French far right leads after legislative elections' 1st round

North Korea launches a ballistic missile toward sea

Criminal laws passed 'forcibly', INDIA will not allow 'bulldozer' justice: Cong

Rahul's 'not Hindus' dig at BJP draws protests



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DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2024 PAGES 12

PRICE ₹8

95 forest camps in KNP under water, movement of commercial vehicles restricted • Modi, Shah take stock of situation

## State flood scene grim; mother-son dead

GUWAHATI, July 1: Assam's flood situation on Monday turned critical following heavy rainfall in the state as well as in neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh.

The Brahmaputra and all its tributaries are flowing above the danger level. Informing this here on Monday, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned of heavy rainfall for the next two to three days.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday took stock of the prevailing flood situation and assured all possible help to the state to tackle the flood situation, he said.

Sarma, while talking to the press here, admitted that the second wave of flood has affected the state and that flood situation in Assam has turned critical given the water level of river Brahmaputra at all points has crossed danger

"Modi has called me up in the morning and assured me of all possible help to tackle the flood situation. He said that the Army and NDRF are

HTBRIEFS

**ITBP** evacuates

GUWAHATI: The 20th Battal-

ion of the Indo-Tibetan Border

Police (ITBP) on Saturday suc-

cessfully carried out a daring res-

cue operation in Arunachal

Pradesh. Leveraging their ex-

pertise in mountaineering, they

managed to evacuate a critical

medical emergency involving a

heart patient, as well as stranded

civilians following a major land-

slide near Tatu (Aalo). ITBP on

its official micro-blogging site handle X informed, "20 Bn

#ITBP conducted a heroic rescue

mission in Arunachal Pradesh.

Using their mountaineering

skills, they evacuated a medical

emergency (heart) patient and

stranded civilians after a massive

landslide near Tatu (Aalo)." As

per reports, a large landslide took

place on the Pasighat -

Mariyang-Yingkiong national highway near Geying. Although

a goods truck was swept away, there have been no casualties re-

Review meeting **GUWAHATI:** Chief Minister

Himanta Biswa Sarma presided

over the 21st Board Meeting of

the Assam Cancer Care Founda-

tion in Guwahati on Sunday, em-

phasizing significant progress in

the state's efforts to combat can-

cer. Following the meeting, CM

Sarma shared key achievements

on micro-blogging site X stating,

"I chaired the 21st board meeting

of the @CareAssam Foundation

and the strides we have been

making in cancer care are im-

pressive." The Foundation has

provided screenings for 191,747

individuals and managed

168,047 outpatient department

(OPD) cases. Additionally,

64,634 inpatient department

(IPD) patients have been treated,

and a targeted breast cancer

screening initiative has benefitted

4,009 women.



ready to work hand in hand with the state government," Sarma said. Sarma said that the PM has advised him that the MLAs and ministers should

Assam registers first case under

new criminal laws: Himanta

GUWAHATI, July 1: Assam has

registered the first case under provi-

sions of the Bharatiya Nyaya San-

hita in Nagaon district, chief

minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said

It was registered at 12:32 pm in

Nagaon Sadar Police Station, he

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita,

Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita

and the Bharatiya Sakshya Ad-

hiniyam came into effect across the

country from Monday, replacing the

British-era Indian Penal Code, Code

of Criminal Procedure and the In-

The replacement of the colonial

laws is of particular importance for

Assam, as "we are fighting against

child marriage, and had to take the

dian Evidence Act, respectively.

said at a press conference here.

on Monday

swing into action to help the people in distress. He further informed that Home minister Amit Shah

also reviewed the flood situation in Assam. He said that the coming 3 days will be crucial for the state given heavy rainfall in many parts of the state and Arunachal Pradesh.

The IMD has predicted heavy rainfall in Nalbari, Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Tinsukia, Dhubri, Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Golaghat and

'Water levels of the tributaries of Brahmaputra are about to breach embankments when the respective levels cross danger levels. If water level crosses danger level then situation is considered grim," he said

Sarma said that till date 41 revenue circles in 14 districts are reeling under flood waters and that 698 villages are inundated by flood waters. He said that as many as 2,70,628 families have been affected by flood till date.

A woman and her child lost their lives due the flood on Sunday, he said. Analysing the situation Sarma said that National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

## Gadkari to fix deplorable Teok-Sivasagar highway

JORHAT, July 1: Congress leader condition.

Gogoi, while traveling through a stretch of the highway between Jorhat and Sivasagar district on Sunday, uploaded visuals showing the pitiable condition exacerbated by incessant monsoonal rains, and sought Gadkari's attention.

In the video, Gogoi emphasised

Gogoi noted that Gadkari had

pressed optimism that the Minister would take necessary steps to expedite completion and alleviate public suffering.

The Lok Sabha MP, who had been in Jorhat since Saturday, visited Jhanjimukh in the Teok assembly constituency on Sunday to assess villages affected by severe waterlogging. Highlighting Gadkari's previous visits to Jorhat and his reputation for swift project implementation nationwide, Gogoi appealed to prioritize this critical ighway project.

Several accidents, including fatalities, have occurred recently due to safety lapses such as inadequate barricading, warning signs, and street lighting for commuters.

Notably, two private companies contracted for the project in the past five years were terminated by NHIDCL due to reported anomalies in implementation.

It's worth mentioning that student bodies like AJYCP and AASU, along with various organisations, (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

Robbery accused injured in police firing in Assam

KOKRAJHAR, July 1: A man accused of robbery was injured in police firing while allegedly trying to escape from custody in Assam's Kokrajĥar district on Sunday night, an official said.

The incident took place near a tea garden at Salakati in the district when police had taken the arrested accused for a search operation in the area. The accused was arrested for robbing a man of ₹ 34 lakh in front of Axis Bank in Kokrajhar town on June 21, police said.

During the search operation, the accused allegedly attempted to flee, prompting police to fire at his leg to prevent his escape, the official said on Monday. The accused has been admitted to the R N B Civil Hospital for treatment.

Police had arrested four suspects on Sunday in connection with the robbery case from various parts of Lower Assam and recovered ₹ 21.5 lakh from their possession. The injured was identified as Amir Hussain from Manikpur, while the other accused (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### Nearly 1.2 lakh students take free college admission

GUWAHATI, July 1: Education minister Ranoj Pegu on Monday said over 71 per cent of more than 1.66 lakh students taking admission in different colleges across the state have availed the fee waiver scheme for poor families.

Previously, students with a parental annual income of up to ₹ 2 lakh were eligible for free admission, but the limit has been raised to ₹ 4 lakh from this year, Pegu said in a post on X.

The colleges now allow ration cards as proof of family earnings instead of income certificates earlier, he added.

"This year, 1,18,199 (71 per cent) students out of 1,66,123 students have availed free admission till yesterday evening," Pegu said.

The admission fees are set by colleges and universities with the State Fee Regulation Committee determining the upper limit, he added. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

# Gaurav Gogoi urges

HT Correspondent

Gaurav Gogoi has urged Union minister Nitin Gadkari to intervene and take immediate action to complete the Teok-Sivasagar highway in Jorhat, which is in a deplorable

that the Teok-Sivasagar highway is crucial for connectivity in the Jorhat region.

'Work on several portions of the road has been ongoing for several years. The condition of the road is deplorable, leading to frequent accidents and long traffic jams. Despite multiple contractors and tenders, the issues persist, causing severe inconvenience to the public," Gogoi stated in a video posted

on the micro-blogging site X.

### Pijush Hazarika assesses flood situation in Karbi Anglong

DIPHU, July 1: Assam Minister Pijush Hazarika visited Diphu town in Karbi Anglong and took stock of the flood situation in the district on Monday. During his visit, Hazarika reviewed the current

situation and discussed potential measures to mitigate future flood risks, such as strengthening embankments, dredging rivers, and improving drainage The minister announced plans to construct a 15

km embankment to protect riverbanks in West Karbi Anglong from flooding, though specific river names were not mentioned. "In West Karbi Anglong, a 15 km river embank-

ment will be built to prevent erosion from various rivers. The construction of this embankment will ensure safety from flooding in West Karbi Anglong. Additionally, 5 km of embankment work has already been completed in Parokhuwa and Nonmati," he stated. Hazarika also mentioned that geo bags, sand



bags, and porcupines have been delivered and will be distributed to reinforce riverbanks against erosion. He assured that more materials would be sent if necessary

The minister reported that ₹ 70 crore has been allocated to Karbi Anglong over the past three years specifically for flood relief. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### BJP slams Rahul Gandhi for his 'not Hindus' remarks

Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) Act

to overcome the interpretation of the

Islamic laws," for the last one-and-

Sanhita, even consensual inter-

course below the age of 18 is equiv-

alent to rape and is punishable

with consent for married women has

been raised from 15 years to 18

years, the CM said. This new clause

will help in dealing with child mar-

riage cases, and will prove to be a

deterrent for those involved with the

and 115 master trainers of the

Assam Police have been working

for the last few months to make a

"The colonial laws got replaced

social menace, Sarma said.

The minimum age for intercourse

"Under the new Bharatiya Nyaya

a-half years, he said.

accordingly," Sarma said.

NEW DELHI, July 1: The BJP on Monday protested inside and outside the Parliament after leader of opposition Rahul Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha that members of the ruling party are not Hindus as they promote division and violence.

help of Protection of Children from smooth (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it is a serious matter that Gandhi is calling the entire Hindu society violent, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and other ministers demanded an apology from the Congress leader. "BJP and RSS do not represent all the Hindus...We are also Hindus," Gandhi was heard saying in his response in the Lower House, amid treasury benches protest.

In a post on X, Shah said Gandhi insulted "crores of Hindus" by saying that Hindus commit violence, lie and spread hatred. "He should apologise for this," he demanded.

Union health minister and BJP president JP Nadda also lambasted Gandhi, accusing him of combining lies and hatred in his speech. It was a worst show by Gandhi on his first day, he said.

"Third Time Fail LoP has a knack for agitated, flawed logic. His speech today has shown that neither



has he understood the mandate of 2024 (his third successive loss) nor does he have any humility," he said

Slamming Gandhi for his remarks, Union minister G Kishan Reddy said democracy will remain intact and there will also be peace "so long as Hindus are in majority" in the country. (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

### CM Biren denies report on resignation, asks media not to spread rumours

IMPHAL, July 1: Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh on Monday described a report on his resignation as unfounded and asked the media not to spread ru-

Singh also claimed that it is an attempt by political rivals who want to take advantage of the prevailing situation in the state which has been in the grip of violence since May last year. His statement came three days after a media outlet reported that Singh is likely to resign soon. "Manipur is passing through a troubled time. In such

weak. We are fully confident of our abilities," the chief Addressing the Manipur issue is more important, Singh told reporters after attending a programme in Im-

a crucial time, the leaders of Manipur can't afford to be

phal on the implementation of three new criminal laws across the country. "The rumours (on resignation) are possibly spread by those who want to be CM and ministers, as well as the opposition," he said. The chief minister said that his government commu-

nicates regularly with the PMO and the Union Home Ministry on the Manipur situation. "If we leave, who will lead the people? More chaos

will be created. We have to guide the people," said Singh



who heads a BJP government in the northeastern state. Singh also called on media outlets not to publish unfounded reports. "Panic situation might be created if speculative reports are published without verification. Publications of such unfounded reports may give pleasure to some people. However, chances are 90 per cent of the people in the state would start panicking," he said. He asked media outlets (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)



The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal paid a courtesy visit to Rashtrapati Bhavan to call on President of India, Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi on Monday. HT Photo

# Eminent Indian-American physician elected official delegate to Republican Convention

Shivangi the national president of the Indian American Forum for Political Education

WASHINGTON, July 1: Eminent Indian-American physician Dr Sampat Shivangi has been elected as an official delegate to the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee this month that would formally nominate former US president Donald Trump as the party's presidential candidate.

Trump, 78, is the presumptive Republican Party candidate for the presidential election. An influential Indian-American

community leader, Dr Shivangi, has been elected as a National Delegate at the convention for the sixth time. "It is a great pleasure and honour

to share the news that I have been nominated and elected as (an) official delegate at the upcoming Republican National Convention to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from July 13 to July 19, 2024," Dr Shivangi said.



The four-day Republican National Convention (RNC) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, would formally nominate Trump as the party's candidate for the November 5 presidential election.

The nomination process would be completed by Republican delegates from across the country.

Dr Shivangi, a lifelong member of the Republican Party and a founding member of the Republican Indian Council and the Republican Indian National Council, has been nominated as RNC delegate six consecutive times.

"This will be my sixth time serving as a National Delegate at the Republican National Convention to nominate the Republican Party nominee to contest the national presidential election," he said. "My nomination began as early as when President George W Bush was nominated in New York, then-Senator George McCain, Governor Mitt Romney, (and) President Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020. Now again to re-elect President Donald Trump in 2024 in Milwaukee," he said.

He is the national president of the Indian American Forum for Political Education, one of the oldest Indian American Associations. Over the past three decades, he has lobbied for (CONTD. ON PAGE-2)

THE HILLS TIMES

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### Sensex, Nifty close at fresh record highs on gains in IT, banking shares

Sensex rose by 443 points to close at a new record high while Nifty settled above the 24,100 mark on Monday on buying in banking and IT shares in line with gains in Asian and European markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rebounded by 443.46 points or 0.56 per cent to close at an all-time high of 79,476.19. During the day, the barometer soared 528.27 points or 0.66 per cent to 79,561. As many as 20 Sensex shares closed higher while 10 stocks declined.

The broader Nifty rose by 131.35 points or 0.55 per cent to close at a fresh lifetime high of 24,141.95. Intra-day, the index hit a high of 24,164, just 10 points short of its lifetime high of 24,174 hit on Friday.

Sensex and Nifty had hit intraday record high levels on Friday but closed lower due to profit-taking in blue-chips.

Among Sensex shares, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever. Tata Consultancy Services, JSW Steel, Infosys, HDFC Bank, Tata

Motors and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers.

NTPC, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro, Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank and Axis Bank were among the laggards.

"The domestic market sustained its upward momentum, with a reduction in US PCE inflation raising hopes for a rate cut by the US Fed in September. This optimism contributed to the strong performNair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services

India's manufacturing sector output increased at a sharp pace in June as new business continued to flow in amid favourable demand conditions and resulted in record upturn in employment, an HSBC PMI survey showed.

"The consistent buying interest on dips suggests bullish control, likely continuing the current tone. The renewed strength in midcap

ther positivity," said Ajit Mishra SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap and midcap indices raced to record high levels. Smallcap gauge jumped 1.58 per cent and the midcap index climbed 1.11 per cent. Among the indices, IT soared 1.84 per cent, teck jumped 1.46 per cent, commodities (1.21 per cent), telecommunication 1.03 per cent, industrials (0.95 per cent) and metal (0.73 per cent). Utilities, power and realty were the laggards. A total of 2,656 stocks advanced while 1,346 declined and 144 remained unchanged on the

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled higher. European markets were trading with gains. US markets ended lower on

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.51 per cent to USD 85.43 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 23.09 crore on Friday, according to

### CIL's Q1 production surges 8pc to 189.3 million tonne in FY'25



Mcap of BSE-listed

firms hit lifetime high

of ₹443 lakh crore

NEW DELHI, July 1: The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a lifetime high of ₹ 4,43,05,344.36 crore on Monday, driven by a rebound in equities, where the benchmark Sensex ended at a new all-time peak.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 443.46 points or 0.56 per cent to settle at a new closing peak of 79,476.19. During the day, it climbed 528.27 points or 0.66 per cent to 79,561.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms hit a new record high of ₹ 4,43,05,344.36 crore (USD 5.31 trillion) amid an optimistic trend in

"The domestic market sustained its upward momentum, with a reduction in the US PCE inflation raising hopes for a rate cut by the FED in September. This optimism contributed to the strong performance of IT stocks," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services,

Among the Sensex pack, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, UltraTech Cement, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, JSW Steel, HDFC Bank, Tata Motors, Hindustan Unilever and

ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers. NTPC, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank and Baiai Finsery were among the laggards.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.58 per cent and the midcap index climbed 1.11 per cent. Both the smallcap and midcap indices hit their lifetime highs.

Among the indices, IT soared 1.84 per cent, teck jumped 1.46 per cent, commodities (1.21 per cent), telecommunication 1.03 per cent, industrials (0.95 per cent) and metal (0.73 per cent). Utilities, power and realty were the laggards. A total of 2,656 stocks advanced while 1.346 declined and 144 remained unchanged on

the BSE. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,822.83 points or 2.36 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 509.5 points or 2.16 per cent.

The Sensex recorded the best monthly gain in June by climbing 7.14 per cent.

The Sensex breached the historic 79,000 mark on Thursday, and the Nifty hit the 24,000 level for the first time in intra-day trade. (PTI) takes, firms stepped up

KOLKATA, July 1: Coal India Limited (CIL) achieved an 8 per cent growth in coal production, reaching 189.3 million tonnes in the first quarter of the current fiscal, surpassing its target

statement on Monday. The company's production increased by 13.8 million tonnes compared to the corresponding quarter of FY'24, with all seven producing sub-

of 189.2 million tonnes, the company said in a

sidiaries registering positive growth, it said. CIL's supplies also rose by 6 per cent to 198.4 million tonnes during April-June 2024, with a significant increase in supplies to both power

and non-power sectors, it added. The company's coal loading witnessed healthy growth, with an average of 367.2 rakes per day, a 10.3 per cent year-on-year increase, it said. Higher production and loading resulted in a substantial increase in coal inventory at CIL's pitheads, reaching 81.5 million tonnes, providing a sufficient buffer to meet any sudden surge in demand, it said.

At a time when power demand in the country is surging, the miner stepped up its supplies to coal-fired plants, registering a 4 per cent growth to 160 million tonnes in Q1 FY'25, a year-on-



year increase of 6 million tonnes

In the same period of FY 2024, CIL's off-take to thermal power plants stood at 154 million tonnes, the company said.

Additionally, CIL's supplies to the non-power sector reached an all-time high of 38.4 million tonnes in Q1FY25, logging a 16 per cent growth. This sector had received 33 million tonnes in April-June 2023. The growth in June 2024 alone was 23 per cent at 13.4 million tonnes, the statement said. (PTI)

### India's manufacturing sector growth ticks higher in June; record upturn in employment

NEW DELHI, July 1: recruitment. The rate of job India's manufacturing sector output increased at a sharp pace in June as new business continued to flow in amid and resulted in record upturn in employment, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) increased from 57.5 in May to 58.3 in June, indicating a sharper improvement in business conditions.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

June data showed that the stronger expansion in sales at manufacturers in India was largely due to buoyant underlying demand, higher export volumes and successful adver-

As a consequence of ongoing increases in new order in-

creation was sharp and the strongest seen since data collection started in March 2005.

"... Firms increased their favourable demand conditions hiring at the fastest pace in higher inflows of new work over 19 years. Input buying activity also rose during the month," said Maitrevi Das, Global Economist at HSBC.

Staff expenses reportedly intensified in June, which coupled with rising material and transportation costs caused another overall increase in operating expenses, the survey

Manufacturers in India were able to share additional cost burdens with their clients amid conducive demand conditions. Selling charges were raised to the greatest extent in over two

"On the price front, input costs moderated slightly in June, but remained at elevated levels. Manufacturers were able to pass on higher costs to mained robust, resulting in improved margin," Das said.

Meanwhile, new export orders increased substantially in June. Companies attributed from overseas to better demand from Asia, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Europe and the US.

The survey noted that the outlook for the manufacturing sector remained positive, with nearly 29 per cent of panellists expecting output growth over the coming year.

Firms forecast further improvements in demand and order book volumes in the year ahead, with advertising and greater client enquiries also underpinning optimism, the survey said.

The HSBC India Manufacturing PMI is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 400 manufacturers.

### Air India to set up flying institute in Maha to train 180 commercial pilots annually

MUMBAI, July 1: Tata Group-owned Air India on Monday said it will set up a training institute at Amravati in Maharashtra with an aim to train 180 commercial pilots annually.

The DGCA-licensed Flight Training Organisation (FTO) at the Belora Airport will be the largest such institute in South Asia and become operational from the first quarter of next financial year, Air India said

According to the airline, the upcoming facility will be the first by any Indian airline in the country and will have 31 single-engine aircraft and three twin-engine aircraft for training.

Air India said it has got the tender from the Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC) to

establish and operate the facility for 30 years. "The FTO at Amravati will be a significant step to-

wards making Indian aviation more self-reliant and offering more opportunities to the youth in India to fulfil their ambitions of flying as pilots.

'The young pilots coming out of this FTO will fuel Air India's ambition of becoming a world-class airline, as it moves ahead in its transformation journey, said Campbell Wilson, Managing Director and CEO at Air India

The facility, which will be developed on 10 acres, will have digitally-enabled classrooms, hostels at par with global academies, a digitised operation centre, and a maintenance unit, Air India said.

"The FTO will be operational by Q1 FY26 and offer aspiring pilots an opportunity to undergo training with world-class curricula at par with best-in-class global schools," said Sunil Bhaskaran, Director, Aviation Academy, Air India. (PTI)

### EaseMyTrip inks MoU with UP **EcoTourism Development Board**

MUMBAI, July 1: Online travel tech platform EaseMyTrip on Monday said it has signed an agreement with Uttar Pradesh EcoTourism Development Board (UPETDB) to boost state tourism.

The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to foster a strategic partnership aimed at elevating the promotion and development of tourism in Uttar Pradesh, EaseMyTrip.com said in a statement. This partnership will leverage EaseMyTrip's extensive reach and technological expertise to highlight Uttar Pradesh's rich ecotourism offerings, it added

Under the collaboration, Ease-MyTrip will also promote all registered homestays in Uttar Pradesh on its online portal. "We are excited to start this new project with UP-ETDB. Uttar Pradesh, with its rich history, popularity, and stunning natural beauty, hosts a plethora of underrated and unexplored destinations waiting to be discovered by more people.

"We are confident that our collaboration with the UPETDB will not only benefit both parties but also contribute significantly to the growth and enhancement of tourism across the state," Ease-

MyTrip Co-Founder Rikant Pittie said. EaseMyTrip will also curate and market bespoke tourism packages showcasing Uttar Pradesh's unexplored destinations, cultural experiences, culinary delights, and traditional crafts. "Our collaboration with EaseMyTrip aims to enhance the visibility and accessibility of these diverse and rich offerings. This strategic partnership will not only drive significant growth but also position Uttar Pradesh as a preferred destination for travellers,' Uttar Pradesh Principal Secretary, Tourism and Culture Department, and Director General. (PTI)

#### Contd. from Page 1...

#### State flood scene grim;

(NHPC) dam authorities last evening had released 409 cubic metres of water resulting in flooding of 21 villages in North Lakhimpur affecting 11000 families. "Flood situation in Assam turned critical in Brahmaputra valley in 2011 and 2017 due to overflowing of the Subansiri River. This year we are facing the same situation. However, today the NHPC hasn't released additional water," he said.

Talking about the flood situation in Kaziranga National park, Sarma said that flood waters have submerged the park and that 95 forest camps out of 233 forest camps are under water. Vehicular restrictions have been carried out in the wake of the flood situations in KNP.

Commercial vehicles shall not be allowed to move through Kaziranga National Park and that the vehicles will be allowed to move inside Dibrugarh through North Assam, he said. An order from the office of the superintendent of police, Golaghat stated that only private vehicles shall be allowed to move at the regulated speed during daytime. It stated that only local private vehicles will be allowed to cross KNP during night hours.

"Commercial Vehicles shall be diverted at (a) Numaligarh Tiniali, (b) Bagori border and (c) Bokakhat Town. OsC of Numaligarh Rural PS and Kamargaon PS shall be in charge of Numaligarh Tiniali. They will divert all Commercial Vehicles towards Karbi Anglong. Commercial Trucks going only till Bokakhat Town shall be allowed to move from Numaligarh Tiniali. OC, Bokakhat PS shall stop all Commercial Vehicles at Bokakhat, going towards Kohora IC, Kohora OP shall stop all Commercial vehicles from Bagori side," the order stated

### Gaurav Gogoi urges Gadkari

have been protesting for three years against alleged malpractices, substandard work quality, and project delays, causing significant commuter hardships on this key Upper Assam road. On May 1, 2015, Gadkari laid the foundation stone for the ambitious four-lane project at a ceremony in Jorhat, attended by then-chief minister Tarun Gogoi, father of Gaurav Gogoi.

### Robbery accused injured

are Nurul Amin Mandal from Ulubari in Chirang, Tuton Barman from Nayachara Part-1, Kokrajhar, and Pros-

### Nearly 1.2 lakh students take

Brushing aside reports of doubling admission fees, the Minister asserted that the state government does not charge any fee from college students and instead, it offers a fee waiver scheme for BPL students. Sharing Pegu's post, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the state government has paid Rs 103 crore to different colleges for enrollment of students in the last year. (PTI)

### Pijush Hazarika assesses flood

"Flooding is particularly severe in Baithalangso, Bithung, and Rongkhang of West Karbi Anglong," he added. In addition to his field assessment, Hazarika convened a meeting at Kajir Ronghangpi Memorial Guest House, Taralangso, with Tuliram Ronghang, chief executive member (CEM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), executive members (EMs) of KAAC, and department officials. The meeting aimed to gather views and suggestions on strategies to reduce flooding in Karbi Anglong.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, the Minister said, "I visited Karbi Anglong to assess the recent floods and discuss measures to minimise flood damage, including embankment erosion control and safeguarding lives and property. We have had productive discussions with the CEM, EMs, and department officials regarding the current flood situation and preventive measures.

### Assam registers first case

transition," he said. More than 500 police officers have been trained at the Gandhinagar Forensic University. "The state government has set up five forensic laboratories as forensic evidence is compulsory under the new laws," Sarma said.

The chief minister said July 1 will become an important milestone in India's history as a "step to decolonise the laws of the nation. Our criminal laws will become democratised". "We have to sensitise the judiciary and the police along with other stakeholders, including people of the state, so that we can be proud of our criminal justice system,'

### BJP slams Rahul Gandhi

"I want to tell Rahul Gandhi that so long as Hindutva is there, there will be democracy and peace in the country," he told PTI at Parliament Complex, when asked for comment. "Look around the world. There is still peace in the country. There is no peace in Pakistan and other countries in the world," he added. Union minister Krishan Pal Gurjar flayed Gandhi for his remarks and said the leader of opposition only made baseless remarks" in his speech and did not give any "positive suggestion" in the House.

"He brought shame to the dignity of the position of Leader of Opposition," he told PTI. BJP MP Sanjay Jaiswal also hit out at Gandhi for his remarks and said that he had to speak on the Motion of Thanks on the President's address following the tradition but he did not do so. "Apart from this, he spoke about everything else," he charged.

"He gave a unique knowledge to the world by saying that 'abhay mudra' lies in the foundation of all religions," Jaiswal told PTI, taking swipes at Gandhi over his remarks on Lord Shiva's 'abhay mudra'. (PTI)

#### **Eminent Indian-American**

several bills in the US Congress on behalf of India through his enormous contacts with US Senators and Congressmen. "I feel this is a unique honour and an opportunity for an Indian American to represent the community

Dr Shivangi said he would be part of the luncheon hosted by Governor Tate Reeves of Mississippi in honour of the delegates at Northern Lights in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on July 16, for the Mississippi delegates. (PTI)

### CM Biren denies report

to come to Manipur and take stock of the actual situation to help bring peace to the state. Ethnic conflict between Imphal valley-based Meiteis and hill-based Kukis has led to the deaths of over 200 people since May 3, 2023, and rendered thousands of people homeless.

Earlier, addressing a gathering, Singh said, "The new laws allow registration of zero FIRs anywhere and also

gives scope for registration in local language or dialect." "Law against mob justice commences today with punishments of life imprisonment and even death... I want to appeal to the people of Manipur to give up mob justice" The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya

Adhiniyam (BSA) came into effect on Monday. The new laws replaced the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively. (PTI)



**NEW DELHI, July 1:** The issue of granting special category status (SCS) to Bihar and Andhra Pradesh should be decided on nonpolitical considerations by a constitutional body, RBI's monetary policy committee member Ashima Goval said on Monday.

Goyal further said the 14th Finance Commission has already ruled on special category status states. Andhra Pradesh has been demanding special category status after its bifurcation in 2014 on the grounds of revenue loss as Hyderabad became the capital of Telangana. Bihar has also been seeking the special status since 2005 when Nitish Kumar was sworn in as its chief minister. The state also suffered revenue loss after the mineral-rich Jharkhand was carved out

of it in 2000. "...the criteria for SCS are primarily for hilly terrain with low population density and development of vulnerable border areas, which do not apply to the two states," Goyal told PTI.

For special category status states, the Centre meets 90 per cent of the funds required in a centrally



sponsored scheme against 60 per cent in the case of normal category states. The remaining funds are

provided by the state government. "Moreover, the 14th Finance Commission had ruled that no more SCS states should be created. The issue is best decided on nonpolitical considerations by a constitutional body," the eminent economist said.

The 14th Finance Commission raised the share of states in taxes collected by the Centre to 42 per cent from 32 per cent but abolished special category states. The special status category was

introduced in 1969 on the recommendation of the Fifth Finance Commission to benefit certain backward states with hilly terrains, strategic international borders, and economic and infrastructural backwardness.

With support from N Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which won 16 and 12 seats in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, respectively, and other alliance partners, the NDA has the government at the Centre.

Responding to the debate on economically and socially betteroff southern and western states 'subsidising' the northern and eastern states, Goval said net resource flows are part of what has kept the country together. "Directions of flows have differed in the past and will change again in the future," she said, adding that states gain much more than just resources participating in a vibrant growing common market.

Moreover, she asserted that facts do not support the divisive agenda. According to her, data from four

populous northern states -- Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh and four southern states, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, shows since 2000, the formula-based share of taxes fell for southern states, while the share of discretionary grants from the Centre rose for them and fell for the northern

"As a result, the share of total transfers to the southern states was constant," Goyal said. (PTI)

### Villagers rescue elephant calf trapped in well



**HT Bureau** 

**DIPHU**, **July 1:** An elephant calf fell into a kutcha well in the early hours in Hongkram, West Karbi Anglong, and was successfully rescued by villagers. Due to continuous rain and difficulty in finding food, wild elephants are increasingly encroaching into human settlements. Around 3:00 am, a herd of approximately 10 wild elephants entered Mongal Rongphar village, Hongkram, intending to cross the Karbi Langpi River. During this movement, a calf from the herd fell into a kutcha well located in the backyard of a house. The well, dug by villagers for water consumption and washing purposes, became a trap for the young elephant.

Jirsong Timung, from Kangteng Teron village, Hongkram, who was present during the incident and involved in the rescue operation, explained that villagers heard the distress cries of the elephant calf. Upon investigation, they discovered the calf trapped inside the well.

Timung stated that the villagers promptly mobilised to rescue the calf. Using spades and hand hoes (kudal), they carefully excavated the earth around the well to create an exit path for the elephant calf. By gradually filling the well with earth, they facilitated the calf's safe ascent. The rescue operation concluded successfully around 8:00 am, Timung recounted. Another villager at the scene mentioned that although Forest staff arrived later, the entire rescue effort was spearheaded by local villagers,

demonstrating their quick and effective response to the situation.

# Dibrugarh grapples with severe waterlogging

Union minister Sarba and CM Sarma discuss emergency measures

**HT Correspondent** 

DIBRUGARH, July 1: Dibrugarh town continues to grapple with severe waterlogging following relentless heavy rainfall. The situation worsened on Monday, with new areas succumbing to flooding. All 22 wards of the town have been inundated since June 27.

State Disaster Management minister Jogen Mohan assessed the situation in Dibrugarh on Monday and instructed officials to take urgent measures to address the crisis. Dibrugarh district commissioner Bikram Kairi and superintendent of police Rakesh Reddy also inspected waterlogged areas at Thana Chariali.

State Disaster Management minister Jogen Mohan visited the urban flood-affected areas of Dibrugarh town this afternoon. Accompanied commissioner Bikram Kairi and superintendent of police Rakesh Reddy, the minister surveyed the flood-affected Mancotta Road and

Thana Chariali areas of the town. "We are actively addressing the issue. If necessary, we will install additional pumps to drain out the rainwater from the town. We need to plan the drainage system scientifically for a permanent solution," said the minister. Mancotta Road, a crucial thoroughfare, has been



submerged for five days, particularly from Chowkidinghee traffic point to Phoolbagan. Other important roads such as AT Road, RKB Road, HS Road, KC Gogoi Road, Jail Road, VKV Road, Jhalukpara Road, KP Road, PN Road, and Convoy Road are also severely waterlogged. Residents in areas like Khalihamari, West Milannagar, Jiban Phukan Nagar, Lachit Nagar, Chowkidinghee Khaniagaon, GanLakhi Nagar, Jibon Phukan Nagar, Guardpara, and Graham Bazar are facing significant hardships due to flooding. The Dibrugarh Police Reserve, old SP office, All India Radio office, Inspector of Schools Office, Joint Director of Health ofweather conditions, relief from wafice, schools, and colleges have terlogging may not be immediate, been affected by waterlogging. All schools in Dibrugarh district were ordered closed from Monday by the Inspector of Schools.

Dibrugarh mayor Saikat Patra

noted that floodwaters from the Brahmaputra River have entered Dibrugarh town from the Maijan area, exacerbating the situation. He acknowledged that without a ces-

as drains are overwhelmed. "It's a serious issue. The Dibrugarh district administration should understand the gravity of the situation before it's too late. The Di-

sation in rain and improved

drain should be cleaned using scientific methods, and illegal encroachments should be swiftly cleared to prevent further waterlogging issues," said Ranjan Sharma, a resident of Dibrugarh. Meanwhile, a physical trainer

brugarh Town Protection (DTP)

(PT) teacher at Sampoorna Kendriya Vidyalaya died due to electrocution after coming into contact with a live wire from a generator in Dibrugarh on Sunday morning. The deceased, identified as Pawan Gare, 29, a resident of Majuli, was also a boys' hostel warden. He had gone to start the power generator following a power cut due to waterlogging in the hostel area. Despite being rushed to the hospital, he was declared brought dead by doctors. Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal held a telephonic discussion with chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma regarding the grim flood situation in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, and other parts of the state. Sonowal requested Sarma to provide all necessary assistance to flood victims and support emergency efforts to

mitigate losses due to floods. Chief minister Sarma assured Sonowal of immediate relief for affected regions and pledged assistance and support to those affected

#### AIDSO and AIMSS lead protests, decry drug abuse & crime surge

HT Correspondent
TEZPUR, July 1: In protest

against the uncontrolled prevalence of drugs, alcohol, gambling, and the government's instruction to wine shops to increase their sales, the Sonitpur District committee of All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) and a women's organisation AIMSS registered a strong protest against the Assam government's directive on Monday. They criticised the move to boost revenue through increased alcohol sales, citing a rapid growth in antisocial activities such as drug abuse, gambling, rape, burglary, and theft in the region. Activists from both organisations, supported by people from all walks of life, conducted a protest rally from Hem Baruah Hall. Later, they demonstrated their opposition in front of the district commissioner's office, adorned with posters and banners, and voiced slogans against drug peddling, gambling, and

### Diphu and Sivasagar host awareness sessions on updated laws

gapara, Padum Nagar, Santipara,



HT Bureau

DIPHU, July 1: The Diphu Police Station organised an awareness programme on the new criminal laws of the country, aimed at replacing colonial-era laws, at the Circuit House on Monday.

Stakeholders such as the Karbi Students Association (KSA), members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), school children, senior citizens, and doctors participated in the awareness programme. Speakers included District & Sessions Judge of Diphu Judicial Court, Roshan Lal: Additional Sessions Judge, Gitali Rabha; and public prosecutor, Dilip Kumar Dekka. They explained the implications of the new criminal laws, which bring significant changes to India's criminal justice system, replacing the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Indian Evidence Act with Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya

Following the awareness programme, Sanjib Kumar Saikia, APS, SP of Karbi An-

the awareness programme aimed to inform the public about the enforcement of the new criminal laws from July 1. These laws introduce various changes, new sections, and procedures designed to meet the needs of the country's citizens. Saikia emphasised that the new laws are citizen-centric and will benefit all sections of society, including children and women. The SP also mentioned new facilities under the law, such as the provision of zero FIR, online registration of police complaints, and issuance of summonses through electronic modes such as SMS.

Our Sivasagar correspondent adds: On Monday, an awareness meeting was held at Sivasagar PS regarding three new criminal laws that have come into effect nationwide. SP Sivasagar, Subhrajyoti Bora, emphasised that these laws aim to enhance accountability and improve public accessibility within the police administration.

The new laws allow police officers to record information received via electronic modes such as e-mails and WhatsApp. However, the complainant must physically visit the PS to sign the FIR. It is now mandatory to video record the seizure procedure, and medical officers must submit medical reports within 7 days for POCSO cases to prevent easy bail for the accused. In gang rape

cases involving minors, the death sentence may be applicable. Bora highlighted that investigating officers are now required to update complainants about case progress within 90 days. Additionally, any PS must register a case from a person, even if the incident occurred elsewhere. The new laws are gender-neutral and are expected to significantly reduce litigation time and alleviate the burden on Indian courts. Dr Saumerjyoti Mahanta, principal of Sibsagar Commerce College, remarked that these laws are a step towards overcoming colonial legacies, ensuring people's rights to live peacefully in their own country while safeguarding the rights of the accused. Senior journalist Manoj Kumar Borthakur praised the government's efforts to reduce the financial and temporal burdens associated with over 5 crore pending cases in Indian courts.

Police officer Sikharani Senapaty discussed changes in provisions concerning women-centric cases, particularly sexual harassment and POCSO offenses. Social worker Madhurjya Borgohain chaired the meeting, attended by OC Sivasagar PS Kujajit Sharma, principal of Government HS School, Manju Chetia, and over a hundred citizens, students, and organisational repre-

### Thowra MLA narrowly escapes boat capsize

HT Correspondent
DEMOW, July 1: Thowra MLA Sushanta Borgohain narrowly escaped a boat capsize in Nitaipukhuri Rajabari Barpathar village under Demow constituency (formerly Thowra LAC) on Monday. He and his companions fell into the water as the boat sank but fortunately emerged unharmed. The incident occurred during their journey to assess flood damage in the area.

Speaking on his X (formerly Twitter) handle on Monday, Thowra MLA Sushanta Borgohain mentioned visiting Barpathar village in Rajabari Gaon Panchayat, Demow Constituency, to survey the flood damage caused by the Brahmaputra. The district administration is actively providing relief to affected residents. Borgohain was accompanied by Hiraniit Bireshwar Deori, Pradip Gogoi, and the gaon pradhan during the

According to sources, due to incessant rain, the water level of the Brahmanutra has increased, causing several villages in Demow constituency (formerly Thowra LAC)

#### Nagaon Lions Club honours three senior physicians

HT Correspondent
NAGAON, July 1: Along with the rest of the country, Nagaon Lions Club celebrated International Doctor's Day on Monday. On this occasion, as in previous years, Nagaon Lions Club felicitated three noted and sincere physicians of the small town with fulam gamosa, mementos, japi, and appraisal letters at their respective workplaces. Dr Dipen Kr Sarma was felicitated at his Fouzdaripatty-based Police Hospital, Dr Sitangshu Chakraborty at Lawkhowa Road-based Shikha Homeopathic Hospital, and Dr Brijmohan Khaderia at his workplace near Haibargaon by the club members.

The felicitation program was initiated by the newly elected president of the club, Ajoy Mittal, along with secretary Pralay Shah, treasurer Madan Shah, PRO Biswajit Mahanta, Gurucharan Singh, Bakul Bora, Mahabir Agarwal, and

### other members of the club. SBI Sootea marks 69th Bank Day

HT Correspondent
BISWANATH CHARIALI, July

1: The 69th Bank Day was celebrated in SBI Sootea with great pomp and grandeur on Monday. The customers and staff were addressed by branch manager Prem Chetry, who highlighted the role played by SBI in nation-building throughout its 69-year journey.

The celebrations began with the felicitation of important customers and influential people of the society. A cake-cutting ceremony was led by Neeraj Nishim Hazarika, a young entrepreneur from the locality, in the presence of Sootea Municipal Board chairperson Dipsikha Handique and other veteran and important customers. Neeraj Nishim Hazarika praised the excellent management of the branch by branch manager Prem Chetry and the service delivery by the staff and officers. Sweets were distributed among the customers.

### Aryabhatta Science Centre hosts District-Level Science Meet-2024

**HT Bureau** 

GUWAHATI, July 1: The District Organising Committee, Aryabhatta Science Centre, in association with the district administration of Cachar, organised a District-Level Science Meet-2024 at Government Girls Higher Secondary & Multipurpose School on Sunday with a day-long program. The competition aims to develop a scientific temperament among students, make science education exciting through experimentation and hands-on activities, and promote basic science as a career option. Students from various schools under Cachar education block participated, displaying their handmade science projects on different subjects. Inaugurating the event, district development commissioner of Cachar, Norsing Bey, who was the special guest, appreciated the Aryabhatta Science Centre for organising the competition to foster creative talent and generate a scientific temper among children. DDC Bey also commended the students for their participation and urged them to be sincere in their studies, emphasising that it is the prime duty of students. The chief guest, Professor Fazal Ahmed Talukdar from NIT Silchar, thanked the Aryabhatta Science Centre for promoting science and technology among school children in villages. He advised parents and teachers to guide students, helping common people live and work in better conditions. The inaugural session was followed by the opening of the exhibition stalls by DDC Norsing Bey and Professor Fazal Ahmed Talukdar. DDC Bey also interacted with the district coordinators of Arvabhatta Science Centre. Cachar, discussing ways to strengthen the centre's activities

### Cabinet ministers engage business leaders in Tezpur on GST concerns

**HT Correspondent** 

Sakshya Adhiniyan (BSA).

**TEZPUR, July 1:** The cabinet committee comprising state government's minister for Housing & Urban Affairs and Irrigation, Ashok Singhal, and state Finance minister Ajanta Neog interacted with trade and business organisations from several districts of Central Assam on Goods and Services Tax (GST) at the Tezpur Convention Centre near here on Monday. This was the third meeting of the regional consultative meeting scheduled to be held at different places across the state.

Representatives of various trade organisations attending the meeting briefed the two ministers on the difficulties they faced following notices issued to them under GST and made several suggestions, including simplification of the tax payment system. In his speech, minister Singhal said that protecting the interests of taxpayers has always been a priority for the present government. He men-



tently supported businessmen and is committed to effectively addressing the challenges they face, particularly in tax payment, "GST was introduced under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to benefit the business community in the state," he added, mentioning that Assam is the first state in the country to conduct cabinet-level discussions with businessmen at the grassroots level, under the special initiative of chief minister

Singhal also appreciated the contribution of the business community from the participating districts towards the nation-building process. He stated that the ministers would hold further discussions in Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Jorhat, and Silchar to address traders' concerns regarding GST notices and would submit their reports within a month.

The meeting was attended by MLA Prithviraj Rava, Pramod Barthakur, Ganesh Limbu, Krishna Kamal Tanty, state chief tax commissioner Pallav Gopal Jha, and other top officials of the department, as well as representatives of trade and business organisations from Tezpur, Dhekiajuli, Bishwanath Chariali, Nagaon, Hojai, and Morigaon.

Following this, the two ministers also held a separate meeting with deputy tax commissioners from the mentioned districts of Central Assam and suggested working with sympathetic consideration, offering relax-

### Summer workshop kicks off at Sankari Sangeet Vidyalaya

HT Correspondent
MORIGAON, July 1: A 15-day long summer workshop commenced on Monday under the aegis of the Sankari Sangeet Vidyalaya, Morigaon, at the Srimanta Sankardev Sangha's Zila Namghar and Sankari Sangeet Vidyalaya's office premises. The workshop aims to promote the wonderful creations of saint Srimanta Sankardeva among the younger generation, including Sankari dance, musical instruments, and theatre. It was organised by the Cultural Affairs Department, government of Assam, in collaboration with the Jagiroad Cultural Center, Morigaon. The workshop will be conducted by six prominent music practitioners with various degrees in Sankari music. It was officially inaugurated by the additional district commissioner of Morigaon, Dr Sangita Barthakur, ACS. The inaugural ceremony was moderated by the president of Sankari Sangeet Vidyalaya, Gyan Muhan Deka. The event was attended by Anshuman Dutta, cultural officer at Jagiroad Cultural Centre, Birinchi Kumar Sharma, president of the Morigaon District Journalists Association.

## TOF master trainers training prog launched at Assam Agricultural University

HT Correspondent

JORHAT, July 1: In a significant step towards enhancing Trees Outside Forests (TOF) and empowering farmers and tree growers to adopt TOF and agroforestry practices, a five-day training of TOF master trainers is being held from July 1-5 at Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat.

The training program is organised by the Centre for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF) in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Forest, government of Assam. Upon completion of the program, these TOF master trainers will mobilise a minimum of 100 farmers from their respective villages to disseminate the knowledge they have gained, promoting the adoption and dissemination of agroforestry

practices on the ground. This initiative is part of the Trees Outside Forests in India (TOFI) program, a five-year collaboration between the United



Development (USAID) and India's Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MOEFCC),

implemented by CIFOR-ICRAF. The program was inaugurated by Dr BC Deka, vice chancellor of Assam Agricultural University (AAU). In his address, Dr Deka

play in people's lives and the myriad benefits agroforestry offers to farmers. He commended the TOFI initiative for aiding in income generation and taking significant steps toward mitigating the global climate crisis. Dr Deka also highlighted the potential economic benefits of carbon credits associated with agroforestry, which farmers can leverage.

Nandha Kumar, divisional forest officer (DFO) of Jorhat division in Assam, who attended the session, articulated the critical role of wood in the industry and the dynamics of wood supply and demand. He explained how recent deregulation of species in Assam would provide farmers with greater freedom regarding transit and felling constraints

Kumar also highlighted the involvement of farmers in the Amrit Brikshya Andolan in Assam, a significant initiative led by the chief minister. Santanu Pujari, chairman of the Assam Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (AIIDC), underscored the importance of the TOFI initiative in developing the state's wood-based industries and establishing sustainable infrastructure. He encouraged farmers, as major stakeholders, to contribute to a more sustainable and profitable future for the state

through active participation in the initiative

Dr AK Das, director (DPGS) of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, and Rajib Bora, scientist -G from the Rain Forest Research Institute (RFRI), Jorhat, also highlighted the importance of agroforestry models and practices during the session.

Altogether, 102 participants from various farmer-producer organisations (FPOs), NGOs, Self-Help Groups, and other institutions in Jorhat district are receiving rigorous and intensive training in the program. They are being trained by experts from the Department of Environment and Forest, Department of Agriculture, Rain Forest Research Institute, CIFOR-ICRAF, and various reputed agricultural, horticultural, and forestry institutions in Assam.

Representatives from the TOFI team, including Raju Sood, Dr Arup Jyoti Kalita, Manjil Barua, and Mini Niraj Kumar, are present to conduct the program.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY Words are but pictures of our thoughts. -John Dryden

#### Press freedom under siege

The global landscape of press freedom is facing unprecedented challenges, with a record number of over 360 journalists de-L tained in more than 30 countries, predominantly on charges of espionage. In this grim context, Julian Assange's recent legal resolution stands out as a notable exception. Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks, avoided a potentially lifelong imprisonment by pleading guilty to violating U.S. espionage laws, ending a protracted 14-year legal battle. His release was facilitated by a rare diplomatic intervention from Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, leading to a U.S. pardon. WikiLeaks gained notoriety for its controversial releases of classified U.S. military documents and videos, exposing human rights violations and civilian casualties during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The repercussions for media organizations and journalists revealing such sensitive information are typically severe, as governments globally do not take kindly to media scrutiny of classified activities or political malfeasance. Assange's return to Australia last week concluded a long ordeal, which saw him spend over five years in a British high-security prison and seven years in asylum at the Ecuadorean embassy in London. His legal battles included facing extradition to Sweden on sexual assault allegations and to the U.S. on 18 criminal charges, which could have resulted in a lifetime impris-

WikiLeaks' 2010 release of thousands of U.S. classified military documents marked a significant moment in journalism, showcasing Assange's exceptional hacking skills and fearless investigative drive. Currently, the trial of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich has captured the Western world's attention. Gershkovich, detained in Moscow for 15 months, is being tried in Yekaterinburg on espionage charges. This situation echoes past tragedies, such as the abduction and murder of WSJ correspondent Daniel Pearl in Pakistan and the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi in Istanbul, allegedly by Saudi government agents. Both cases highlighted the perils journalists face when challenging powerful entities. Press freedom is under significant threat worldwide, as evidenced by the arrests of three Al Jazeera journalists in Egypt—Australian Peter Greste, Canadian Mohamed Fahmy, and Egyptian Baher Mohamed—on charges of compromising national security. Although they were later pardoned, their imprisonment underscored the dangerous climate for journalists reporting in politically volatile regions. According to the New Yorkbased Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 363 journalists were detained in over 30 countries last year, with the highest numbers in Iran, China, and Myanmar. India saw a record high of seven journalists incarcerated, four from Jammu & Kashmir, reflecting ongoing criticism over the use of anti-terror laws like UAPA and the J&K Public

Notable cases include Asif Sultan, Sajad Gul, Rupesh Kumar Singh, Gautam Navlakha, Majid Hyderi, Irfan Mehraj, and Prabir Purkayastha. Purkayastha's arrest for allegedly spreading pro-China propaganda via foreign funds drew significant attention, though he was eventually granted bail by India's Supreme Court. Despite these challenges, the media in India operates with a considerable degree of freedom, supported by a multi-party democracy, the Right to Information Act, and a strong judiciary. Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression, yet there is a pressing need to balance the repressive Official Secrets Act with the Right to Information Act of 2005. In the era of artificial intelligence, global governments must reassess their stance on official secrets and the use of digital technology. AI, while offering powerful tools for newsrooms, also poses risks for human rights by enhancing authori-

### Speaker of LS has to function impartially in interests of vibrant democracy

contested election for the post of Lok Sabha Speaker is a sign of a broadening divide between treasury and opposition benches. Before Independence contests for the position of president (equivalent of modern-day speaker) were quite common. In the first election in 1925, Vithal Bhai Patel defeated his government nominee by two votes. He went on to lay the institutional foundations for the independence of the Speaker's office

The next exciting contest was in 1946. In this election, the colonial government thought its nominee would win. But to its surprise, its supporting members cross voted, leading to G V Mavalankar's election by a margin of three votes. Government was incensed and wanted to examine the ballot papers to identify which of its members had voted Mavalankar. Anticipating such an eventuality Assembly secretary destroyed ballot papers.

In a parliamentary democracy where Government is answerable to the legislature, a non-partisan speaker is critical. It's one of the most challenging offices. It combines constitutional responsibility with a political milestone. When the electoral verdict is that of a majority government, speaker has to ensure adequate space for minority voices and not allow the government to ride roughshod over them.

· In a coalition scenario, speakers are under pressure from their party to secure government's continuity and ensure the passage of its legislative business. Speakers have to walk a fine line, where they are not with any side but belong to the entire house. In both these situations, speaker must ensure that the House fulfils the Constitutional mandate of a deliberative legislature.

In 1952, when Mavalankar became the Speaker of the first Lok Sabha, he started the convention to ensure Speaker's impartiality. In his acceptance speech as Speaker, he highlighted the British convention about Speak-

**By: Harihar Swarup** ership, "the principle of which is that, once a speaker, he is not opposed by any party in the matter of his election, whether in the Constituency or in the house, so long as he wishes to continue as Speaker".

He championed this issue in parliamentary forums and pushed it with Congress party. The party, however, felt that "this was not a feasible proposition for the present in view of other political parties being involved in the question. "Since then the practice has been that political parties come to a consensus, and speaker (usually from the majority party is elected unanimously)".

Part of the consensus-building exercise is that the post of Deputy Speaker often goes to opposition benches.

Over the years, the job of the Speaker has become more complex and contentious. His responsibility is to conduct the proceedings of the House on the colonial principle that Government will decide agenda for the debate in the national legislature. The rules of both the houses of Parliament also prescribe that Govt. business also takes priority. As if this were not enough in 1985, the anti-defection law gave Speakers powers to decide on the party whip and for anti-party activities. They could now make or break parties and ruling govern-

Some of these structural issues have become more prominent now. They have led to successive governments shying away from uncomfortable debate in Parliament, and ministers are requesting the Speaker to exercise his/her discretion in fast-tracking government business through LS Limited space for Opposition and inadequate scrutiny of government bills by parliamentary committees have become a bone of contention between Government and the Opposition benches. Speaker's decisions in state assemblies under anti- defection law have also tainted the office. There is apprehension that some of the unhealthy practices in states might find their way to parliament. (IPA Service)

# Global research rankings: India's position slips

ndia is currently grappling with its severest educational crisis to date in higher education. The integrity of admission tests for medical colleges and research institutions has been severely compromised due to widespread question paper leaks. This includes crucial exams like the national fellowship qualifying tests for research roles in national laboratories and teaching positions in science at universities. Institutions of high repute such as the Indian Institute of Science and the Indian Institutes of Technology heavily rely on the National Eligibility Test (NET) to recruit aspiring research scholars. The reliability and timely administration of these exams directly impact the future trajectory of higher education and research endeavors across the

As the Central Government and its agencies grapple with unprecedented challenges, India finds itself falling far behind China in the rapidly evolving global research landscape. Recent declarations by prestigious publications such as Nature and The Economist have underscored China's ascendance as a dominant force in global research and science. Despite India's historic pride in its significant science and technology workforce, boasting the world's thirdlargest, and achievements in critical sectors like atomic energy, space, and vaccine development, However, at the institutional the tide is turning. China now not only outpaces India but also surpasses the US and Europe in key sectors and crucial metrics such

as scientific paper publications. A nation's strength in science and technology hinges on the robustness of its higher education and research infrastructure, and its capacity to generate top-tier research. This output is gauged through various metrics such as scientific publications, patents, prestigious awards like the Nobel Prize, industry technology transfers, and societal contributions. Nature's annual ranking of research leaders fo-

primary criterion, evaluating 500 institutions based on their output of high-quality research in the previous calendar year (January 1 to December 31, 2023). This list serves as a benchmark for institutional research performance, drawing from 145 esteemed natural and health science journals chosen by a panel of independent scientists.

cuses on research

publication as the

China leads the world in research output, surpassing major nations like the US, Germany, the UK, Japan, France, Canada, and South Korea. India holds the ninth position, a commendable feat in global high-quality research, with a slightly higher increase in share compared to China from the previous year. entific and Innovative Research

level, India's performance dims significantly. Among the top 10 scientific institutions globally, seven hail from China. The remaining spots are occupied by Harvard (2nd), Max Planck Society (3rd), and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (7th). MIT and Stanford University hold the 14th and 15th positions, respectively, while the Chinese Academy of

Sciences leads the rankings. In the ranking of the top 500 research institutions, Indian universities occupy much lower positions. The Indian Institute of DEGREE OF THOUGHT Science stands at 174, followed by

IIT-Bombay at

Dipak Kurmi 247. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) as a whole is ranked 275, while the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research is at 283. The Homi Bhabha National Institute comes in at 296, and the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata is placed at 321. Other Indian institutions in the list include IIT Guwahati (355), the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (363), IISER-Bhopal (379), IIT-Kanpur (405), IIT-Madras (407), IIT-Delhi (428), IISER Pune (439), Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Ad-

China leads globally in physical sciences, chemistry, and earth and environmental sciences, while the US and Europe maintain their dominance in general biology and medical research. Chinese research excels particularly in applied sciences, supported by significant investments in large-scale projects like the world's largest radio telescope and a substantial underground dark-matter detector. Chinese laboratories also lead in quantum computing research. In space exploration, China maintains a significant lead over India, having achieved milestones such as its first manned spaceflight in 2003 and ongoing efforts to establish a

the Moon India faces a pivotal moment in responding to China's recognition as a science superpower or global research leader. While the government has previously chosen to dismiss such rankings or critique their methodologies over the past decade, this approach offers only temporary respite. It does little to address the underlying challenges or reshape global perceptions of Indian science.

space station. Recently, China

successfully conducted a robotic

mission to return samples from

A more prudent approach would be for India to acknowledge its place among the top 10 countries in research and focus on further improving its standing.

It's crucial to analyze China's successes and failures objectively. China's significant investments in initiatives like the China Nine League and Project 211 have propelled its universities and government labs to global prominence. In India, initiatives like the establishment of IISERs as research-focused universities have been fruitful, but there's a pressing need to enhance research capabilities in mid-tier universities. China's approach of incentivizing cash rewards for research paper publications has led to ethical concerns and should serve as a cautionary tale for India to avoid similar pitfalls.

There is growing concern over the stagnation across various fronts in India: from the insufficient research funding as a percentage of GDP to outdated funding mechanisms and inadequate creation of new research institutions. Equally troubling is the perceived inertia among key institutions tasked with fostering innovation and intellectual discourse-national science academies, the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser, and technology forecasting agencies seem either dormant or preoccupied with ceremonial functions rather than substantive initiatives. Reports highlighting China's ascendancy in science should jolt India into urgent action. (The writer can be reached at dipakkurmiglpltd@gmail.com)

### The form of poverty under capitalism has many dimensions

vanced Scientific Research

(450), and the Academy of Sci-

By: Prabhat Patnaik

overty is taken to be a homogeneous phenomenon irrespective of the mode of production that is under consideration. Even reputed economists believe in this homogeneous conception of poverty. In fact, however, poverty under capitalism is entirely different from poverty in pre-capitalist times. Even if for statistical purposes poverty is defined as lack of access to a set of use-values that are essential for living irrespective of the mode of production, the fact remains that this lack is enmeshed under capitalism within a set of social relationships that are sui generis and different from earlier. Poverty under capitalism thus takes a specific form associated with insecurity and indignity that makes it particularly unbearable

There are roughly four proximate features of capitalist poverty. The first arises from the inviolability of contracts, which means that irrespective of their conditions, the poor have to pay whatever they are contracted to pay; this leads to a loss of assets or destitution. In pre-capitalist times, for instance in Mughal India, revduce; this meant that in years of poor harvest, the revenue claims on the peasants got automatically scaled down; put differently, the burden of the poor harvest got shared among the producers and the

But in colonial India, reflecting its capitalist ethos, the tax got levied on land; the contract between the producer and the overlord changed: the producer would be allowed to cultivate a plot of land provided he paid a certain amount of revenue to the State. This meant that in a poor harvest year, the burden of the poor harvest was not shared and fell exclusively on the

producer. The contract in other words was for a fixed amount of money payment, not for a variable amount of payment, as a share of the produce or its equivalent in money form. The destitution of the peasantry. that is, the transfer of peasants' assets to money lenders followed from this. Poverty in short was associated with destitution which therefore tended to have a

cumulative impact on the producers.

Put differently, the "flow" lack of access to use-values on the part of the producers was accompanied by a process of their "stock" deprivation of assets which meant an increase in their vulnerability over time. There was thus a dynamics introduced into poverty.

The second feature of capitalist poverty is that it is experienced by individuals, whether individual persons or households. In a pre-capitalist society where people lived in communities, other members of the community, whether belonging to the same caste-group or simply to the same village, came to the help of the poor in particular years of bad harvests or natural calamities. Privations in other words were not suffered in isolation. Under capitalism however when the communities are broken up because of the inexorable logic of the system, and the individual emerges as the primary economic category, this individual also suffers privations in isolation.

Non-Marxist traditions in economic theory fail to see this basic change because they are bereft of any sense of history. Marx had accused classical economics of this blindness towards history: the individual that emerged only at a certain point in history was taken by it as having existed all along.

Neo-classical economics starting with Carl Menger and Stanley Jevons, which began around 1870, of course apotheosised the individual, taking the individual as an eternal category and its point of departure for economic analysis. Both strands therefore missed the contrast between capitalist poverty and precapitalist poverty, the former experienced by isolated and alienated individuals and the latter referring only to the deprivation suffered within a community and hence to a sharing of deprivation.

The fact that capitalism is characterised by alienated individuals (until they form "combinations" or trade unions which bring them together in common struggles against the system) and that it is these individuals who experience poverty, gives poverty an additional dimension; it is not just the lack of access to a set of use-values that constitutes capitalist poverty but also a psychological trauma that goes with this lack of access.

This becomes clearer when we look at the third feature of capitalist poverty. It arises for two reasons: one is the low wages of those employed, and the other is the absence of employment. It is the reserve army of labour that is particularly afflicted by poverty. In fact in economies like ours where the "employed" and the "unemployed" are not two distinct categories, but most workers barring a tiny minority are unemployed for several days in a week or several hours in a day, the psychological trauma associated with poverty arising from the inability to find employment, is all the more pervasive. The lack of employment appears as a personal failure on the part of the individual, as something that saps the individual's self-worth, apart from causing lack of access to a given set of use-values.

The fourth feature of capitalist poverty is the opacity to those afflicted by it of the factors causing it. Poverty in the sense of a lack of access to a given set of use-values in a pre-capitalist society is palpably rooted in the size of what is produced and in the share taken from it by the overlord. Indeed this is visible to everyone: a bad harvest may reduce the size of the produce and hence accentuate poverty (even when the reduction in output is shared): likewise a rapacious overlord may snatch so much from the producers that many of them are reduced to poverty even in normal harvest years.

But why a person remains unemployed and hence poor under capitalist conditions remains a mystery to the person himself. Likewise, why prices suddenly rise, pushing more people into poverty, remains a mystery to those afflicted.

Satyajit Ray's film about the 1943 Bengal famine (Distant Thunder) shows, in the run up to the famine, prices rising in Bengal even as the Japanese troops occupy Singapore. The war in Ukraine today certainly contributes to the worldwide rise in food prices that accentuates poverty even in a remote African or Indian village. The apparent opacity of the roots of capitalist poverty is linked to the phenomenon of global inter-connectedness under capitalism; that is, to the fact that global developments, developments

in distant lands, have an impact on every village, no matter how remote.

These specific features of capitalist poverty have important implications, of which I shall draw attention to only one. Many well-intentioned persons, who would like to reduce or eliminate poverty, suggest that transfers from the government budget should be made, so that everybody in society has a basic minimum income. This of course has not happened on the requisite scale anywhere, so that poverty continues as a social phenomenon and is even getting accentuated because of the world-wide food price inflation alongside the recession caused by neo-liberal capitalism; even suggestions for transfers are invariably for somewhat paltry transfers. But all this refers to poverty in the sense of inadequate access to a set of use-values, that is, poverty that does not refer specifically to capitalist

Even if sufficient transfers could be made and poverty in the sense of lack of access to use-values could be overcome, that still would not overcome capitalist poverty which also entails a psychological trauma, a robbing of self-worth through unemployment.

Overcoming capitalist poverty in this true sense requires inter alia the provision of universal employment. Keynes had thought that this could be done under capitalism, but he has been proved wrong. This is not to suggest that transfers should not be made; but they are simply insufficient, palliatives that do not go to the root of the problem.

In India likewise five kilogrammes of free foodgrains per head per month are currently being provided to about 80 crore beneficiaries. How much of this reaches them, how long this scheme will continue (it was started because of the pandemic) are moot points. But anyone who believes that schemes like this constitute the panacea for poverty in contemporary India is sadly mistaken. What is required is the universal provision of employment. education, healthcare, old-age security, and food, that would restore to people the dignity of being citizens of a democratic society; but this would involve going beyond neo-liberal capitalism. (IPA Service)

### NATO's new secretary general is expected to be tougher with President Putin

By: Girish Linganna

Wednesday (June 26), NATO selected Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as its new leader. This decision comes amid the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and uncertainties about the future role of the United States in the alliance, according to reports from Reuters and AFP. Rutte's selection was finalized after Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, his only competitor, withdrew from the race last week because he could not gather enough support. Rutte strengthened his campaign to become NATO's new leader last year by coleading an international coalition that will provide F-16

fighters to Ukraine and train Ukrainian pilots. Rutte will begin his new role on October 1, taking over from Jens Stoltenberg of Norway, who has held the position for 10 years. Rutte has been a strong critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin and a firm supporter of Ukraine. He has gained extensive experience in political negotiations during his almost 14 years as the Dutch prime minister.

At 57, Rutte has played a key role in pushing for Europe's military support for Ukraine since Russia invaded it in 2022. He believes defeating Moscow on the battlefield is essential for achieving peace in Europe.

Rutte's perspective is strongly shaped by the 2014 downing of an airliner over Ukraine with 196 Dutch victims among the 298 killed, an incident the Netherlands holds Russia responsible for. He emphasised that NATO should be strong enough to challenge Moscow and warned other European Union leaders against naivete

about Putin's Russia, according to the South China Morning Post.

In September 2022, seven months after Russia's fullscale invasion, Rutte had told the United Nations, that if they did not stop Putin right away, he would not stop at Ukraine. This war was about more than just Ukraine: it was about upholding international law.

Rutte became the Dutch prime minister in 2010 and, eventually, the longest-serving one before announcing last year that he would leave national politics. After the MH17 flight, en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, was struck by a Buk missile and shot down over eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014, he shifted from focusing mainly on domestic issues to becoming a key player in the EU, significantly influencing discussions on immigration, debt and the Covid-19 response.

Under his leadership, the Netherlands has boosted its defence budget to meet the NATO requirement of spending over 2% of its GDP. The country has supplied F-16 fighter jets, artillery, drones and ammunition to Kyiv, while also making significant investments in its own

Rutte strongly supports Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, whom he remembered meeting in Kyiv five years ago. In his final months in office, Rutte also signed a 10-year security agreement with Ukraine, ensuring Dutch support despite criticism from far-Right leader and election winner Geert Wilders. Rutte has built strong connections with different leaders from the UK

Many people think he was especially good at working

with US President Donald Trump, who is running for re-election. Rutte, who is known as 'The Trump Whisperer' for his skill in handling former US President Donald Trump, is often praised for saving a 2018 NATO summit by persuading Trump on defence spending and displayed typical Dutch straightforwardness by openly disagreeing with the president in the Oval Office.

In a moment that later went viral, Trump said it would be "positive" whether or not the EU and the US reached a trade deal. Rutte, who was visiting, laughed and interrupted, saying, "No! It's not positive. We need to figure something out.'

This experience might be important because the possibility of Trump returning has worried NATO leaders. The former president had previously questioned whether the US would help defend other members if they were attacked

At last year's Munich Security Conference, Rutte advised leaders to stop "complaining about Trump" and focus on increasing their spending on defence and ammunition production, no matter who wins the US election. Rutte believed Zelensky had a mission and that Ukraine's advancement was largely due to his mindset. On Wednesday, June 26, Kyiv congratulated Rutte on his appointment, while Russian forces reported steady

progress in eastern Ukraine. At the same time, despite cautioning about the threat from Putin, he indicated that the Russian supremo might not be as powerful as he seemed. Kremlin, however, has stated that Rutte's new role would not change equations for Russia and NATO was still an enemy. (IPA Service)

# Fifty years of Lucy, the marvellous ancestor

MISCELLANEOUS

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2024

he Institute of Human Origins at Arizona State University is celebrating this year as a 'Year of Human Origins' because 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the discovery of 'Lucy'. The discussions on human origins and Lucy provokes one to seriously think about human life and where we

Who is Lucy? What does she have to do with the idea of human origins?

When then US President Barack Obama visited Ethiopia in 2015 and had a chance to see the Lucy skeleton in the museum, The Guardian reported it as Obama meets Lucy, the grandmother of humanity. The paleo-anthropologist giving him the tour explained that all human beings are connected to Lucy, "even Donald

Lucy is a unique specimen which provides a tangible proof for Charles Darwin's thesis on human evolution, who argued that humans are "descended from some less highly organised form", probably from "a hairy, tailed quadruped" living on trees. In his theory of evolution, Darwin had proposed that humans and African apes might share a common

On November 24, 1974 at the site of Hadar in Ethiopia, Donald Johanson and his team found several fragments of bones: a forearm bone, skull, a femur (thigh bone), some ribs, a pelvis and the lower jaw. It took a week to recover 40% of a single hominid skeleton. This rather incomplete skeleton paleoanthropologists because of its rarity is considered an extraordinar-

ily complete skeleton. Using several methods of dating it was situated at around 3.18 million vears old. In life it would have stood about three-and-a-half feet tall, and weighed about 27 to 30 kg. Through

a comparison of size from other sexually dimorphic fossils from Hadar, it was argued that the skeleton is of a female. The arrangement of bones suggested bipedality and led one to believe that it belongs to hominids

Hominids are the species after human/African ape ancestral split which includes varied species, sapiens being only one of them. Thus the importance of Lucy is her being the common ancestor to a group of species that all died out (different varieties of hominins), but also an ancestor to the lineage that ultimately led to us (homo sapiens).

Following Darwin's understanding and these discoveries, over the past few years, academics and social scientists all over the world have been inspired by the idea of decentering our understanding of history and society from the human species. Efforts have been made in trying to expand our understanding of the world as a connected ecosystem where us humans are pretty late entrants and our existence can only make sense in relationship to other species and ecological factors. In this vein, this year is important.

Why it is important to highlight Lucy's provenance, and a few other questions

For most of the modestly educated eople in our country, the name 'Ethiopia' would hardly ring a bell. If you are a part of the tip of the iceberg that can afford private school where general knowledge books published by Oxford or Orient Longman are prescribed, it is more likely that you would be familiar with the country which was erstwhile Abyssinia. If you are further up in the miniscule tip and like to call yourself a connoisseur of coffee, you might be familiar with Ethiopia as the land where coffee originated. The chances that we could locate Ethiopia correctly on the world map

For a large section of our society,

Ethiopia specifically, and the African continent generally, are either objects of indifference or of disdain, not only for the uninitiated but even for those who study the world, its history, geography or polity. And while we live in a world, and a nation, that has historically been disturbingly obsessed with an association with fairness of skin, (global) northern-ness of location and aryan-ity of race, the historical legacy of the A.L. 288 (site in Ethiopia where Lucy's skeletons were found) of the Ethiopian Afar beckons us to really take a hard look at our connected roots.

From the single ulna to a partial hominid, Lucy, as she is commonly known, became the woman who shook up man's family tree in 1974. The discovery by Donald Johanson and his doctoral student Tom Gray, came on a dusty, warm November afternoon which was marked by the routine of tedious paperwork, quacking guinea fowls and a Land Rover that marked the Ethiopian territory with an unmistakable American

And the fragments of our long lost forebear having been discovered, the immensity of the find having kicked in, it was the Beatles's Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band and a Sony tape deck that threw up the name Lucy.

Johanson, in his story of that day, reminisces that he smiled "politely" at this naming suggested by his girlfriend Pamela Alderman. And while he felt discomfort at this anglophonic christening of the earliest 'spokeswoman" of human history, and while Bekele Negussie, the director general of the Ministry of Culture of Ethiopia, suggested that this ancient woman be named per the geographical location of her discovery, the name Lucy caught on.

It was this name that appeared in popular media including crossword puzzles, cartoons and innumerable documentaries. Interestingly, it also

happened to be the name which caught on in the popular parlance in Africa. As Johanson mentions in his book Lucy's Legacy: The Quest for Human Origins, everything from African Red Bush Tazo Tea bags to coffee shops, rock bands, magazines as well as an entire soccer tournament were found named after our very own Lucy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital.

Not only Ethiopia, but also the US seems to be amply replete with coffee shops and cafes named after Lucy. And while the name caught the imagination not only of the anglophones but of interested peoples all over the world, and while the Arizona State University Institute of Human Origins celebrates the 50 year anniversary of the discovery of Lucy with a very glorious line-up of public talks and conversations, the celebration should be more than one institution's and should be a moment of collective reflection and scrutiny across the world.

The momentousness of the discovery of Lucy, a cardinal juncture that pegged firmly our existence in the scientific idea of evolution, cannot and must not be undermined. Lucy stands tall (figuratively alone!) as a testament to the importance and relevance of evidence-based research and intellectual rigour which historians have been trying to preserve against right-wing, extremist ideas of creationism being peddled across the world at this juncture.

The knowledge about Lucy must not be stored in crypts or museums alone, or must not be a joyous moment for a certain community of intellectuals in the United States alone. Lucy's identity is imprinted upon our survival as human beings even 3.2 million years after her demise, and not only of our survival but of our eventual common ancestry.

While racial discriminations and anti-blackness mark the global canvas, and more so in our country

promptly used, anti-blackness is rampant and racism is literally found in all shapes, sizes and colours, the very knowledge of a common ancestry going back to Africa is not only educative but also remarkably humbling. In a time when WhatsApp forwards have become the be all and end all of information gathering for the majority of this country, to disseminate knowledge about our connected roots and evidence-based past narratives is nothing if not imperative.

Lucy's 50th anniversary is an opportunity to reflect and reorganise, especially for the community of historians. While it is absolutely justified to celebrate this occasion and to congratulate the University of Arizona and Johanson for their contribution to the field, some concerns remain, some questions must worry us - why is Africa, Ethiopia, despite being our most likely common ancestral land, such a distant name for us? Why, even for the elites of our society, is Arizona more familiar than Ethiopia? Why is our education system not inclusive of political actors who belong to the third world?

How do we make Lucy a more familiar name with the public? In what register do we remember people like Ali Axinum, the local guide who led the American archaeologists through the ever changing sands of Africa, who are are lost from the records? And most importantly, how do we bring back the name Dinkinesh, the Ethiopian name for Lucy which meant "you are marvellous"

In India, the decision to delete the evolution theory of Darwin from the NCERT textbooks is to also deprive ourselves and future generations of this breakthrough in understanding our past. Discussing and celebrating Lucy's discovery is to counter rampant anti-intellectualism and to reassert the spirit of scientificity in our

Lucy reminds us that Ethiopia and adjacent regions are the sites of evolutionary drama out of which our human species emerged and spread at different places at different points

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Archaeologists and historians have meticulously researched to argue that historically in the deep past our species migrated out of Africa in different directions. One such branch reached India as well. The study of old DNAs too have proved such migratory patterns. This simple fact of our common link to Africa silences all whining and shouting of pseudo-nationalists who keep announcing later migrants to the land as outsiders.

The socio-political questions and conversations that Lucy provokes reach far beyond the distant past. They are conversations that, like all historical discoveries, affect our present. Lucy and our relationship with her is a key to gaining perspective on how to live in a highly fractured and war-torn world today. Our knowledge of the deep past makes us marvel at our common fate as a part of a larger system of existence and erosion, both in the past and in the future.

In the end we would like to reassert the vastness and commonness of the past which is often humbling. We find universality in it. A universality which offers us possibilities as far reaching as slowly merging into the world of other animals. We become them. As we move into the deep past, our many anthropocentric endogamy(ies) end in Claude Levi Strausse's 'true endogamy of human species', which is merely a 'refusal to recognise the possibility of marriage beyond the limits of the human community'

Theoretically, of course. And if we go further back in the past we end up close to apes. Such a synergistic concept, connecting us to intra and inter species immediately disturbs our deeply entrenched ideas of caste, race, gendered and other segregations. (Courtesy: The Wire)

## Medical myths: All about weight loss

uring the holiday season, many people take on more calories than they work off. Consequently, adding a little extra weight at this time of year is not unusual.

Classically, January is a time of change, and many people go on health kicks that include weight loss. With that in mind, we address some common misconceptions.

1. Skipping breakfast aids weigh loss The common adage that breakfast is the

most important meal of the day may or may not be true, but it seems unlikely that skipping the morning meal aids weight loss. The rationale behind this strategy is that

missing one meal a day leads to a lower overall intake of calories. However, the story is not so straightforward.

One study, published in 2010, analyzed food intake information from 2.184 people aged 9-15 years. Twenty years later, the researchers asked for the same information

They compared data from people who had skipped breakfast during childhood and adulthood with data from those who had never skipped breakfast or had done so only in adulthood

Compared with the other groups, the participants who skipped breakfast during both childhood and adulthood tended to have larger waist circumferences, higher fasting insulin levels, and higher total cholesterol levels.

Sometimes, people who skip breakfast eat more during the rest of the day to counteract the deficit. But one 2013 study found that missing breakfast does not lead to eating more at lunch. The authors conclude that "Skipping breakfast may be an effective means to reduce daily energy intake in some adults.'

However, these researchers only monitored the participants' food intake at lunch, not dinner. And the study only included 24 participants, so we should be wary of drawing solid conclusions from the findings.

A much larger 2007 study, which involved more than 25,000 adolescents, looked for links between skipping breakfast and having overweight. The researchers also assessed the roles of alcohol intake and levels of inactiv-

ity.

The scientists found that skipping breakfast had a stronger association with overweight than either alcohol consumption or levels of

A 2020 systematic review and meta-analysis that appears in the journal Obesity Research & Clinical Practice concurs. After analyzing the results of 45 previous studies, the authors concluded: "Skipping breakfast is associated with overweight/obesity, and skipping breakfast increases the risk of overweight/obesity.

2. 'Fat-burning' foods can aid weight loss Certain foods are referred to as "fat-burning." This sounds too good to be true, and it probably is. Some people claim that foods such pineapple, ginger, onions, avocados, asparagus, celery, chilies, broccoli, green tea, and garlic speed up the body's metabolism,

thereby helping the body burn fat. There is little scientific evidence, however,

#### that these foods can help reduce weight. 3. Weight loss supplements can help

Proponents of certain supplements claim that they, too, help the body burn fat. In reality, these are generally ineffective, dangerous,

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) report that they have "found hundreds of products that are marketed as dietary supplements but actually contain hidden active in-

unsafe ingredients in drugs that have been removed from the market, or compounds that have not been adequately studied in humans." Jason Humbert, a senior regulatory manager at the FDA, adds:

'We've also found weight loss products marketed as supplements that contain dangerous concoctions of hidden ingredients, including active ingredients contained in approved seizure medications, blood pressure medications, and antidepressants.

4. Low fat foods aid weight loss

Of course, reduced fat or low fat foods are likely to contain less fat. However, these products sometimes compensate with added sugar or salt. Checking labeling is key.

Also, it is worth noting that "reduced fat" does not necessarily mean "low fat," but simply that the fat content of a product is lower than the full-fat version.

5. Thou shalt not snack

People may believe that snacking is a cardinal sin of dieting. In some cases, though, snacking can help people manage their caloric intake more effectively. It is not so much snacking itself, but what one snacks upon that that counts.

Snacking may be more complex than it first appears. While some snack on celery and others on cookies, some people might snack because they are hungry and others because they are bored.

Having a piece of fruit or some low fat yogurt between meals, for instance, might reduce food cravings, keeping a person from overeating at mealtimes or resorting to more energy-dense snacks. Some research has shown that people with obesity are more likely to snack than people without the condition. In this case, switching from unhealthful to healthful snacks may aid in weight loss, if this is a goal.

In general, snacking is multifaceted - it may support or hinder weight loss efforts, and in some cases it may have little effect.

Older research, from 2007, investigated the role of snacking in weight loss. In the yearlong study, the researchers asked one group of participants to have three meals a day, without snacking. A second group was asked to have three meals and three snacks daily. Individuals in both groups consumed equivalent amounts of energy each day.

At the end of the study, the authors found no difference in weight loss between the two groups; snacking, it seems, neither helped nor

Another study, from 2011, investigated the "relationship between eating frequency and weight loss maintenance." The researchers recruited participants who had previously had overweight or obesity but who had since

maintained healthy weights. They compared these individuals' eating patterns with those of people with obesity and people with healthy weights who had never had overweight.

The team found that participants with healthy weights ate more snacks than those who had lost weight - and that people with overweight ate the fewest snacks. Overall, the authors concluded that "Eating frequency, particularly in regard to a pattern of three meals and two snacks per day, may be important in weight loss maintenance."

6. No treats allowed

This follows on from the myth above. Of course, limiting sugary, high fat treats is important, but cutting them out entirely is unnecessary and could be counterproductive.

As the British Heart Foundation explain: "Depriving yourself of all the foods you enjoy

tation and abandon your efforts. There's no harm in allowing yourself a treat now and again.'

7. Some sugars are worse than others

There is a rumor that minimally processed sugars, such as those in maple syrup or honey, are more healthful than white sugar. In reality, our bodies process sugar in the same way - regardless of its source. The gut reduces all sugars into monosaccharides.

Rather than looking at sugar processing, it is more important to note the amount of sugar in any food. All types of sugar provide around

4 calories per gram. 8. Cut out all sugar

Following on from the myth above, we know that all sugar is high in calories. However, a person looking to lose weight does not need to mercilessly cut sugar from their diet. As with all things, moderation is key. It may

instead be a good idea to avoid products with

9. Artificial sweeteners are healthful To lower their sugar intakes, many people opt for low- or no-calorie sweeteners, such as aspartame. This may reduce the number of

calories consumed, but some studies have linked artificial, or nonnutritive, sweeteners A systematic review and meta-analysis published in 2017 analyzed 37 existing studies involving a total of 406,910 participants to

investigate the impact of sweeteners on cardiometabolic health. According to the researchers, "Observational data suggest that routine intake of nonnutritive sweeteners may be associated with increased BMI [body mass index] and car-

diometabolic risk. However, not all studies have reached this conclusion. Researchers and health experts continue to discuss the effects of nonnutritive sweeteners on weight loss and metabolic

10. You can target fat in specific areas

Some people are particularly keen to lose fat from certain areas, such as the thighs or abdomen. In reality, this targeting is not possible. All bodies respond differently to weight loss, and we cannot choose which bits of fat will go first. However, if weight loss is paired with exercises to tone a particular area, it can give the impression of more region-specific weight loss.

11. This fad diet is excellent

Vast legions of diets have become fashionable only to fade into obscurity, making room for more. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) explain in a nutshell: "[Fad] diets limit your nutritional intake, can be unhealthy, and tend to fail in the long run."

The take-home Overall, losing weight can be challenging. Our bodies evolved during leaner times, so they are primed to take on energy and store it. However, many of us live in a world where calories are readily available, and our bodies still store this energy as if it's going out of fashion.

In general, reducing the caloric intake and exercising is the most reliable approach to weight loss. With that said, people with chronic diseases, including diabetes and obesity, should speak with their doctors before beginning a new weight loss regime.

It is also worth remembering that if anything seems too good to be true, it probably is - any "weight loss miracle" is unlikely to be miraculous. Most foods are not inherently unhealthful, but it is a good idea to consume high-sugar and high-fat foods sparingly. (Courtesy: Medical News Today)

### It's not easy to spot lies - and those good at lying know how to exploit these blindspots



**By: Geoff Beattie** 

You don't have to be in the middle of an election campaign to be concerned about your ability to spot a lie. Psychology research suggests people lie at least once a day.

A 2006 review of 206 papers found that we are little better then chance at guessing whether something is a lie or not, 54% to be exact. Some lies are told to make others feel

better. I wouldn't mind if someone wanted to tell me, "You're such a brilliant psychologist." Most lies however, are for the benefit of the person telling the lie. We learn to lie young, typically between

the ages of two and three. More successful lying in childhood takes a little longer and requires a more developed ability to understand others' mental states. You also need good working memory to

be convincing, so that you can remember the lie. Brighter children seem to lie most often and most selfishly.

By adulthood we are, it seems, well practised.

There are no tell-tale signs of lying per se, but there may be indicators of negative emotion associated with telling a lie (anxiety, guilt, shame, sadness, fear of being caught) even when the liar is trying to conceal them.

These sometimes leak out in micro-expressions, brief facial expressions lasting a fraction of a second or squelched expressions where the liar covers the emotion with a mask, usually a fake smile.

You can tell a fake smile because it doesn't involve the muscles around the eyes and leaves the face quickly. Genuine smiles fade more slowly. But the thing about possible nonverbal indicators of deception is most of us would need to replay the behaviour in slow motion to spot them.

Facing up to the truth But what about avoiding eye contact,

My mother always said that she could tell when I was lying because I couldn't look her in the eye. She would move closer and ask what I'd been up to the night before. Eye contact is not a useful indicator of deception. Eve contact is affected by our

cognitive activity even when we're telling the truth. For instance, by planning our speech or accessing memory. Also, we all know that's what people look out for. And liars know to control it.

believed globally to be a deception cue.

Good liars can maintain eve contact when lying by planning their lie in advance and

truth and real situations.

Eye contact is also affected by interpersonal distance. It's difficult to maintain eye contact when someone is sitting closeup and staring at you (like my mother). This is the intimacy equilibrium model.

Certain behaviours signal intimacy, like distance, eye contact and topic of conversation. If interpersonal distance changes, we balance this by unconsciously moderating the others. So when my mother moved in for the interrogation. I looked away and she got the evidence she was looking for.

This is a type of confirmation bias. It's not just that you look for evidence to confirm your hypothesis, you unconsciously influence the very behaviour you're look-

This doesn't just apply to my mother. A 1978 study suggested that police officers in interrogations move closer to suspects they think are guilty. The suspect looks away, and ... guilty as charged! Observers don't notice the changed distance.

But confirmation bias isn't just about seating arrangement. We make instant and unconscious judgements of trustworthiness in a face quickly in everyday life (about one-tenth of a second). Once we've decided that someone looks trustworthy, we may unconsciously search less for cues

Lie detection is fraught with biases and good liars know how to exploit them. They know what we're looking out for and that's what they control. Good eye contact, masking smile, well-prepared speech with few hesitations. They can also convince themselves of the essential truth of the lie. Self-deceit reduces any emotional response.

For my new book Lies, Lying and Liars: A Psychological Analysis I studied many expert liars and how they use our intuition against us. For example, in judging a lie we need a baseline of behaviour to detect

any deviations. Expert liars aim to disrupt this. One of my informants (with something to hide) said that when he was stopped by the police he pretended to be really angry and a

bit unstable to throw them off course. And then there's personality. There's no point in searching for micro-expressions of guilt, shame, sadness, or fear, if that's not how they feel inside. Some people enjoy lying. It's exciting, they don't care about the consequences. Any micro-expressions in these cases will be positive.

Not a bit of wonder expert liars feel embuilding their lies on fragments of the boldened. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

### China deploys aircraft carrier off Philippine coast amid tensions over South China Sea

BEIJING, July 1: China has deployed its second aircraft carrier 'Shandong' which was spotted patrolling waters off the Philippine coast as Manila stepped up efforts to assert its claims over a shoal in the disputed South China Sea firmly opposing Beijing's counter-

Shandong, an aircraft carrier with a displacement of about 70,000 tonnes, was seen patrolling the waters of the Philippines which serves as a deterrence against "continuous Philippine provocations" on Chinese islands and reefs in the South China Sea, state-run Global Times media reported on Mon-

day. aircraft carrier is likely on a scheduled exercise could also prepare it for a potential far sea voyage into the West Pacific: it

quoted Chinese experts as saying. Shandong's deployment comes

after the People's Liberation Army (PLA) deployed major surface combat ships, including large and medium destroyers as well as the main amphibious landing ship in the South China Sea as the maritime territorial conflict with Manila escalated.

Ni Lexiong, a defence professor in the Department of Political Science at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, was quoted by the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post as saying that the Shandong's passage was meant to be a deterrent to Manila and Washington and underline "China's determination to protect territorial sea sovereignty" amid tensions over the Second Thomas Shoal.

Chester Cabalza, president and founder of International Development and Security Cooperation, a Manila-based think tank, said the

powering a guard, officials said on Monday.

18 inmates flee from jail in PoK, 1 shot dead

ISLAMABAD, July 1: At least 18 dangerous criminals, including six

on death row, fled from a prison in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir after over-

The incident took place on Friday when an inmate of the Rawalakot

prison used a pistol to force a prison guard to get the keys to effect the

breakout. According to a police official, of the 18 prisoners who escaped,

Another prisoner was shot dead while escaping, the official said, adding

that he was serving a five-year sentence. Police have launched a massive

search operation in the area. Meanwhile, the authorities have launched a

probe into the incident and dismissed the prison's chief and some other

According to Samaa TV, seven officials, including the deputy superin-

tendent of Rawalakot Jail, have been detained and investigations into the

breach of security commenced. In response to the security lapse, all jails

across Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have been placed on high alert.

A judicial commission has been requested by the government to investi-

officers. Some officials have been arrested for questioning, police said.

six were on death row and another three were serving life sentences.

carrier's patrol was an example of "performative politics" by Beijing that could become a frequent event.

If so, it "would mean that there is a red flag on their national security", he said, adding that "once we see massive military force, that means that Beijing is preparing for a war", the Post reported.

The China-Philippines confrontation to assert their claims in the disputed South China Sea took a violent turn last month as their naval ships collided in the first such incident after Beijing issued new rules to act against foreign vessels and detain foreigners "suspected of

violating" regulations in the

Chinese waters. A few weeks ago, a Philippines naval ship and a Chinese vessel collided near the Second Thomas Shoal of the South China Sea claimed by

Manila.

The navies and the coast guards of the two countries were having face-offs in the last few months as the Philippines, backed by the US, made a strong bid to assert its claims over the Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea (SCS) claimed by China.

China claims most of the South China Sea (SCS) which the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and Taiwan hotly dispute.

China alleges that the Philippines deliberately ran a naval ship aground in 1999 at the Second Thomas Shoal, which it calls Renai Jiao, and converted the damaged ship into a permanent installation manned by naval personnel.

The Philippines, backed by the US, is trying to assert its claims over the SCS based on the 2016 ruling by a tribunal of the UN Convention of Law of Seas, (UNC-LOS) endorsing its rights. (PTI)

#### Macron, first elected in 2017, has said he will not step down before his second term expires in 2027

### French far right leads after legislative elections' 1st round but rivals hope to deny it a majority

Rally surged into the lead in the first round of legislative elections, according to results released early on Monday, bringing the far-right party to the brink of power and dealing a major blow to President Emmanuel Macron's centrists in an election that could set the country, and Europe, on a starkly different

The results confirmed polling that showed the party - with a history of racism and xenophobia and once shunned by the mainstream is no longer taboo, confined to the fringes of French politics. There remains another torrid week of campaigning before the decisive final voting Sunday, and whether the National Rally will be able to win an outright majority and form France's first far-right government since World War II remains uncer-

Marked by high turnout of nearly 68% that reflected the high stakes, voters handed the Marine Le Pen's National Rally a strong lead, with about 33% of the vote. The number includes the votes from a group of conservative canwho had allied with the far-right party in the first round. The New Popular Front, a leftist alliance, finished second with about 28%. The president's centrist group came third with around 20%, according to figures released by the Interior

When Macron dissolved the National Assembly on June 9, after a stinging defeat at the hands of the National Rally in French voting for the European Parliament, the deeply unpopular and weakened president gambled that his rivals wouldn't repeat that success when the country's own fate was in the He and his allies, as well as

politicians on the left, are still hoping they can head off an outright win by the National Rally, and horse-trading began Monday, with some efforts to block far-right candidates taking shape. The leftist coalition said it would withdraw its candidates in districts where they arrived in third position in order to support other politicians opposed to the far right. Macron's centrist alliance also said some of its can-

didates would step down before the

In Sunday's voting, 78 of the National Assembly's 577 seats were won outright, by candidates who got more than 50% of the vote in their district, according to French newspaper Liberation's analysis of the Interior Ministry data. Of those, 38 were from the National Rally, including Le Pen herself.

That triumph provided an additional boost for the far-right parties in Europe as Viktor Orbán's Hungary takes over the European Union's rotating presidency for six months. To underline her party's triumph, Le Pen said that National Rally lawmakers would meet at the parliament on Monday and symbolically claim their seats.

Addressing a jubilant crowd waving French tricolor flags of blue, white and red, Le Pen called on her supporters and voters who didn't back her party in the first round to push it over the line and give it a commanding legislative majority. That scenario would make the party's young leader, Jor-

an awkward power-sharing arrangement. Macron, first elected in 2017,

dan Bardella, prime minister —

and force him and and Macron into

has said he will not step down before his second term expires in

"The French have almost wiped out the 'Macronist' bloc," Le Pen said Sunday night. The results, she

If the National Rally is able to form a government, it has promised to dismantle many of Macron's key domestic and foreign policies, including taking a more confrontational approach to the European Union and stopping French deliveries of long-range missiles to Ukraine. The National Rally has historical ties to Russia, which invaded its neighbor two years ago.

At home, the party's plans include the rollback of Macron's pension reform that raised the retirement age and promises to boost voters' spending power without clearly detailing how it would pay for the pledge that could also spook European financial markets.

National Rally opponents fear for civil liberties if it takes power. Macron himself warned that the far right could set France on a path to civil war. Its plans to boost police powers and curb immigration also alarm many, including minorities. The National Rally has long been hostile toward France's Muslim community. (AP)

### North Korea launches a ballistic missile toward sea, after end of new US-South Korea-Japan drill

SEOUL, July 1: North Korea launched at least one short-range ballistic missile off its east coast on Monday, South Korea's military said, a day after the North vowed "offensive and overwhelming" responses to a new US military drill with South Korea and

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said the missile was launched from North Korea's southeastern town of Jangyon at 5.05 am. It said an additional, unidentified ballistic missile launch trajectory was detected 10 minutes later, a suggestion that North Korea might have performed two missile launches.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said South Korea's military has boosted its surveillance posture and is closely exchanging related information with the United States

The launch came two days after South Korea, the US and Japan ended their new multidomain trilateral drills in the region. In recent years, the three countries have been expanding their trilateral security partnership to better cope with North Korea's evolving nuclear threats and China's increasing assertiveness in the region.

The "Freedom Edge" drill was meant to increase the sophistication of previous exercises with simultaneous air and naval drills geared toward improving joint ballistic-missile defense, anti-submarine warfare, surveillance and other skills and capabilities. The three-day drill involved a



US aircraft carrier as well as destroyers, fighter jets and helicopters from the three

On Sunday, North Korea's Foreign Ministry issued a lengthy statement strongly denouncing the "Freedom Edge" drill, calling it an Asian version of NATO. It said the drill openly destroyed the security environment on the Korean Peninsula and contained a US intention to lay siege to China and exert pressure on Russia.

The statement said North Korea will "firmly defend the sovereignty, security and interests of the state and peace in the region through offensive and overwhelming countermeasures." Monday's launch was the North's first weapons firing in five

On Wednesday, North Korea launched what it called a multiwarhead missile in the first known launch of a developmental, advanced weapon meant to defeat US and

South Korean missile defences. North Korea said the launch was successful, but South Korea dismissed the North's claim as deception to cover up a failed launch.

In recent weeks, North Korea has also floated numerous trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea in what it has described as a tit-for-tat response to South Korean activists sending political leaflets via their own balloons. South Korea responded by briefly resuming its anti-Pyongyang frontline propaganda broadcasts for the first time in years.

In mid-June, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin struck a deal vowing mutual defence assistance if either is attacked. Observers say the pact could embolden Kim to launch more provocations at South Korea. The US, South Korea and others believe Pyongyang has been supplying conventional weapons to Russia for its war against Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance.

Meanwhile, North Korea opened a key ruling party meeting Friday to determine what it called "important, immediate issues" related to works to further enhance Korean-style socialism. On the meeting's second day, North Korea's leader spoke about "some deviations obstructing" efforts to improve the country's economic status and unspecified important tasks for resolving immediate policy issues, North Korea's state media reported Sunday. (AP)

#### Singapore's Indian-origin Oppn leader re-elected Secy-Gen of Workers' Party

SINGAPORE, July 1: Singapore's Indian-origin Leader of Opposition Pritam Singh has been reelected secretary-general of the Workers' Party (WP), ahead of the city-state's next general election. A total of 14 members, led by re-elected chairwoman Sylvia Lim, were voted into the Central Executive Committee (CEC) -- the top decisionmaking body of the Workers' Party (WP).

Singh, 48, was elected unopposed on Sunday. He has been WP's secretary-general since 2018. "Fantastic result. We're looking forward to

working with this CEC for the next two years," Singh told reporters.

"This wasn't about candidature, this was an internal party election, so my comments will be restricted to that," Channel News Asia quoted Singh

Media reports say the WP CEC, elected for two years, is set for the city-state's next general election, which has to be called by November 2025 but could be held earlier, sometime in November this

Singh was charged in court on March 19 for ying in Parliament about a case involving former WP member Raeesah Khan. (PTI)

#### Albania's world-renowned novelist Ismail Kadare dies at 88

TIRANA, July 1: Renowned Albanian novelist Ismail Kadare has died after being rushed to a hospital in Tirana, his publishing editor said on Monday. He was 88. Kadare has long been mentioned as a possible contender for the Nobel Literature

Onufri Publishing House editor Bujar Hudhri said the noted author died on Monday morning. A nurse at the hospital, who spoke on condition of anonymity because she was not authorised to talk to the press, said he was taken to the emergency room after suffering a cardiac arrest.

Kadare became internationally recognised after his novel "The General of the Dead Army" was published in 1963 when Albania was still governed by the communist government of late dictator Enver Hoxha. Kadare fled Albania to France in the fall of 1990, just a few months before the fall of the communist regime following student protests the previous December. He lived in Paris and had recently returned to Tirana.

Last year, French President Emmanuel Macron awarded him the Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor title during a visit by the French president to the Albanian capital. France had previously also made him a foreign associate of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, as well as Commander of the Legion of Honor.

Kadare has been awarded a number of international prizes for his works, which included more than 80 novels, plays, screenplays, poetry, essays and story collections translated into 45 languages.

#### gate the circumstances leading to the escape, the report said. (PTI) Australia appoints 2<sup>nd</sup> Israel releases director of hospital it says was used as a Hamas base woman governor-gen in KHAN YOUNIS (GAZA STRIP), July 1: Israel released the director of 123 years to represent

British monarch MELBOURNE, July 1: Australia The release of Mohammed Abu appointed Sam Mostyn on Monday as only its second woman governor-general, a largely ceremonial role representing the British monarch who is the

nation's head of state. It is the first such Australian appointment since the reign of King Charles III began in 2022 and the first by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's centre-left Labor Party government that wants to replace the British monarch with an Australian president as head of state. The businesswoman and gender equality advocate, who in 2005 became the first woman Australian Football League Commis-

sioner, was sworn in as Australia's 28th governor-general since 1901. In her first speech in her new role, Mostyn quoted Australia's first woman governor-general Quentin Bryce, who described her role in 2013 as "striking a balance between observing traditions and protocol and being thoroughly contemporary.'

"I will be an optimistic, modern and visible governor-general, committed to the service and contribution that all Australians expect and deserve from

the holder of this office," Mostyn said. Mostyn said she had spoken about the role with all five surviving former governors-general, including Bryce who was appointed by Queen Elizabeth II on the advice of a Labor prime minister and served from 2008 and 2014. Albanese's government was elected in 2022 advocating for a referendum to create an Australian republic with an Australian citizen as head of state.

But he gave preference to holding a referendum in his government's first three-year term to enshrine in the constitution an Indigenous panel that would advise the government on Indigenous issues.

That referendum was defeated last year and though Albanese has not yet announced plans for a republic referendum, the office of Assistant Minister for the Republic has been created to prepare the nation for change. (AP)

Gaza's main hospital on Monday, seven months after the military raided the facility over allegations it was being used as a Hamas command centre.

Selmia without charge or trial raised further questions about Israel's allegations regarding Shifa Hospital, which its forces have raided on two occasions since the start of its nearly nine-month war with Hamas. Abu Selmia said he and other prison-

ers had been tortured and held under harsh conditions, allegations that could not be independently confirmed but matched other accounts of Palestinian detainees who have been released back "Our detainees have been subjected to

all kinds of torture behind bars," he said. "There was almost daily torture. Cells are broken into and prisoners are beaten." He said guards broke his finger and caused his head to bleed during beatings, in which they used batons and



He said the medical staff at different facilities where he was held had also taken part in the abuse "in violation of all laws." He said some detainees had limbs amputated because of poor med-

Israeli officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment about why he had been released or his allegations of mistreatment. Prison authorities have previously denied such mistreating

Two far-right ministers in Israel's government meanwhile condemned Abu

Selmia's release, saying it had been carried out without their consent.

Israeli forces raided Shifa Hospital in November, alleging that Hamas had created an elaborate command and control centre inside the facility. Abu Selmia and other staff denied the allegations and accused Israel of recklessly endangering thousands of patients and displaced people who were sheltering there.

The military uncovered a tunnel beneath Shifa Hospital leading to a few rooms, as well as other evidence that militants had been present inside the medical centre, but the evidence fell short of what it had claimed before the Abu Selmia was detained on Nov 22

while escorting a UN-led evacuation of patients from the hospital. He said his detention was "politically motivated", adding that he had been brought to court at least three times but was never charged or allowed to meet with

Israel has since raided several other Gaza hospitals on similar allegations, forcing them to shut down or dramatically reduce services even as tens of thousands have been wounded in Israeli strikes or sickened in the harsh conditions of the war. The army raided Shifa a second time earlier this year, causing heavy destruction after saying that militants had regrouped there.

Hospitals can lose their protection under international law if combatants use them for military purposes.

Israel launched its offensive after Hamas' Oct 7 attack, in which Palestinian militants killed some 1,200 civilians and took another 250 hostage. The war has killed over 37,800 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or fighters.

Most of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have fled their homes, with many displaced multiple times. Israeli restrictions, ongoing fighting and the breakdown of public order have hindered the delivery of humanitarian aid, fuelling widespread hunger and sparking fears of

### Japan launches an advanced Earth observation North Koreans are seen wearing Kim Jong Un pins satellite on its new flagship H3 rocket



making

TOKYO, July 1: Japan deployed an upgraded Earth observation satellite for disaster response and security after it was launched on a new flagship H3 rocket on Monday.

The H3 No. 3 rocket lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Centre on a southwestern Japanese island and released its payload about 16 minutes later as planned, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA, said during a livestream.

The Advanced Land Observation Satellite, or ALOS-4, is

tasked primarily with Earth observation and data collection for disaster response and map-

It's also capable of monitoring military activity, such as missile launches, with an infrared sensor developed by the Defence Ministry.

The rocket appeared to fly as planned, and JAXA is expected to give further details at news conference later Monday. The launch was initially planned for Sunday but was delayed due to bad weather at the launch site

The ALOS-4 is a successor to the current ALOS-2 and can observe a much wider area. Japan will operate both for the

The launch was the third of the H3 system, after the successful one on February 17. and the shocking failed debut flight a year earlier when the rocket had to be destroyed with its payload - a satellite that was supposed to be the ALOS-3.

JAXA and its main contractor Mitsubishi Heavy Industries have been developing the H3 launch system as a successor to its current mainstay, H-2A, which is set to retire after two more flights.

MHI will eventually take over H3 production and launches from JAXA and hopes to make it commercially viable by cutting the launch cost to about half of the H-2A.

#### for the first time as his personality cult grows **SEOUL, July 1:** For the first time, but few images honouring the 40-year-

North Korean officials have been seen wearing lapel pins with the image of leader Kim Jong Un, another sign the North is boosting his personality cult to the level bestowed on his late dictator father and grandfather.

North Koreans are required to wear pins over their hearts which for decades bore images of either the country's founder, Kim Il Sung, or his son Kim Jong II, or both. The existence of pins dedicated to Kim Jong Un had not been verified until state media published photos on Sunday showing officials wearing his pins at a

ruling Workers' Party meeting. The pins are part of a state-sponsored mythology surrounding the Kim family which treats Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il like gods. They are memorialised with numerous statues across North Korea, their birthdays are two of the country's main holidays and their portraits are hung in all homes and offices. Few question current leader Kim Jong Un's hold on power,

old have been displayed in public since he took power in late 2011 upon his father's death. Recently, however, he has begun taking steps to build his own personality cult while also trying to further move out of the shadow of his father's and grandfather's legacies.

In May, his portrait was publicly displayed along with those of the two other Kims for the first time at a Workers' Partyrun training school. In January, Kim announced he will no longer pursue peace-

ful unification with South Korea, a decadeslong policy cherished by his father and grandfather. Observers also say North Korea appears to be refraining from using terms like "the Day of Sun," a reference to the April 15 birthday of Kim Il Sung. "The latest series of efforts to idolise Kim Jong Un is assessed as a move to dilute his prede-

cessors while establishing his authority as a leader" different from them, Kim Inae, a deputy spokesperson for South Korea's Unification Ministry, told reporters on Monday. She said Kim is also likely trying to boost internal solidary behind his leadership as he grapples with economic hardships

and the influence of South Korean pop culture. Ahn Kyung-su,

dprkhealth.org, a website focusing on health issues in North Korea, said Kim Jong Un is trying to phase out the symbols representing

the legacies of his predecessors to promote his own era. But as the third-generation leader in the Kim family, he will find it difficult to push too far because that would weaken the legitimacy of its dynastic rule, said Ahn, who has interviewed many North Korean defectors and closely monitors North Korean state media. (AP)



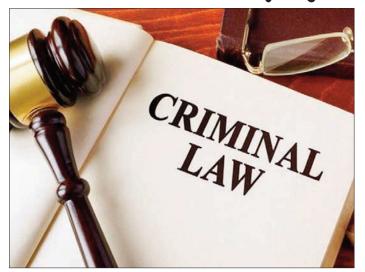
Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) replace colonial era laws

## Arunachal CM terms new criminal laws as 'watershed' moment in country's judicial history

ITANAGAR, July 1: With the new criminal laws coming into force on Monday, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu termed it a "watershed" moment in India's judicial history.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) replaced the colonial-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

"A watershed moment in India's judicial history as Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam come into force today, replacing the British-era IPC, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Indian Evidence Act." Khandu



the new laws as a farsighted move The Chief Minister described towards ensuring political, eco-

ensuring the timely completion of

"Registration of FIRs has been made much easier. The new Sanhitas are more sensible towards handling crimes against women. Gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji and Hon'ble Home Minister Shri @AmitShah ji for completely transforming the country's criminal justice system. @PMOIndia @HMOIndia," Khandu added.

Arunachal Pradesh will use the English and Hindi versions of the three new criminal laws since the state's people speak in "innumerable" dialects, officials said.

Officials and other individuals concerned are being trained on the new laws in English and Hindi.

# 1 missing after bridge collapses with truck in Manipur



IMPHAL, July 1: One person went missing as a Bailey bridge collapsed in Manipur's Imphal West district when a truck was

crossing it, officials said on Mon-

The incident happened at Mutum

rying firewood was crossing the bridge over the Imphal river, they

The truck fell into the river. Locals managed to rescue three persons who were travelling in the truck but the driver, identified as Md Borajao (45), went missing, they added.

A search was underway to find the driver, officials said.

"I have asked the officials concerned to submit an inquiry report within three days and to repair the bridge at the earliest. It seems the accident was because of a technical defect," said Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Y Khemc-

### 2 arrested, heroin worth ₹4 crore seized in North Tripura

AGARTALA, July 1: Two persons were arrested with heroin worth ₹ 4 crore in North Tripura's Bagbassa area, police said on

Acting on a tip-off, a vehicle that was coming from Mizoram was intercepted on the Assam-Agartala highway on Sunday, they

"During the search, 408 gram of heroin kept in various parts of the vehicle were found. Two persons, identified as Sohel Miah and Dilwar Hussain -- both residents of Sonamura subdivision of Sepahijala district, were arrested for smuggling drugs," Superintendent of Police Bhanupada Chakraborty told PTI.

The heroin consignment, which was coming from Myanmar via Mizoram, was supposed to be delivered at Sonamura located near the Bangladesh border, he said.

"We have started an investigation into the case. Drug peddlers are using the North Tripura district as a safe corridor," he added.

Chakraborty said that with this, police seized heroin worth ₹ 31 crore from various parts of the

# Manipur Guv urges all sectors to cooperate to resolve crisis

Manipur, Anusuiya Uikey has said that all stakeholders should co-operate with each other to resolve the

prevailing crisis in Manipur She said this while addressing the closing ceremony of the 15-day Summer Children Theatre Workshop, 2024, held at Manipur Trade and Expo Centre Relief Camp in Lamboikhognangkhong in Imphal West district on Sunday.

The workshop was organised by the National School of Drama, New Delhi and the National School of Drama (TIE Wing), Tripura, in JONGLANG and state social welfare department especially for children in relief camps of the Expo Centre and Temporary Shelter Home, Sajiwa Jail Complex in Imphal East. The Governor interacted with 120 displaced children along with their guardians and distributed certificates for their participation in dancing and painting events during the workshop

The Governor said, "Every section of the society has been affected by the situation in the state. Women and children have been affected and there is the need to support them with utmost care. Their minds are in turmoil because of the pre-



shop will help in diverting their minds and help them to relax.'

Appreciating the role of KHEN-JONGLANG, the Governor said that such initiatives will help to remove stress from the young minds and foster a good mental back-up for the children.

She then asked the theatre group to continue their efforts and assured to extend all possible assistance from the Rai Bhavan.

"As children are the future pillars of the nation, facilities like good education, good healthcare etc. have to be delivered to them. All children are talented and they should be guided and nurtured in their area of interest," the Governor

Expressing her serious concern over the situation in the state, the Governor said that steps to resolve the crisis were being initiated by taking up the matter with the central leaders from time to time and hopefully some tangible result would be seen in the near future.

The Governor then appealed to all stakeholders to cooperate with the steps taken to resolve the crisis and restore peace and tranquility in the best interest of the people of the

### Schools having low number of students to be merged with nearby schools

AGARTALA, July 1: Tripura chief minister Manik Saha said around 165 schools that have a low number of students would be merged with other schools located in their vicinity.

The state education department has already undertaken an extensive survey to identify the schools in which the number of students is

"Raising the alarm over the move to rationalise students and teachers in state-run schools will not bring fruitful results. Schools mushroomed in the state due to political reasons. We have to ensure quality education by merging schools with low number of students with schools that have a good number of students," he told the reporters on "It came to light that a few

schools run with four students and two or three teachers. The merger plan will be beneficial for the students too. The shortage of teaching staff will also be addressed by the plan," he said.

Saha said around 165 schools having a low number of students will be merged with nearby schools, preferably located within a 1 km ra-

The chief minister said the government was also working to address traffic congestion in Agartala.

"I had a meeting with engineers on addressing traffic jams in various parts of the city. I suggested constructing more flyovers to ensure seamless movement of vehicles,"

### Rains wreak havoc in Arunachal Pradesh



ITANAGAR, July 1: Incessant rains triggered landslides and floods in several districts of Arunachal Pradesh on Monday, throwing life out of gear, officials

All the major rivers in the state are in spate and flowing above the danger mark, they said.

The overflowing Kameng river swept away several houses at Seppa, the headquarters of the East Kameng district. However, there was no report of any casualty.

A landslide that happened in the Division IV area of the state capital damaged several buildings and buried a car. A woman who was driving the car managed a miraculous escape, police said.

The important Kurung bridge was washed away on Sunday, snapping connectivity to the Kurung Kumey district, Koloriang MLA Pani Taram said.

A flood alert was issued for

Namsai district and Wakro circle of Lohit district as water levels of all the rivers have crossed the danger marks, officials said. Thirty-four villages in Namsai

and Wakro have so far been affected by the flood, they said.

People have been advised to remain alert and take all precautionary measures. They have also been advised to refrain from venturing into the rivers or riverbanks, officials said.

In the East Siang district, the water levels of the Siang river, its tributaries and other perennial streams are in spate. Incessant rains triggered landslides along the Pasighat-Yingkiong and the Pasighat-Aalo highways, disrupting communication.

Flood waters submerged lowlying areas of Pasighat, Ruksin, Mirem and Bilat areas of East Siang, and parts of Lower Siang district, officials said.

The weather is also hindering the construction work of the Murkongselek-Pasighat railway line, they said.

The IMD issued a red alert for Changlang, Namsai, Lohit, Lower Dibang Valley, East Siang and Lower Siang districts, forecasting heavy to very heavy rains over the next two days.

Heavy rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning, is likely in Anjaw, Papum Pare, Tirap, East Kameng, Kurung Kumey, Leparada, Longding, West Kameng and West Siang on Tuesday, it said.

All schools in Itanagar and nearby areas have been shut for five days, in view of the weather conditions, according to an order.

### National Doctors' Day New criminal laws will protect rights Maximum of two adjournments in court cases, celebrated in USTM



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, July 1: Faculty members and students of the IA Ayurvedic Medical College at the University of Science and Technology Meghalaya (USTM) came together to celebrate the 'National Doctors' Day' at the university campus in Ro Bhoi district in Meghalaya on Monday.

The doctors and associates of the upcoming PA Sangma International Medical College and Hospital (PIMCH) also marked the occasion, reflecting on the invaluable contributions of medical professionals.

At IAAMC, the celebrations were vibrant as students and doctors gathered to honor Bidhan Chandra Roy on his birth and death anniversary on Monday. The event commenced with the cutting of a cake, followed by melodious singing and insightful speeches on the significance of the day.

R.K. Sharma, principal of IAAMC, addressed the gathering, emphasising the importance of this day and the legacy of Roy. Anil Kumar Sarma, advisor of IAAMC, delivered a speech shedding light on the remarkable life and achievements of Roy, highlighting his contributions in the medical field.

Barnali Das, deputy medical superintendent of the University Hospital of Ayurveda and Naturopathy, also addressed the students, inspiring them with her words and reinforcing the significance of their chosen profession.

Simultaneously, the doctors of PIMCH commemorated the day with equal zeal, honoring Roy,

fondly remembered as the 'Miracle Man of Medicine'. The programme was graced by G.D. Sharma, vice chancellor of USTM, and Biraj Kumar Das, principal of PIMČ along with many senior doctors and staff members.

Addressing the enthusiastic gathering of doctors at PIMCH, G.D. Sharma underscored the vital role that medical professionals play in society. He spoke about the dedication and commitment required in the medical field and the profound impact that doctors have on the lives of countless individuals. Sharma expressed his gratitude to the doctors for their unwavering service and dedication, particularly

during challenging times. Biraj Kumar Das, principal of PIMCH, also took the opportunity to address the audience. He spoke about the legacy of Roy and his monumental contributions to medical education and healthcare in India. Das encouraged the young medical students to draw inspiration from Roy's life and strive for excellence in their careers. The celebrations concluded with a sense of pride and unity among the medical

The day served as a reminder of the noble profession of medicine and the relentless efforts of doctors who work tirelessly to ensure the well-being of society. The event reinforced the commitment of IAAMC and PIMCH to produce dedicated and compassionate doctors, who would carry forward the legacy of great medical professionals like Roy

fraternity at USTM.

# of people: Mizoram minister

AIZWAL, July 1: Mizoram home minister K Sapdanga on Monday said the newly introduced criminal laws marked the beginning of a new process and significant chapter in the coun-

Addressing a function at central Mizoram's Serchhip town to mark the introduction of three new criminal laws - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), which came into force across the country on Monday, Sapdanga said that these changes are crucial in the ongoing fight against crime, benefiting both Mizoram and the entire country.

He said that the old laws, some of which were over a century old and enacted by the British, are now being replaced to suit contemporary times and technologies.

"The new criminal laws will strongly protect the rights of the people. It will empower the law enforcement agencies and increase their role. It will be rigid in some cases as well as lenient at the same time. They are outstanding laws to mitigate and fight several crimes in the country," the Mizoram Home minis-

He said that the new criminal laws will replace the colonial era - Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act.

The Mizoram government had taken a series of initiatives, including training of police personnel, churches, NGOs and advocates and carrying out public awareness to ensure the smooth implementation of three new criminal laws. (PTI)

### zero-FIR under new criminal laws: Manipur CM said that at the same time the implemen-

IMPHAL, July 1: Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh said on Monday that under the new criminal laws, there are provisions for maximum of two adjournments in court cases and filing of zero-FIR at any police station.

The Union home ministry had recently announced the enactment of three new criminal laws.

Addressing a formal function at the Palace Auditorium, Manipur State Film Development Society in Imphal on Monday, N. Biren Singh said that the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA), 2023 have replaced British-era Indian Penal Code, 1860, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, respec-

The chief minister said, "Under the new laws, FIRs can be filed in one's own dialect. These laws will be of great help

Stating that the laws are abreast of the times, and would be very effective, he tation part is also very crucial.

"If those implementing agencies including security officers, lawyers are not sincere then the laws will not serve their purpose. I appeal to all to work with sincerity and with conviction to help in delivering justice to the people," Singh

The chief minister also said that the central government's introduction of these laws stemmed from the observation that the existing laws were inadequate to address the technological advancements and societal shifts that had occurred over the past few decades. The new laws overhauled the Indian criminal justice system, he said, adding that they aimed to implement justice through a victim centric approach, increasing focus on national security and introducing digital/ electronic evidence reviews. He also said that there were provisions against mob justice and further, appealed to the people of the state against delivering mob justice and to bring understanding through dialogue and more peaceful ways.

He said other major changes included revisions in punishment for few crimes and addressing issues such as the jurisdiction, backlog of cases, insufficient human resources and infrastructure, inadequate investigations and prosecutions and outdated laws and procedures. The Chief Minister also highlighted certain key features of the three new laws and said that under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, in the corporate context, the penal sections of law mostly related to cases of cheating, criminal misappropriation, breach of trust, forgery and used of forged documents.

He also highlighted key feature of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 and said it defined additional types of electronic evidence, empowered courts and police officers to issue summons in cases where digital evidence was involved, clarifies jurisdictions in cheating cases involving electronic modes of deception and empowered Courts to ask for electronic filings in cases where documents were

### 'Stop Diarrhoea Campaign' launched in Nagaland

Campaign to be implemented through different platforms and collaboration between sectors such as health, water and sanitation, education and rural development

HT Correspondent
DIMAPUR, July 1: The Nagaland health and family welfare department launched the 'Stop Diarrhoea Campaign' in the three districts of Noklak, Wokha and Tuensang under the slogan 'Stop diarrhoea through hygiene and ORS' on Monday to eliminate diarrhoea.

The department adopted a new strategy to eliminate the disease by upgrading the campaign in the state from two weeks to two months involving extensive information education communication (IEC) through different platforms and collaborating across multiple sectors such as health, water and sanitation, education and rural development. The campaign will culminate on August

Launching the campaign in Noklak, DC Arikumba said diarrhoea is a disease, which can be prevented and cured if proper hygiene and other preventive measures are taken.

He requested all the stakeholders to spread awareness on the campaign in the district.



said during the district task force meeting on 'Stop Diarrhoea Campaign' held on June 29, it was decided to set up dedicated corners, which would have stocks of ORS and zinc

tablets to be provided to the patients for free in all health units.

In Tuensang, the campaign was launched at the conference hall of the Tuensang Dis-

Tuensang ADC, Thungchanbemo Tungoe, who was the guest of honour of the programme, urged the health workers, especially the ASHA and Anganwadi workers, to work with dedication to create awareness campaign on the importance of hand washing and clean drinking water among the children, especially during the monsoon season.

Tungoe said the district administration is always ready to assist the health workers anytime in this regard.

In Wokha, the campaign was launched at the chief medical officer's office.

Addressing the campaign as the special guest, Wokha ADC, K Furhesie Nyuwi emphasised the importance of sensitising health workers to strengthen diarrhoea management efforts in the district.

He also urged the line department to get actively involved in the campaign because it is a collective responsibility to save the lives of kids and attain zero deaths due to childallow 'bulldozer' justice in parl system: Cong

**NEW DELHI, July 1:** With the three new criminal laws coming into effect, the Congress on Monday accused the government of getting them "forcibly" passed in Parliament after suspending 146 MPs and asserted that going forward, the INDIA bloc will not allow such "bulldozer justice" to prevail in the country's parliamentary system.

Three new criminal laws came into effect in the country on Monday, bringing far-reaching changes in India's criminal justice system.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) take into account some of the current social realities and modern-day crimes. The new laws replaced the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, re-

In a post in Hindi on X, Kharge said, "After the political and moral shock in the elections, Modi ji and the BJP are pretending to respect the Constitution, but the truth is that the three laws of the criminal justice system which are being implemented from today, were passed forcibly after suspension of 146 MPs.'

"INDIA will no longer allow this 'bulldozer justice' to prevail in the parliamentary system," he asserted.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also took a swipe at the government after the first FIR was lodged under the new laws.

"The first FIR has already been filed under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita 2023. It is by Delhi Police against a street vendor for obstruction, after he was earning his daily livelihood under a foot-over bridge of New Delhi Railway Station," Ramesh said.

Delhi Police registered its first FIR under provisions of the new criminal code the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against a street vendor selling water and tobacco products from a cart that allegedly obstructed a public way in central Delhi's Kamala Market area on Monday, offi-



Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram also slammed the government as the new criminal laws came into effect and said it was another case of "bulldozing" existing laws and replacing them with three new bills without adequate discussion and debate.

In a post on X, Chidambaram said, "90-99 per cent of the so-called new laws are a cut, copy and paste job. A task that could have been completed with a few amendments to the existing three laws has been turned into a

"Yes, there are a few improvements in the new laws and we have welcomed them. They could have been introduced as amendments. On the other hand, there are several retrograde provisions. Some changes are prima facie unconstitutional," he said.

MPs, who were members of the standing committee, pored over the provisions and wrote detailed dissent notes to the three bills, the senior leader said.

Chidambaram added the government did not rebut or answer any of the criticisms in the dissent notes and there was no worthwhile debate in Parliament.

"Law scholars, bar associations, judges and lawyers

have in numerous articles and seminars pointed out the

ernment has cared to answer the questions." he said "It is another case of bulldozing three existing laws and replace them with three new Bills without adequate discussion and debate," Chidambaram said.

The initial impact will be to throw the administration of criminal justice into disarray, he said.

"In the medium term, numerous challenges to the laws will be instituted in various courts. In the long term, further changes must be made to the three laws to bring them in conformity with the Constitution and the modern principles of criminal jurisprudence," Chidambaram

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who piloted the laws, had said the new laws would give priority to providing justice, unlike the British-era laws that gave primacy to penal action.

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said the Congress' concern was that the bills were passed without dis-

"Something as important and as far reaching as this. Many of us had called for an overhaul of the IPC but we wanted a discussion and the discussion never took place and that is something very regrettable in a democracy like ours," he told reporters outside Parliament.

Congress MP Manish Tewari hit out at the government over the issue, saying these three new criminal laws are pernicious in nature and draconian in their implementa-

"They will throw a spanner in the works of the Indian criminal justice system. From today, two parallel systems will be in play. All those cases registered before June 30, 2024, midnight will be prosecuted under the old system and those cases registered after June 30, 2024, midnight will be prosecuted under the new system," he said.

"There are 3.4 crore pending cases and a bulk of them are criminal cases. So, there is going to be utter confu-

### Modi says calling Hindus violent serious matter



**NEW DELHI, July 1:** Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi took a swipe at the ruling BJP in the Lok Sabha on Monday, saying those who call themselves Hindus are engaged in "violence and hate" round the clock, drawing massive protests from the members of the treasury benches, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that calling the entire Hindu society violent is a serious matter.

Gandhi, however, retorted that he was speaking about the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP, the Rashtriva Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) or Modi are not the entire Hindu society, he

The Congress leader held up a picture of Lord Shiva and said his message is about fearlessness and non-violence. He also cited the teachings of other religions to make a similar

"All religions and all our great men talk about non-violence and fearlessness, but those who call themselves Hindus only talk about violence, hatred and falsehood.... Aap Hindu ho hi nahi (You are not Hindus)," he said.

Gandhi's dig at the BJP had the members of

Home Minister Amit Shah sought the Congress leader's apology to the House and the country for hurting the feelings of crores of people who take pride in identifying them-

selves as Hindus Shah spoke of the Emergency and 1984 anti-Sikhs riots to hit back at Gandhi, saying he has no right to talk about non-violence when the

Congress had spread "terror" in the country. Gandhi further emphasised that all religions talk about courage, citing Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism to underline the importance of fearlessness.

He accused the BJP of launching systematic attacks on the Constitution and the fundamental idea of India, noting that millions of people have resisted the ideas proposed by the ruling

"I was attacked on the orders of Prime Minister Modi. There were 20-plus cases (against me), (my) house was taken away, 55 hours of

interrogation by the ED," Gandhi said. Despite these challenges, he said he feels broud of the collective effort to protect the

"It feels nice that BJP people are now repeating 'Jai Samvidhan' after me," he said.

Gandhi also expressed his contentment at being in the opposition.

"I am happy and proud to be in the opposition. For us, there is something more than power, it is the truth," he said.

During his first speech as the leader of opposition, Gandhi held up a picture of Lord Shiva, which prompted Speaker Om Birla to remind him that rules do not allow display-

ing placards in the House. Gandhi reiterated that all religions, including Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism, emphasise courage and the importance of being fear-

### 'Justice within three years of registering FIR under new laws'

Hope for reduction of crime: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, July 1: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Monday that justice would be delivered up to the level of the Supreme Court in all cases within three years of the registration of an FIR under the new criminal laws.

Addressing a press conference after the new criminal laws were implemented, Shah expressed hope of a reduction of crime in future as 90 per cent conviction was expected under the new laws.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) came into effect on Monday. The new laws replaced the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respec-

"Justice can be received up to the level of the Supreme Court within three years of the registration of the FIR," he said.

The home minister said that with the implementation of the three first hearing. criminal laws, India would have The new laws promote a justicethe most modern criminal justice system in the world.

'The new laws brought in a modern justice system, incorporating provisions such as Zero FIR, online registration of police complaints, summonses through electronic modes such as SMS and mandatory videography of crime scenes for all heinous crimes," he said. Shah said the first case under the new laws was about a motorcycle theft registered in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior at 10 minutes past midnight.

He also said the police dismissed the case filed against a street vendor for selling water and tobacco products from a cart that allegedly obstructed a public way in central Delhi's Kamala Market after an investigation.

The new laws would give priority to providing justice, unlike the colonial-era laws that gave primacy to penal action, and made reporting of crimes even easier by recognising e-FIR, Zero FIR and electronic or digital evidence.

The home minister said the judicial process would now be time bound and the new laws set time limits for the judicial system, ending long delays.

He said the new statutes were made more sensitive by adding a chapter on crimes against children and women and the inquiry report in such cases were to be filed within seven days.

Shah said according to the new laws, judgment in criminal cases had to come within 45 days of completion of trial and charges must be framed within 60 days of

centric approach by providing community service for minor

crimes, he said. The home minister said organised crime, acts of terrorism and mob lynching had been defined, sedition was replaced with treason and video recording of all search and seizures made mandatory.

He said a new chapter on crimes against women and children was added, buying and selling of any child made a heinous crime and a provision for death sentence or life imprisonment for gang rape of a minor included.

A new provision has been added

in cases of having physical relations after giving false promise of marriage and statement of rape victims will be recorded by a woman police officer in presence of her guardian, he said.

Officials said under the new laws, overlapping sections were merged and simplified, with only 358 sections against 511 in the Indian Penal Code.

For example, definitions scattered from sections 6 to 52 have been brought under one section.

Eighteen sections already stand repealed and four relating to weights and measures are covered under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009. Instances of false promise of marriage, gang rape of minors, mob lynching and chain snatching, among others, are reported but the Indian Penal Code did not have specific provisions for dealing with such incidents.

These have been addressed in the BNS, the officials said.

A new provision has been made for cases such as abandonment of women after making sexual relations on the false promise of mar-

The three laws were based on justice, transparency and fairness, the officials said.

Under the new laws, a person can now report incidents by electronic communication, without the need to physically visit a police station. This allows for easier and quicker reporting, facilitating prompt action by the police.

With the introduction of Zero FIR, a person can file a First Information Report (FIR) at any police station, regardless of jurisdiction. (PTI)

### BJP paid heavy price for throttling voice of one MP, lost 63 seats: Moitra

**NEW DELHI, July 1:** TMC MP Mahua Moitra hit out at the ruling party for suspending her in the last Lok Sabha session, saying they paid a very heavy price for throttling her voice which led to loss of 63 BJP

Speaking during a discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address to a joint sitting of Parliament, she said the BJP will not be able to treat the opposition the way they treated them during the last session

"Last time I stood, I was not allowed to speak. The ruling party paid a very heavy price for throttling the voice of one MP," she said. referring to her suspension in the last session.

"In their attempt to silence me, the public silenced them, causing them to lose 63 MPs... mujhko bithane ke chakkar mein janta ne aapko bitha diya, aapke 63 MPs loss kar diya," Moitra began, setting

Moitra condemned the installation of the Sengol in Parliament, calling it a symbol of monarchy with no place in a democracy.

"The BJP's 'raj tantra' has been reduced by the 'lok tantra' of this country. This is not a stable government. It depends on multiple allies who have a history of U-turns. We are 234 warriors this time, having walked on fire. You will not be able to treat us like last time," she said. referring to the President's speech, Moitra criticised the omis-

sion of critical issues. "There are six themes in the President's address. The budget for the North-East has increased four times, yet the word 'Manipur' is

nowhere in the speech. "The Prime Minister mentioned 'Muslim', 'madrassa', 'mutton', 'machhli' and 'mujra' but not 'Manipur' once during the campaigning. We don't need you to look East or act East. We need you to work

brace East," she said. Moitra challenged the government's claims of women empowerment.

"This is a complete untruth. You delayed reservation in Parliament because vou fear 'naari shakti'."

There are just 74 women MPs this time, with the BJP having only 30 out of 240.

In contrast, the TMC had 37 per cent women MPs last time and 38 per cent this time, she noted.

"While we have empowered three lakh 'lakhpati didis', the BJP seems focused on creating 'arabpati dadas'," Moitra said.

On Kashmir, the TMC MP questioned the abrogation of Article

"If abrogating it was such a good idea, why did the BJP not field candidates in Baramulla, Srinagar and Anantnag-Rajouri? You downgraded Ladakh, and five years later, they are still waiting for inclusion in the Sixth Schedule. As a result, stalled on all trains. (PTI)

the Ladakhis relegated you to the third place" she said.

Moitra also took aim at the Election Commission, accusing it of bias. "We won in spite of the EC, not because of it. Commissioners turned a deaf ear to the most egregious violations of the Model Code of Conduct by the ruling party and

the prime minister. This election will be remembered for an eager and compliant EC turning a blind eye and a deaf ear towards the ruling party. Ultimately, the voters took charge and

said 'bahut ho gaya'," she said. Criticising the government's infrastructure projects, Moitra said. "You are sanctioning Rs 1.08 lakh crore for Vande Bharat Bullet Train Project. In Balasore last year, three trains collided as there was no 'kavach'; last week, in the train accident there was no 'kavach'. With the current level of funding, it will take 50 years for 'kavach' to be in-

### Rehra police station in Amroha among first in UP to lodge FIR under new criminal law

LUCKNOW, July 1: Rehra police station in Amroha district is among the first police stations in Uttar Pradesh to lodge a case under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, taking note of a death due to electrocution. officials said on Monday. The case was registered under BNS 106 (Causing death by negligence) against Rajveer alias Raju and Bhoop Singh alia Bholu, following a complaint by Dhakia village resident Sanjay Singh. Singh alleged that the duo had installed electric wire in his agricultural field due to which his father Jagpal got electrocuted. The incident took place on Monday morning.

"History in the making. Police station Rehra in Amroha district becomes one of the first police stations in Uttar Pradesh to file an FIR under the new Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, marking a significant milestone in the state's law enforcement," the Uttar Pradesh Police

#### RaGa enjoyed power without responsibility till now: Anurag NEW DELHI, July 1: BJP leader Anurag ing, would he be able to sit in the House till late

achievements of the NDA government in the last 10 years and took a swipe at Rahul Gandhi, saying he was enjoying power without responsibility till he became the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Initiating the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address, Thakur said the Lok Sabha elections have kept those against the Constitution in the Opposition benches for the third time. While congratulating Gandhi on becoming the Leader of Opposition, Thakur said the Congress leader now has power with responsibility and "absentee landlordism will not work". For the last many years, Gandhi was enjoying power without responsibility, Thakur said and asserted that it was an "agnipariksha" for the Congress leader now. "The person who was used to bunk-

y listed out various economic as the prime minister does?... he is not there (even) now," the BJP leader remarked.

Gandhi was not in the House when Thakur made the remarks and there were protests from the Opposition members.

Taking a jibe at the Congress, he said they have been adamant on proving that "99 is more than 240", Thakur said referring to the tally of the Congress and BJP in the recent Lok Sabha elec-

"When a party sets such low standards, it finds even poor performance overwhelming," he said.

"When the UPA won in 2004, the Congress had 145 seats and BJP had 138. There was a difference of only seven seats. You formed the government, and ran it for five years, did we say anything? In 2009 you had 206 seats... But BJP got 282 seats in 2014... "he said. (*PTI*)

### Tharoor urges govt to build mitigating structures to combat sea erosion in Kerala



**NEW DELHI, July 1:** Congress MP Shashi Tharoor drew the government's attention on Monday to sea erosion impacting the economically and socially disadvantaged coastal communities in Kerala and demanded that a robust network of mitigating structures be built immediately to address the issue.

The Thiruvananthapuram MP said he wanted to raise the issue in the Lok Sabha under Rule 377 but the Speaker "did not allow us to speak". "The plight of our coastal communi-

ties deserves more attention than the

government gives it," he said, posting a copy of the text he had laid. Drawing the attention of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Tharoor said his constituency alone had lost more than 64 square kilometres due to coastal

erosion.

"There is an urgent need to protect the coast through new and upgraded protective structures along the coastline " the text road.

"Every year, the monsoon amplifies the fury of the sea, devastating coastal areas in my constituency of Thiruvananthapuram, consuming beach fronts and destroying homes. The suffering fisherfolk communities, who have traditionally inhabited the coastline, are economically and socially disadvantaged, and their sustenance and

livelihood are threatened," it added. Tharoor highlighted the lack of seawalls to protect the coast, especially between Pozhiyoor and Poovar, and along the Valiyathura pier and the Valiy-

athura-Cheriyathura stretch. The few existing man-made barriers are grossly inadequate or crumbling, exacerbated by the dearth of fishing har-

The Congress leader said coastal erosion continued unabated despite the Union government's promise to enact mitigating measures through the Central Institute of Coastal Engineering of Fishery and the Pradhan Mantri Matsay Sampada Yojana, and his repeated parliamentary interventions on this issue in the past.

He urged the government to immediately build a comprehensive network of seawalls, groynes and fishing harbours to alleviate the anguish of the coastal communities and combat coastal ero-

Tharoor said the government's expeditious action would safeguard the future of the fishing communities and prevent further loss of the Indian terri-According to the Union environment

ministry, varying degrees of erosion due

to natural causes or anthropogenic ac-

tivities impacted coastal communities

residing in the erosion prone areas in some stretches of India's shoreline. The National Centre for Coastal Research, an attached office of the earth sciences ministry, monitored the shoreline changes for the entire Indian coastline using multi-spectral satellite images along with field-surveyed data for the

period 1990-2018. It observed that 33.6 per cent of the Indian coastline was vulnerable to erosion, 26.9 per cent was under accretion (growing) and 39.6 per cent was in stable state. (PTI)

### India records below-normal rainfall in June: IMD

NEW DELHI, July 1: India recorded below-normal rainfall in June, with the deficit standing at 11 per cent, the highest in five years, the India Meteorological Department said on Monday. According to the IMD data,

of rainfall against a normal of 165.3 mm for the month, the seventh lowest since 2001. June rainfall accounts for 15 per cent of the total precipitation of 87 cm recorded during the

four-month monsoon season in

the country.

west India.

the country received 147.2 mm

After making an early onset over Kerala and the northeastern region on May 30, and progressing normally up to Maharashtra, the monsoon lost momentum, extending the wait for rains in West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, and worsening the impact of a scorching heat wave in north-

"The country recorded 16 days of below-normal rainfall activity -- from June 11 to June 27 -- which led to overall belownormal precipitation," IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said. The IMD reported that northwest India recorded a 33



per cent rainfall deficit, central India a 14 per cent deficit, and east and northeast India a 13 per cent deficit. Only south India recorded surplus rains (14 per cent) in June.

The Met office stated that 12 per cent of the sub-divisional area of the country experienced excess to large excess rainfall, 38 per cent received normal rainfall, and 50 per cent experienced deficient to large deficient rain-

IMD data shows that in 20 out of the 25 years when June rainfall was below normal (less than 92 per cent of the long-period average), July rainfall was normal (94-106 per cent of LPA) or above normal.

June rainfall was below normal, the seasonal rainfall was normal The IMD had earlier forecast

monsoon season in India, with cumulative precipitation estimated at 106 per cent of the long-period average of 87 cm.

In 17 of the 25 years when

or above normal, it said.

Below-normal monsoon rain-

above-normal rainfall during the

fall is expected in northeast India, normal in the northwest, and above-normal in central and south peninsular regions of the country, it said. India's core monsoon zone,

covering most of the rain-fed

agricultural areas in the country, is predicted to receive abovenormal rainfall this season, the Met office said. The monsoon is critical for India's agricultural landscape,

with 52 per cent of the net cultivated area relying on it. It is also crucial for replenishing reservoirs critical for drink-

ing water and power generation

across the country. June and July are considered the most important monsoon months for agriculture, as most of the sowing for the Kharif crop

takes place during this period. El Nino conditions are prevailing at present, and La Ñina may set in by August-September, scientists have said.

El Nino, the periodic warming of surface waters in the central Pacific Ocean, is associated with weaker monsoon winds and drier conditions in India. La Nina, the antithesis of El Nino, leads to plentiful rainfall during the monsoon season. (PTI)

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### Implementation of new criminal laws evoke mixed reactions from legal experts

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2024

**NEW DELHI, July 1:** The three new criminal laws, which replaced the British-era penal statutes on Monday, have evoked mixed reactions from legal luminaries with some hailing them as "significant step" towards modernising criminal justice system while others terming them as "draconian" and "cosmetic".

The new laws -- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) -- came into effect across the country from July 1 and replaced the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act respectively.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi said an opportunity to make genuine reforms has been wasted and "cosmetic changes" have been brought about in new laws, disregarding the crucial aspect of huge pendency of cases in courts, especially in

However, senior advocate and former Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Adish C Aggarwala termed the new criminal laws as significant step towards modernising the criminal justice delivery system and delivery of time bound

This view was echoed by senior advocates Mahesh Jethmalani, also a BJP MP, and Vikas Pahwa. Advocate and Congress MP Manish Tewari

termed the new laws "pernicious in nature, draconian in their implementation". Activist lawyer Kamini Jaiswal concurred with Tewari and termed them as "disaster"

Significantly, the apex lawyers' body, the Bar Council of India (BCI), came in support of the laws and recently urged all bar associations across the country to refrain from any immediate agitation or protest against the implementation of the

"One of the important changes brought in by the new laws is the introduction of specific timelines for conducting trials and delivering verdicts," former SCBA president Aggarwala said and hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for decolonising British-era

He said after hearing arguments, the judges will have to render judgment within 30 days from the date of completion of arguments, which may be extended to a period of 45 days for reasons to be recorded in writing.

Jethmalani said the opposition parties do not understand that these laws are for everyone, for prosecution, for victims and for criminals.

"I don't understand which provision is the problem. They are just saying anything and have not analysed the provisions," he said.

Pahwa said, "I think there are a lot of positive points if we read them as a whole. Of course there's also a flip side. The biggest positive point would be the implementation of technology. The entire criminal justice system will now be governed by technology." He said the trials will get expedited if the laws are followed in right spirit.

'This is an opportunity to create genuine reform. Unfortunately, what has happened is cosmetic changes, 90 per cent remaining the same, numbers changed, a few words changed here and

PUNE, July 1: Rescue teams on Monday

morning recovered the body of one of the two

missing children, who along with three other

family members got swept away at a waterfall

near the Bhushi Dam in Pune's Lonavala area,

Search was on for the other missing child,

On Sunday, a group of persons got swept

After the tragic incident, the rescue teams

Police, Navy divers and other rescue teams

on Monday resumed the search for the two

missing children and recovered the body of

Mariya Ansari (9) from a reservoir near the

accident spot, a senior official from Pune rural

Search was still on for the other missing

A heart-wrenching video of the incident

showed a group of 9-10 persons, including

child - Adnan Sabhahat Ansari (4), he said.

away by the gushing water caused by intense

on Sunday recovered the bodies of a 36-year-

old woman and two minor girls.

officials said.

rainfall in the region.

### Rebel SAD leaders appear before Akal Takht jathedar, apologise for 'mistakes' during Akali regime

AMRITSAR/CHANDIGARH, July 1: Rebel Shiromani Akali Dal leaders on Monday appeared before the jathedar of the Akal Takht and apologised for the "mistakes" committed when their party was in power in

They handed the apology letter to Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh at the Akal Takht Secretariat at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The Akal Takht is the supreme temporal seat of the Sikhs.

The leaders sought forgiveness for the "four mistakes" during the former SAD regime between 2007 and 2017, including the failure to punish those responsible for the 2015 sacrilege incidents, and pardoning Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in the 2007 blasphemy case.

They also held SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, who was the deputy chief minister at that time, responsible for the "mistakes".

While the rebels targeted Badal, in Chandigarh, the SAD's women wing expressed faith in his leadership, saying he is best suited to lead the party at this juncture.

In the letter to the Akal Takht, the rebel leaders said the Sikh panth and the people of Punjab drifted away from the Akali Dal over these "mistakes" while asserting that they were ready to face any punishment in accordance with the Sikh tenets.

Because of this, the SAD faced "failures" not only on the religious front but also suffered people's apathy in the political field, the rebel leaders said while acknowledging that they also remained part of the party leadership as these events unfolded.

Reacting to Badal's 2023 apology for not being able to catch the culprits involved in the sacrilege incidents, the rebel leaders had recently said the forgiveness sought by the



SAD chief was neither from the Akal Takht nor followed the rites and rituals of the Sikh

A section of senior party leaders have revolted against Badal, demanding that he step down as the party chief following its debacle in the recently held Lok Sabha elections in Puniab.

Recently, the rebel leaders had decided to launch the 'Akali Dal Bachao Lehar' and sought Sukhbir Badal's ouster as SAD pres-

Among the prominent leaders who have raised a banner of revolt are former MP Prem Singh Chandumajra, former SGPC chief Bibi Jagir Kaur, ex-MLA Gurpartap Singh Wadala, former Minister Parminder Singh Dhindsa, and party leader Sucha Singh Chhotepur, all of whom presented themselves before the Akal Takht jathedar. The letter also referred to the 2015 sacri-

lege incidents, saying the then Akali government could not ensure punishment to the guilty in these cases. The sacrilege incidents caused outrage in the Sikh panth, said the

But the (then) Shiromani Akali Dal government and the then Home Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal and president Shiromani Akali Dal, neither got this matter probed in a timely manner nor succeeded in getting the culprits punished, it said.

As a result, the situation worsened in Punjab and tragic incidents took place at Kotkapura and Behbal Kalan, it said.

The Shiromani Akali Dal government could not hold any official accountable for these incidents, it said.

The incidents related to the theft of a copy of the Guru Granth Sahib, putting up handwritten sacrilegious posters, and torn pages of the holy book being found scattered at Bargari, had taken place in Faridkot

These incidents had led to protests in Faridkot. In the police firing at the protesters in October 2015, two persons were killed in Behbal Kalan while some persons were injured at Kotkapura in Faridkot.

The letter also mentioned the 2007 blasphemy case which was registered against Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh for allegedly imitating the 10th Sikh master, Guru Gobind Singh at Salabatpura in 2007.

"Instead of taking further action to punish the person, the SAD government withdrew this case," stated the letter.

In 2021, Badal claimed that the SAD government had never withdrawn the blasphemy case against the Dera chief, who is at present lodged in a jail in Haryana. Ram Rahim has been sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for raping two disciples.

The letter also claimed that Badal allegedly used his influence to ensure that the Dera chief was pardoned in the blasphemy

"But the leadership of Shiromani Akali Dal and Shiromani Committee (SGPC) had to withdraw from this decision keeping in mind the anger and resentment of the Sikh Panth," it said

In 2015, the Akal Takht pardoned the Dera chief in the blasphemy case based on a written apology. However, bowing to pressure from the Sikh community and hardliners, it annulled its decision.

The rebel leaders also slammed the then Akali government for appointing Sumedh Singh Saini as the director general of police and accused it of failing to keep its promise of forming a commission to probe "fake po-

"Because of this and many other similar developments, the Sikh panth got angry and became disappointed with the leadership of the Shiromani Akali Dal. As a result of which, its position in the political and religious fields got weakened," said the letter.

"We also acknowledge that we failed to stop the wrong approach of the leadership of Akali Dal and the SGPC, even though we repeatedly raised these painful issues within the party," it added.

The leaders claimed they had urged the senior leadership of the party to appear before the Akal Takht, repent for their "mistakes" and express remorse as per the 'Gurmat maryada' (religious code of ethics). But their appeal was rejected.

"Being a part of the leadership of Shiromani Akali Dal at that time, we have a burden on our minds. That is why we have come to you to apologise for the mistakes through this letter," the leaders said.

"We are ready to accept any punishment given by the Akal Takht according to the Gurmat' tradition for these mistakes so that we can be relieved from this burden," it added. After the meeting with the jathedar, the leaders offered prayers by standing in front of the Akal Takht and sought forgive-

Speaking to reporters in Amritsar, the rebel leaders expressed their commitment to revive the SAD and serve the panth.

On Monday morning, some rebel leaders went to the Amritsar home of Khadoor Sahib MP-elect Amritpal Singh and met his parents. The radical preacher Amritpal is yet to take the oath as he is lodged in jail in Assam, detained under the National Secu-

#### Tughlakabad Metro Station to be developed as south Delhi's inter-connectivity hub: DMRC

NEW DELHI, July 1: Tughlakabad Metro Station is being developed as south Delhi's new metro hub to facilitate inter-connectivity between the Kashmere Gate-Raja Nahar Singh and Tughlakabad-Aerocity corridors, DMRC officials said on Monday.

While the existing station is being elevated, the new station will be an underground one and a subway will connect the two adjoining stations through the paid area, they said.

"The Tughlakabad Metro Station is being turned into an inter-change station in Phase-4 to facilitate inter-connectivity between the Kashmere Gate-Raja Nahar Singh corridor (Line-6 violet) and the Tughlakabad-Aerocity corridor," the officials said.

The new station has been designed as a four-level underground structure where there will be platform at the bottom (at an approximate depth of 23 metres) followed by the concourse and then an entire floor for parking above it with the roof level at

Lonavala waterfall tragedy: Body

of 1 of 2 missing children found

those who lost their lives, stranded in the mid-

dle of a stream with flood waters gushing

down and crying for help while their relatives

and other bystanders asking them to hold on

carrying a small boy, and another girl were

seen getting swept away. Later, the remaining

A search team on Sunday recovered the

persons were also swept away in the waters.

bodies of Shahista Liaqat Ansari (36), Amima

Adil Ansari (13) and Umera Adil Ansari (8)

SERA, Blue Origin announce India partner

nation for human space flight programme

As the water flow increased, first a woman

to each other.

the top (ground level), they stated.

The underground parking facility will have provision for accommodating around 250 vehicles. It will have direct access via lifts, stairs and escalators to both the Violet and Silver Line stations, the officials said.

Tughlakabad will be the first ever interchange facility of Delhi Metro to have an underground parking facility. Currently, only Dhansa Bus Stand on the Grey line has such a provision, they said.

A subway will connect the new and old Tughlakabad Metro stations. This subway will be about 45 metres long and, hence, provide quick transit facilities to the passengers from one line to the other, they

According to the officials, the Tughlakabad station, being a terminal station of the new corridor, will also be connected to the existing Sarita Vihar depot via a tunnel. This depot is being expanded to accommodate the Silver Line trains. Currently, it only caters to the trains of Violet Line. (PTI)

from the reservoir downstream

rain-soaked Sunday.

According to the police, 16-17 members of

a family from Sayyad Nagar in Pune's Hadap-

sar area had hired a private bus to visit the

scenic spot near Lonavala for a picnic on the

Members of the Ansari family went to see

the waterfall close to the Bhushi Dam but

were caught unawares when the water flow

rose due to intense rain in the area and were

swept away, a police official said on Sunday.

elled from Mumbai for a wedding a couple of

days ago. On Sunday, more than 15 members

hired a bus to go to Lonavala for a picnic, he

As the monsoon season begins, thousands

of visitors flock the Bhushi and Pavana dam

areas, often disregarding warnings from the

police and local authorities to avoid unknown

50,000 people visited Lonavala on Sun-

A police officer estimated that more than

A relative said the family members trav-

### NHRC notice to Centre, TN govt over 'discrimination' by manufacturer of electronic devices in jobs



NEW DELHI, July 1: The NHRC on Monday said it has issued notices to the Union Labour Ministry and the Tamil Nadu government over reports that a major manufacturer of electronic devices has allegedly "systematically excluded" married women from jobs at its assembly plant in Sriperumbudur.

Issuing the notices, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has noted the fact that gender equality is not only required in the Indian Constitution but the international treaty and covenants, viz., International Covenant Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights also provide nondiscrimination on the ground of gender in any form of employment.

The NHRC has taken "suo motu cognisance of media reports that Foxconn, a major manufacturer of Apple devices has systematically excluded married women from job at its iPhone assembly plant in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu", it

It is alleged by a former HR executive at Foxconn that "verbal directions" have been given to the Indian hiring agencies by the company in this regard. It is also stated that the company "does not hire married women because of cultural issues and societal pressure", the statement said, citing reports.

Sources recently said Apple iPhone maker Foxconn has informed the government that 25 per cent of its new hires are married women and its safety protocol, which requires all employees to avoid wearing metal irrespective of gender or religion, is not discriminatory. In an informal note shared with the government after reports had suggested that it was not hiring married women, Foxconn had stated that such stipulations are not part of its policy and these claims may have been made by those individuals who were not hired, the sources earlier said.

The Commission in its statement has observed that the content of the media reports, if true, raise a serious issue of discrimination against married women causing the violation of the right to equality and equal oppor-

Therefore, the Commission has issued notices to the Secretary, Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the chief Secretary, government of Tamil Nadu, seeking a detailed report within one week, the statement It is the obligation of the state au-

thorities to ensure that all companies follow the norms and regulations relating to labour laws and the right to health and dignity to any individual, including women, who are working in the supply chain of any production unit of the private sector, the statement said.

As per media reports carried on June 26, a number of job seekers in the company were spoken to during the period January 2023 to May 2024 and the candidate information pamphlet of the company was examined, it said.

"It was revealed that only unmarried women were eligible for assembly job while there was no mention in this regard in the advertisements made by the company. A WhatsApp chat between a married candidate and the hiring agency of the company was also quoted in the news report stating that when the candidate asked about the salary and childcare facility offered by the company, the response was 'married not allowed'. The company, reportedly, refuted the allegations of discrimination in employment based on marital status, gender, religion or any other form," the statement

### Army fully capable, ready to face all challenges: Gen Dwivedi

NEW DELHI, July 1: The Indian Army is ready and capable to face all current and future security challenges facing India, Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi said on Monday amid the lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh.

A day after he assumed charge of the 1.3 million-strong force, Gen Dwivedi said working towards ensuring synergy among the Army, Air Force and the Navy would be one of his priorities.

In remarks to the media after inspecting a guard of honour at the South Block in Raisina hills, he said the Army is facing "unique operational challenges" and to remain prepared for such threats, it is crucial to continue equipping the soldiers with latest weapons.

"I am fully conscious of the responsibility assigned to me and I assure the country and fellow citizens that the Indian Army is fully capable and ready to face all current and future challenges," he said.

The newly-appointed Army Chief also said that he will encourage induction of indigenously-built military hardware into the force to boost self-reliance in defence.

"The geo-political landscape is changing rapidly and technology is evolving at a very fast pace," he said.

"The Indian Army faces unique operational challenges and to remain prepared for such threats and distinctive requirements, it is crucial that we continuously equip our soldiers with state-of-the-art weapons and technology and continue to evolve our war-fighting strategies," he

Gen Dwivedi said the Indian Army is on the "path to transformation" and it aspires to be 'Atmanirbhar' (self-reliant) in defence.

"To achieve this, we will encourage indigenous initiatives and induct maximum war systems and equipment that are manufactured in our country," he said.

Gen Dwivedi said he would focus on ensuring that the Army is ready operate in the "full spectrum of con-

"It will be my endeavour to ensure that the Indian Army is always ready to operate in the full spectrum of conflict, maintaining complete synergy with the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and other stakeholders," he said.

"This will ensure that India's interests are secured and we become a major pillar of nation building to achieve the vision of 'Viksit Bharat-

### 'Vandalism' at place of worship in J&K; 3 more people detained, shutdown observed

The potential astronauts will be required to meet Blue Origin's phys-They can garner votes by telling their story to the public using their mission profile pages, social media,

> vandalised by a visitor in a village in the Dharmari area on Saturday evening, sparking tension and protests. Police registered an FIR under relevant sections of law and formed a Special Investigation Team headed by a deputy superintendent of Police to identify and arrest the culprits.

While 12 people were apprehended till Sunday, three more suspects were detained on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday. The total number of those taken into custody for questioning in the case stands at 15, a police officer said. He said the SIT is working on various clues to crack the case and requesting people to Responding to a call for bandh

by a local group, a shutdown was observed in Reasi town and adjoining areas on Monday with groups of youth burning tyres on different roads. A large number of agitated people also assembled at Zanana Park in the town and took out a march towards nearby Thapa Chowk, demanding stern action against the culprits.

military forces were deployed in strength in the sensitive areas as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order. Deputy Commissioner of Reasi

"Anyone trying to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere will not be spared. It is an attempt to create hurdles and sabotage developmental activities, besides communal harmony. (PTI)

### REASI/JAMMU, July 1: Three maintain law and order.

more people were detained by police in connection with the alleged vandalism at a place of worship in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, where normal life was hit by a shutdown as local residents protested against the incident, officials said. The place of worship was found

### Officials said police and para-

Vishesh Paul Mahajan visited the protest site and tried to pacify the protesters, assuring that stern action would be taken against the culprits.

2047'," Gen Dwivedi said. (PTI)

#### ROVISION OF PRAYER SHED ON THE PLAY GROUND E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/102

of 2024; Dated: 27-06-2024. E-tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: SN.1. Brief Description of Item: Provision of prayer shed on the olay ground at Railway High School of other ancillary work at Lumding unde Sr.DEN/IV/Lumding. Tender Value ₹1,05,20,287.24; Earnest Money ₹2,02,600.00. E-tenders will be close at 15:00 hrs. on 22-07-2024 and opened at 15:30 hrs. on 23-07-2024. The complete information with tende ocuments of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. o 22-07-2024 in website http:// www.ireps.gov.in.

DRM/Works. Lumdin NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

Shepard, Blue Origin's reusable suborbital rocket. New Shepard will fly the selected astronauts on an 11-minute journey past the Kármán line (100 km), the internationally recognised boundary Astronauts will experience several minutes of weightlessness before making a controlled descent back to the landing pad.

Exploration and Research Agency

and Blue Origin on Monday an-

nounced India as a partner nation in

their human spaceflight programme

for citizens from countries who have

sent a few or no astronauts to space.

offer citizens from across the world

six seats on a future mission of New

SERA, a US-based agency, will

"We're excited to have India as part of our human spaceflight programme," said Joshua Skurla, Co-Founder, SERA.

'We want to make space accessible for everyone and are happy to



offer this unique opportunity to an Indian citizen who wants to experience the wonders of space travel,'

Skurla said. Any Indian citizen can register for the programme by paying a fee of approximately USD 2.50 to cover the costs of verification checks that ensure safe and fair voting. The final candidates will be voted on by the public for an opportunity to fly to space onboard the New Shepard

ple, for people," said Sam Hutchison, Co-Founder, SERA. "This approach will ignite national conversations on space and foster international collaboration in

and other resources. Voting will

progress through candidate elimina-

tion across three phases. People will

vote only for candidates from their

nation or region, except for the sixth

power to choose their astronauts, we

ensure this mission is driven by peo-

"By giving communities the

ical requirements.

global seat

space exploration. The minimal physical requirements and training for New Shepard's flight lowers the barrier to entry by allowing more diverse and inclusive participation in space," Hutchison said. (PTI)

#### 10 THE HILLS TIMES

## Prabhas-starrer 'Kalki 2898 AD' crosses ₹ 500 crore-mark at global box office

**NEW DELHI, July 1:** Director Nag Ashwin's 3D sci-fi spectacle "Kalki 2898 AD" has grossed ₹ 555 crore worldwide at the box office in its opening weekend, the makers said on Monday. Mounted on a reported budget of ₹ 600 crore, the multilingual

movie features a star-studded cast of Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, Amitabh Bachchan and Kamal Haasan. Previously titled "Project K", "Kalki 2898 AD" is billed as a

fusion of the Hindu epic Mahabharata and science fiction and is produced by Vyjayanthi Movies. Vyjayanthi Movies shared the latest box office figures on its

official X page, with the caption: "555 CRORES & counting... "The BIGGEST FORCES are dominating the GLOBAL BOX OFFICE, show no signs of slowing down #Kalki2898AD

#EpicBlockbusterKalki @SrBachchan @ikamalhaasan #Prabhas @deepikapadukone @nagashwin7 @DishPatani @Music\_Santhosh @VyjayanthiFilms @Kalki2898AD @saregamaglobal @saregamasouth."

The film had a global release on Thursday in six languages: Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi and English.

In a separate post, the banner said the Hindi version of "Kalki 2898 AD" crossed ₹ 115 crore (net box office collection) in the

According to Prathyangira Cinemas, which released the movie in the US, by earning USD 10.5 million "Kalki 2898 AD" has become the "highest grossing first weekend film in North America

The movie also stars Disha Patani, Saswata Chatterjee and Shobhana. It is reportedly the most expensive feature film in In-



### Thank you to everyone who has been concerned: Luv Sinha on father Shatrughan Sinha's health



MUMBAI, July 1: Actor Luv Sinha on Monday thanked well-wishers for their concern over his father Shatrughan Sinha's health, reiterating the veteran star-MP is admitted to a hospital here after he developed a "strong fever" and not because he underwent a surgery The 77-year-old was taken to the medical facility some time last week for an annual check-up as well. One should steer clear of "unverified news", Luv said.

"In regard to my father's health I'd like to clarify that there was no surgical procedure, and one

shouldn't believe unverified news. 'We took my father to the hospital for his annual checkup, and because he had a strong fever.

Thank you to everyone who has been concerned," he wrote on X.

Sinha, popular for '70s and '80s films such as "Mere Apne", "Kalicharan", "Vishwanath",
"Kaala Patthar" and "Dostana", was earlier this month elected as TMC MP from West Bengal's

Asansol in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

On June 23, he and his wife, actor-politician Poonam Sinha hosted their actor-daughter Sonakshi Sinha's wedding to her longtime partner and "Double XL" co-star Zaheer Iqbal Previously, Luv had said Sinha was admitted to a private hospital here due to a "strong fever".

He also denied reports that the veteran actor underwent a minor surgery.

"My father had a strong fever and we decided to take him to the hospital so that he could recover and we could have his yearly tests done as well. I have been going there (to the hospital) every day, so (I) can tell you that there was no surgical procedure," Luv had said in a WhatsApp

### Manisha Koirala meets 'Indian' co-star Kamal Haasan, calls him 'one of the brilliant minds'

MUMBAI, July 1: "Heeramandi" star Manisha Koirala on Sunday shared a picture with her "Indian" co-star Kamal Haasan, whom she described as one of the brilliant minds she had an opportunity to work with.

Haasan was recently in Mumbai to promote his upcoming film "Indian 2: Zero Tolerance", the sequel to the 1996 film "Indian".

Koirala, who also worked with the Tamil star in 2001's "Aalavandhan" ("Abhay") and "Mumbai Xpress" (2005), posted their photograph on her Instagram page. "One of the brilliant minds that I had an opportunity to work with..books and films n now fashion is his world. He recommended amazing books which stretches one's mind & soul..his unique & deep observations on life amazed me decades ago ..

"His cinematic understanding is unparalleled.. I can have long hours of conver-



In a previous post, Koirala said she watched "Kalki 2898 AD", which features Haasan in the role of the main antagonist Supreme Yaskin. Directed by Nag Ashwin, the starstudded sci-fi epic has earned Rs 415 crore globally since its release on Thursday.

"Watched #kalki #lovedthefilm #moviedayout," she captioned her Instagram Story S Shankar's "Indian 2", titled "Hindustani 2" in Hindi, is slated to be released on July 12. It will also feature Kajal Aggarwal, Rakul Preet Singh and Siddharth.

### Freeman thanks fans for calling out unauthorized AI version of his voice

LOS ANGELES, July 1: Hollywood veteran and legendary narrator Morgan Freeman expressed gratitude towards his fans after they criticised the unauthorised AI version of his voice on social media.

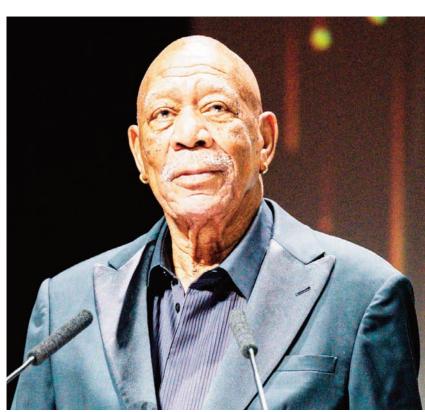
Known for his distinctive voice, the 87year-old has narrated films such as "The Shawshank Redemption", "War of the Worlds" and "Conan the Barbarian" as well as several documentaries, including "Cosmic Voyage" and "Slavery and the Making of America".

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Freeman's comments came after a TikTok user allegedly introduced herself as the niece of the actor and shared a few videos reportedly featuring a narration from an AIgenerated version of his voice.

"Thank you to my incredible fans for your vigilance and support in calling out the unauthorized use of an A.I. voice imi-

"Your dedication helps authenticity and integrity remain paramount. Grateful. #AI #scam #imitation #IdentityProtection," the

Oscar winner wrote in an X post on Friday. Recently, actor Scarlett Johansson threatened legal action against OpenAI for allegedly copying and imitating her voice after she declined to license it to the company. (PTI)



### 'BARZAKH' IS DOWNRIGHT EXPERIMENTAL AND I **LOVE IT: FAWAD KHAN**



NEW DELHI, July 1: Pakistani superstar Fawad Khan says he jumped at the opportunity to feature in the upcoming drama series Barzakh as he always wanted to attempt something "out of the ordinary".

Asim Abbasi, known for Churails and Cake, has directed the show which reunites the actor with his Zindagi Gulzar Hai co-star Sanam Saeed. It is produced by Shailja Kejriwal and Waqas Hassan. Khan said working on Barzakh was an amazing experience. "I grew to love the people I was working with and it felt like being at home. After having seen Cake, when I was approached for 'Barzakh', I jumped at the opportunity. Asim's work sets him apart as a very unique director whose emphasis is on character development in a way that is contemporary.

"Also, I've always wanted to attempt something out of the ordinary and Barzakh is nothing ordinary. It's downright experimental and I love it. Asim and Shailja are a power combo. They've tuned into each other's sensibilities and aesthetics. That makes the process all the more easier," the actor said in a

According to the makers, Barzakh blends magical realism with supernatural fantasy in a family reunion setting, promising an unforgettable narrative. It will have its worldwide premiere on Zindagi's YouTube and ZEE5 on July 19.

statement.

The trailer of the series, which was released on Monday, gives a sneak peek into the poignant journey of a 76-yearold man who stuns his estranged children and grandchildren by announcing

his wedding to the ghost of his first true love.

"This unconventional event sparks emotional revelations and confrontations as family members gather, unsure whether to celebrate or intervene. As seen in the trailer, 'Barzakh' intricately weaves together folklore against the stunning Hunza Valley backdrop, revealing a mystical world where everyone is interconnected. Amidst the turmoil, a haunting question lingers: 'When all has withered, withered, will love endure?" read the official synopsis.

Salman Shahid, M Fawad Khan, Eman Suleman, Khushhal Khan, Faiza Gillani, Anika Zulfikar, and Franco Giusti also round out the cast.

"Under Asim & Shailja there

Khan also praised Abbasi and Kejriwal for leading the team ably.

are many other people who've made this journey memorable. Namely Zoobia, Hussain, Nabeel, Ariana, Yasser and last but not the least Waqas Hasan.

"As a producer, how Waqas brought the story to life is nothing short of extraordinary, and his dedication to the craft is deeply inspiring. I'd like to keep the theme of the show a secret. It's a family reunion under supernatural circumstances. That's all I'll say for now." Working with Saeed after all these years is "still a comfort zone", he said about his Zindagi Gulzar Hai co-star.

"I enjoyed it and I believe in her skills. It always makes my job easy. I hope you enjoy watching it as much as we enjoyed the process of making it," he added.

Saeed said being part of Barzakh was an "immensely rewarding" experience. (PTI)

# Bindra's advice to Paris-bound Indian athletes

India's first individual Olympic gold-medallist, Abhinav Bindra knows a thing or two about handling big-stage pressure and he has a simple piece of advice for those aiming for the podium in the upcoming Paris Games -stay in the moment and have a flexible mind

Bindra, who won the yellow metal in men's 10m air rifle event in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, wants Indian athletes to enjoy their time at the world's greatest sporting extravaganza.

"I want to wish all the athletes the very best of luck. They've done us all proud already by giving it their all and doing consistently well over so many

CHANDIGARH, July 1: As competitions. And now it's their a consistent period of time, moment to shine on the world stage," Bindra said during a meet and greet programme organised by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) here on

> "The Olympics is the greatest platform to sport in the world, and the whole world is waiting to welcome them. The whole country is waiting for our athletes to do their best and make us all proud.

"I would just want them to give their best to stay in the moment, to remain flexible in mindset and just back the work that they had put in. You know, true confidence comes from the effort that has been put in over which I'm sure they have," the 41-year-old added.

Two-time Asian Games goldmedallist and Asian champion shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, who is bound for Paris, said star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's gold-medal winning feat in Tokyo has inspired other track-and-field athletes.

"Our athletes are performing well and they will win medals in the Olympics. Since Neeraj Chopra won the gold medal in the Tokyo Olympics, other athletes also want to win medals for their country," he said.

Asian Games silver medallist javelin thrower Kishore Kumar Jena, who will also be partici-



along side Chopra, hopes India will clinch its best-ever medal haul in athletics in Paris.

"We take pride in representing our country. It is a matter of happiness that many have qualified for the Olympics from India, and we hope to win the highest number of medals," he

"The journey has not been easy, it has involved a lot of hard work, staying away from home, and practising day and

Jena said he is satisfied with his preparation for the Paris

"Preparations are going well,

pating in the Paris Olympics form at our best and give 100 per cent.

"Since 2021, I have been at the national camp in Patiala, receiving full support from the Indian government to enhance my

Sprinter Hima Das, who could not take a shot at Paris qualification due to fitness issues, lauded the AFI for its unwavering support to the athletes.

"As an athlete I will say that everyone should give their best. The Athletics Federation of India has helped athletes reach this level and now it is your turn to show them your achievements," said the athlete from Assam, who is nicknamed and we are determined to per- Dhing Express. (PTI)

# India overcome resilient South Africa to win one-off Test by 10 wickets

CHENNAI, July 1: India were made to wait a tad longer for the winning moment by centurion Laura Wolvaardt, but they eventually went past the line convincingly by 10 wickets on the fourth and final day of the one-off women's Test against South Africa here on Monday.

India were required to chase a modest 37 after bowling out South Africa for 373 in their second innings and the hosts accomplished the task in 9.2 overs without losing a wicket. India had declared their first innings closed at 603 for six.

The opening duo of Shubha Satheesh (13 not out) and Shafali Verma (24 not out) steered their side home comfortably.

This is India's second 10wicket triumph in Tests after a scoring a similar win over the Proteas at Paarl in 2002.

After getting bundled out 266 in their first innings, South Africa fought well through hundredmakers Wolvaardt (122, 314b, 16x4) and Sune Luus (109, 203b, 18x4) in the second innings.

However, SA could only delay the inevitable.

Resuming at the overnight 232 for two, and trailing India by 105 runs. Wolvaardt and Marizanne Kapp appeared to be in good



The former brought up her maiden Test century, also becoming the first woman batter to score a Test, ODI and T20I ton in

the same year. However, Kapp was soon

With still work to be done for

Sharma for 31, while Sneh Rana the innings but was dismissed for ousted Delmi Tucker for a duck 122 when Rajeshwari Gayakwad as the tourists slipped to 266 for trapped her in front to reduce the visitors 281 for five.

But the Proteas marched on the South Africans to take the and went past the 300-run mark,

against the Indians. The previous best was the 266 that made in

their opening innings here. South Africa needed less than 50 runs to take the lead at this stage. Nadine de Klerk and Sinalo Jafta stuck together until the lunch break and SA were 302 for five then.

However, in the post-lunch session, Jafta retired hurt due to cramps, as the visitors sent Anne Dercksen to join De Klerk.

But Dercksen departed for five, falling to Pooja Vastrakar with SA trailing by 27 runs.

Meanwhile, the tourists went past 316 to register their highest score in Test cricket, going past the 315 they made against England at Shenley in 2003.

Although South Africans closed in on a lead they struggled

to get the partnerships going. The next stand was worth 14 runs between De Klerk and Tumi Sekhukhune before the latter was run out for six.

Jafta returned to bat, but she could add just nine more runs and departed for 15 and they went to tea at 336 for eight.

The hosts eventually conceded the lead in the final session. This was the third instance of India giving away the lead after enforcing a follow-on and the fifth

### Praggnanandhaa misses against Wesley So on another day of draws



**BUCHAREST (ROMANIA),** July 1: Grandmaster R Praggnandhaa yet again squandered promising position to settle for a draw against American Wesley in the fifth round of Superbet Classic tournament as none of the five boards produced any decisive re-

The lead positions remained unchanged with Fabiano Caruana of United States still ahead on 3.5 points, enjoying a half point lead over world championship challenger D Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa.

French duo of Alireza Firouzia and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia and Wesley share the third spot on 2.5 points each, a half point ahead of Anish Giri of Holland and Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan.

Local hopeful Daniel is still at the bottom with

Gukesh also enjoyed some advantage that slipped away against Abdusattorov while Vachier-Lagrave played solidly to hold Caruana.

Bogdan-Daniel drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi in the 10-player double round-robin event, offering USD 350000 as prize money.

Praggnanandhaa is usually spot-on when it comes to accurate calculation or tactics but somehow here he has been missing on advantageous positions and also some winning moves.

Having missed out on a technically winning endgame against Gukesh, Wesley So found himself lucky as the Indian missed a not-so-difficult manoeuvre that he would find in seconds on an-

Inspired by the presence of Garry Kasparov in the playing hall, Praggnanandhaa chose the King's Indian defense as black, faced the Fianchetto variation and did not have many troubles in maintaining the balance.

Wesley became a little ambitious towards the final stages of the middle game and this is where Praggnanandhaa could have penetrated his king side decisively. Wesley survived with the skin of his teeth.

Gukesh also had a chance against Nodirbek through a tactical stroke that would have ensured consistent pressure and a long-term advantage. The game was drawn without much ado once Gukesh missed out on the opportunity.

Caruana showed his opening Vachier-Lagrave in a Ruy Lopez open. The American went for a little known variation as black and it was clear that his homework ran deep. Vachier-Lagrave decided not to take his chances for too long and drew vide repetition in just 28 moves.

Monday is the only rest day in the tournament and the sixth round will be played on Tuesday.

Results round 3: D Gukesh (Ind, 3) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 2.5); Wesley So (Usa, 2.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra. 2.5) drew with Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 3.5); Anish Giri (Ned, 2) drew with Firouza Alireza (Fra, 2.5); Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou, 1.5) drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (FID,

### Akula, Bernadette among 47 players in UTT draft for 2024 season

MUMBAI, July 1: India's rising player Sreeja Akula, Romania's world No 10 Bernadette Szocs, Nigeria's Aruna Quadri and German Nina Mittelham are among the top players listed for the Ultimate Table Tennis 2024 draft to be held here

The upcoming edition of UTT is slated in Chennai from August 22-September 7. The players draft will have 47 players including eight foreign men's and

women's players and among them 43 will

be drafted into the teams. The Paris Olympics-bound Indian stars Sharath Kamal, Manika Batra, Harmeet Desai. Manay Thakkar and G Sathiyan have already been retained by their re-

Among Indians, the world No 24 Akula, who recently claimed the WTT Contender singles title, will garner attraction. For the 29-year-old Bernadette, this will be her third appearance, while the 16th ranked Quadri will be set for his fourth. Mittleham will play in her maiden season. Sharath Kamal remains with Chennai Lions while G Sathiyan will play for Dabang Delhi TTC again.

Desai will continue to represent Goa Challengers while Thakkar will turn up for U Mumba TT. Manika will play for Bengaluru Smashers.

With Puneri Paltan not retaining any of their players, they will be a part of the opening round of the draft along with new teams Jaipur Patriots and Ahmedabad SG Pipers.

"All eight teams will be in action from the second round as each franchise will have to make a six-member squad, consisting of one foreign male and female player and two Indian male and female players," a release from the organisers said. Among the other Indian players in the draft will be Asian Games doubles bronze medallists Ayhika Mukherjee and Sutirtha Mukherjee, Yashaswini Ghorpade, Diya Chitale, Poymantee Baisya and Taneesha Kotecha among women.

Snehit SFR, Jeet Chandra, Manush Shah and Yashansh Malik are the other men's players in the draft.

Among the foreign players in the draft are this year's World Team Table Tennis

Championships silver medallists Jules Rolland and Lilian Bardet of France, four-time Olympian and 2015 European Championships doubles gold medallist Joao Monteiro of Portugal, 2019 World Championships doubles silver medallist Alvaro Robles of Spain and South Korea's World No 70 Cho Seungmin in the men's category.

Among the women players, Thailand's

Suthasini Sawettabut (WR 56), who played for title winners Goa Challengers last year, Sakura Mori (WR 27), Lily Zhang (WR 30) and Orawan Paranang (WR 36) will be part of the draft.

The competition will be divided into two groups of four teams each this year.

how you are going to implement

them against top batters like

Laura (Wolvaardt) and Ma-

rizanne Kapp. We need to carry

forward these small learnings,"

South Africa as "satisfactory."

Rana termed the win over

"As far as satisfaction is con-

cerned, we are delighted, espe-

cially when you defeat the best

teams with great performance,

particularly when you need it the

most. So, nothing's more satis-

Having played three Tests in

Test is one of the best formats

the last six months, Rana felt

there should be more bilateral

of the sport, and the more it is

played, the better for women's

cricket. "Thanks to BCCI again

for reviving the multi-day (do-

mestic) competitions, and I feel

we should play more than a Test

(per series)," she concluded.

factory than that," she said.

matches in women's cricket.

he elaborated.

### Anand wins Leon Masters for the 10th time

LEON (SPAIN), July 1: Five- Topalov and Anand had ended in champion Viswanathan Anand proved his mettle once again and defeated Spaniard Jaime Santos Latasa 3-1 in the finals to win the Leon Masters for a 10th time here.

The 54-year-old Anand, who lived in Spain for many years before shifting his base back to Chennai, proved yet again that this was one of his favourite hunting grounds. It was in 1996, or 28 years back, that Anand won his first title here.

The format featured four players with his compatriot Ariun Erigaise, the world number four, as the fourth seed and Bulgarian Veselin Topalov being the other two players in the tournament.

Each round featured four games of 20 minutes each with a 10-second increment after every move. Arjun had lost to Santos Latasa in the second semifinals by a score of 1.5-2.5 which was considered a sensational victory for the latter given the vast differ-

ence in the ratings. Earlier in the first semifinal, the legendary duel between

favour of the Indian who won the third game before drawing the remaining three. Though the scoreline suggests otherwise, Anand conceded that it was not so easy.

Santos Latasa pushed hard in the first game and in the second too, he had an extra pawn in a complicated game that ended in a draw. Anand won the third game with black pieces out of an Italian opening. It was a balanced middle game wherein Anand was pleasantly surprised as the Spaniard went for a wrong trade that cost him two pieces for a rook and a couple of pawns.

The technical genius in Anand was soon at work as he kept on creating problems that became increasingly difficult to solve for his opponent. The game lasted 45 moves. Santos Latasa faced an unpleasant task of winning on demand as black in the final game.

This is something that even the best in the world would not feel comfortable with and Anand got a fine position after trading the Queens early out of a Rossolimo opening. (PTI)

### Match was always inclined towards India despite SA fightback: Sneh Rana CHENNAI, July 1: Spinner balls and when and how to use

African fightback in the second innings of the one-off Test here on Monday. Despite their early domination. India had to wait till the fourth and final day of the Test for the eventual 10-wicket victory. "Are you demotivating us? (chuckles) We had positive vibes throughout (the match) and it

Sneh Rana said India were al-

wavs confident of closing out

the match despite the South

game away from us," Rana said in the post-match press meet. "The match was always inclined towards India. We kept believing that we could take a wicket anytime, and that's exactly what happened," she added. Rana said it was all about keeping calm when the South Africans were offering resistance. "There will be phases during Tests when the opposition will build partnerships. But to

keep ourselves calm and keep

South Africa was taking the

our minds going, we chirped and cracked jokes among ourselves which helped to keep us awake," she said. Rana bagged 10 wickets in the match for 188 runs, the second-best Test bowling figures by an Indian in Tests after former pacer Jhulan Goswami's 10 for 78. The spinner said she was working on her skills at the bowlers' pre-series camp at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru.

"We don't go really into the never did cross our minds that technical part because the time is extremely less. But we did plan what we could bowl, what we could do and how to bring the best out of ourselves. Be it our stock ball or the variation, we only worked on those aspects," she replied to a PTI query. "Obviously, the pitch (here) was favouring the batters. Conditions were difficult (for the bowlers), but you get more-orless similar conditions every-

> "Thus we need to consistently work on variations and stock

where nowadays.



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# New head coach to take charge from Sri Lanka series: Jay Shah

dian cricket team will have a new head coach from the limited-overs series in Sri Lanka starting later this month, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Monday but did not reveal who has been finalised to succeed the outgoing Rahul Dravid.

Former opener Gautam Gambhir is expected to succeed Dravid as the India head coach. The Cricket Advisory Committee has also conducted the interviews for the highprofile job and short-listed Gambhir and former India women's coach W V Raman.

The appointment of a selector will also be made soon, said Shah, who is in the Caribbean with the India squad that won the T20 World Cup title on Saturday, beating South Africa by seven runs in the final.

"Both coach and selector appointment will be made shortly. CAC has interviewed and shortlisted two names and after reaching Mumbai whatever they have decided we will go by that. VVS Laxman is going to Zimbabwe but new coach will join from Sri Lanka series," Shah tld select media, referring to the Zimbabwe tour beginning July 6.

The Indian team is due to tour Sri Lanka for three T20Is and as



Shah showed his elation after India won an ICC title after 11 years here on Saturday. He praised the efforts of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, who played a matchwinning knock in the final.

Both the stalwarts announced their retirement from T20Is after the triumph and were joined by allrounder Ravindra Jadeja in saying goodbye to the format a day later.

"It was same captain last year and same here in Barbados. We

won all games except the final in 2023 as Australia played better. This time we worked even harder and played better to win the title.

"If you look at other teams, experience counts. From Rohit to Virat, all excelled. Experience makes a lot of difference, in World Cups you can't experiment much

"A good player knows when to say goodbye to the game, we saw

strike rate, it is better than a lot of young players," he said. How does he see the transition

panning out following the retirement of Rohit, Kohli and Jadeja? "Transition has already happened with three greats retiring,'

India, who had built a reputation of losing the big finals over the past decade, finally ended their title drought after losing two ICC finals over the last 12 months and

"I would want India to win all the titles. We have the biggest bench strength, only three players from this team are going to Zimbabwe. We can field three teams if the need arises.

The way this team is progressing, our target is to win World Test Championship final and Champions Trophy. There will be a similar squad playing there. The seniors will be there," said Shah.

On Hardik Pandya's all-round performance in the World Cup and chances of him taking over captaincy from Rohit, Shah said: "Captaincy will be decided by the selectors and we will announce it after discussing with them. You asked about Hardik, there were lot of questions over his form but we and selectors showed faith in him and he proved himself."

Shah also confirmed that an A team will be travelling to Australia later in the year ahead of the five Tests Down Under. The BCCI is planning a felicitation after reaching India but the Hurricane warning has shut down the airport in Barbados indefinitely, leaving the victorious squad stranded.

"Like you we are also stuck here. After the travel plans are clear, we will think about the felic-

### Seniors will be there in CT and WTC; next T20 captain to be decided by selectors: Shah

**BRIDGETOWN, July 1:** BCCI Champions Trophy scheduled in February-March in Pakistan. Secretary Jay Shah on Monday asserted that "seniors will be there" in next year's Champions Trophy and the World Test Championship final if India qualifies for it, while a decision on whether Hardik Pandya succeeds Rohit Sharma as the next T20 captain will be taken solely by the selectors.

Talking to select media here, Shah lauded the contribution of senior players in the side's T20 World Cup triumph at the end of which skipper Rohit, senior batting star Virat Kohli and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja announced their retirement from the shortest format's international assignments.

"Transition has already happened with three greats retiring,' Shah said when asked about his thoughts on the team's next phase following the retirement of the seasoned trio.

"The way this team is progressing, our target is to win the World Test Championship final and Champions Trophy. There will be a similar squad playing there. The seniors will be there,' he added.

This means that fitness permitting, senior players are likely to be available for the nine ODI matches that India will play before the

India's ODI assignments before that include three games each against Sri Lanka (away), New Zealand (home) and England (home).

On Hardik Pandya's all-round performance in the World Cup and chances of him taking over captaincy from Rohit in the T20 format, Shah said: "Captaincy will be decided by the selectors and we will announce it after discussing

"You asked about Hardik, there were lot of questions over his form but we and selectors showed faith in him and he proved himself."

Pandya served as Rohit's deputy in the format. India broke the shackles of a tor-

menting 11-year run during which the side failed to win a single ICC After losing two ICC finals over

the last 12 months, the trophy drought finally ended here and Shah hoped the winning run will

"I would want India to win all the titles. We have the biggest bench strength, only three players from this team are going to Zimbabwe. We can field three teams if

### IOA EC members decide not to take any allowance for their Paris trip



NEW DELHI, July 1: Concerned that their image will take a hit if they accept the dearness allowance, which is higher than the athletes for the Paris Olympics, the IOA Executive Council memrather make their own arrangements.

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) EC also asserted that it was not dependent on the government funds for travel abroad since all the members come from "sound backgrounds".

The IOA Executive Council members were to receive USD 300 per day (approx ₹ 25,000) as per the budget estimates. The members were also to receive an additional USD 1000 (around ₹ 90,000) per day for accommodation purpose during their five-day visit.

What drew criticism was that the athletes' allowance was fixed at USD 50 per day even as a sum

of ₹2 lakh was also sanctioned for each athlete for achieving the Olympic qualification.

Concerned that a wrong message has gone to the public, the IOA Executive Council met on bers have decided that they will Sunday morning and decided to not take any such payment and discuss the issue before the Indian contingent's send-off ceremony at a city hotel.

"Yes, we discussed this issue. Most of the members agreed that we should not accept this allowance. A wrong message has gone to the public and it needs to be rectified," an EC member told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

"Actually, all the EC members are financially well-off. They don't need to depend on the government funds for such travels. Each of us can manage it easily. And this 1000-1500 dollars amount does not make any difference to us.

"Our senior Vice President Mr Ajay Patel is chairman of the Gu-

jarat State Co-Operative Bank Ltd and other members are also financially sound. Do you think we are dependent on such amount? Honestly, we are not dependent on the

government funds." The member also claimed that the DA amount was not raised to USD 300 from USD 150 as it has been reported.

"If you get the details checked. the DA amount was USD 300 even in Tokyo, it was nor raised for this edition of the Games. It was wrongly reported that the sum has been doubled for this edition," the member asserted. There are 15 members in the Executive Council, including two Athletes' Commission representatives.

IOA President PT Usha had sought approval from all the members to sanction the budget estimates but treasurer Sahdev Yadav had sought an EC meeting for discussion before final ap-

#### Six Indians in ICC Team of the Tournament

**DUBAI**, **July 1**: The International Cricket Council has picked six Indians in its 'Team of the Tournament' for the just-concluded T20 World Cup but there was no place for star batter Virat Kohli, who played a match-winning knock in the final against South Africa.

In his new role as an opener, Kohli had an underwhelming World Cup before rising to the occasion in the big final where he was adjudged man-of-the-match for his 59-ball

India pipped South Africa by seven runs in a sensational comeback in the death overs to win their second T20 World Cup title after 17 The ICC XI featured Indian skip-

per Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel and two pacers in Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh. Rohit led from the front with 257

runs at a splendid strike-rate of 156.7 to his name. He was the second most leading run-getter after Afghanistan's Rahmanullah Gurbaz. The Player of the Tournament and India's trump card in their title win. Bumrah returned with 15 wickets

But more than his wickets, his impact in restricting the scoring rate of teams made Bumrah India's most important player right through the tournament. His economy rate of 4.17 was the best ever by any bowler in a single edition of the men's T20 World Cup.

Following their historic semifinal finish. Afghanistan found three players in the ICC team, including left-arm quick Fazalhaq Farooqi, who topped the wicket-takers chart jointly with Arshdeep (17 wickets

### Neeraj Chopra opts out of Paris Diamond League: Report



**NEW DELHI, July 1:** Olympic and world champion javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra has opted out of this Sunday's Paris Diamond League, citing the adductor niggle that has been troubling him for the past couple of months, according

Speaking to 'ESPN', Chopra said he is focussing on training and strengthening his blocking leg.

All three white ticked off; one

red to go, tick it: Dravid to Kohli

when my groin gets pulled. We're working on that to see how we can reduce the impact on the groin and control the pressure on it," he said, explaining the issue for which he will consult "different doctors" after the Paris Games.

"I could have competed in more events for sure and that was the plan. But I have realised that my that, I need proper confidence that I "I need to strengthen my block- first. Even if I feel the slightest dis- want to feel confident when I run on ing leg when I throw because that's comfort or like I am pushing my-the runway," he pointed out. (PTI)

self too much in training, I've learnt to pause for a bit," he added. The block phase is a crucial ma-

neuver as it is the point at which the pace generated by the run-up is transferred to the hip and then to the throwing arm before the javelin Chopra, who topped the field in

last month's Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland, with a throw of 85.97m, said he has become wiser over the years and no longer puts himself at risk to fulfill commitments like he used to do before his Olympic gold. "Back then, if I had an entry in a

competition, I would definitely go and compete no matter what happened. But now with more experience, I am better placed to make correct decisions," he said.

"I was happy with my performance in Turku, but I felt there was more work to do. I was slow on the runway compared to my normal speed.

"I want that speed back and for health is paramount, that comes am fully fit and that my groin is fit. I

### Sikandar Raza to lead young Zimbabwe team against India

Zimbabwe team for the five-match T20I series against world champions India, which begins here

The African side has also named Belgium-born Antum Nagyi in the squad but his final inclusion is subject to the confirmation of his citizenship status, Zimbabwe Cricket said in a release.

Naqvi was born to Pakistani parents in Brussels, Belgium, before moving to Australia, but he was con-

**HARARE, July 1:** Experienced batter Sikandar Raza was on Monday named as captain of a young resent Zimbabwe in international cricket and applied resent Zimbabwe in international cricket and applied for naturalisation.

> Aiming to rebuild under new head coach Justin Sammons after failing to qualify for the just-concluded T20 World Cup, Zimbabwe have picked a young squad under Raza.

> The 38-year-old right-hander, who has 86 matches under his belt, is the team's most experienced player, followed by 29-year-old Luke Jongwe who has featured in 63 games. (PTI)

### OCA EB agrees to yoga in Asian **Games programme, General Assembly** nod pending: IOA chief Usha

NEW DELHI, July 1: IOA presi- IOA is hoping for it to be a medal dent PT Usha on Monday said the Olympic Council of Asia's Executive Board has agreed to include yoga in the Asian Games and a confirmation from the OCA's General Assembly would pave the way for its inclusion to the event's pro-

Usha said OCA acting president Randhir Singh informed her about EB's decision. She thanked him for his "unflinching support" to yoga's inclusion as a competitive sport in the Asian Games.

"I am delighted that the OCA Executive Board spontaneously agreed to India's request to give yoga the recognition it deserves. The proposal shall now move through the Sports Committee to the General Assembly for confirmation," Usha said in an IOA release.

An IOA source said it is just the first step towards yoga's inclusion in the multi-sport event as a medal

"Whether it will be medal sport or demonstration sport, that will be decided by the OCA General Assembly. It's the first step. But since Yoga is prevalent worldwide, the

sport in due course of time," the source told PTI.

The IOA chief said it was a natural step for the competitive sports community to embrace yoga, especially after the world had given it due recognition. "It has a universal appeal and

people around the world have embraced yoga and drawn benefits," Usha said. She also thanked new Sports

Minister Mansukh Mandaviya for his efforts ahead of the OCA meet-

"When we make a collective effort, led by the Prime Minister himself, we can achieve success seamlessly. I am glad India's effort to have yoga included in the biggest celebrations of sport is finding resonance.

Mandaviya had earlier welcomed IOA president Usha's move to get yoga included in the Asian Games

"It is only fair that in keeping with its wide popularity, yoga becomes a competitive sport and is in the Asian Games," Mandaviya said in a statement a few days back. (PTI)

BRIDGETOWN, July 1: Staying true to his no-nonsense taskmaster image, outgoing India head coach Rahul Dravid had an assignment for star batter Virat Kohli even on his last day at work

> the T20 World Cup. "All three white ticked off, one red to go. Tick it," Dravid told Kohli in a video of the Indian dressing room celebrations shared by the ICC on its Instagram page.

and within hours of India winning

By three white he meant the limited-overs global trophies -- the T20 World Cup, the ODI World Cup and the Champions Trophy -all of which Kohli has collected as

What's left now is winning the World Test Championship Final. India have lost the WTC Final twice (against New Zealand in

2021 and Australia in 2023). The 35-year-old Kohli, who retired from T20 Internationals after the World Cup triumph here on Saturday, merely smiled at Dravid as he repeated himself to assert his point, albeit with a warm smile on



The 51-year-old Dravid, who was appointed India coach in 2021, ended his tenure with this

India defeated South Africa by seven runs in the humdinger to



final here.

also featured Suryakumar Yadav,

whose blinder of a catch to dismiss

David Miller proved crucial in the

The Mumbaikar said it would

world crown, having won the title in its inaugural edition in South Africa back in 2007 under Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

In the ODI format, India won the 1983 and 2011 World Cups be-

"No feelings right now, I don't know what to say," he said.

grasp the enormity of the achieve-

Pacer Arshdeep Singh flaunted a couple of polaroid shots of his, one taken on the morning of the final and the other with the winner's medal around his neck and the trophy in his hands in the after-

"This is what belief can do," he

The Indian team is currently stranded here as Barbados has been shut down due to hurricane Beryl, originating in the Atlantic. The category 4 hurricane has intensified with maximum sustained winds of 210 kmph.

The Indian team was supposed to take an Emirates flight from New York via Dubai. A source told PTI that the plan now is to take the team back to India on a charter flight.

The Indian contingent, including support staff, families, and officials, consists of about 70 members. (PTI)

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