

IN BRIEF

2 die mysteriously in Northeast Delhi

New Delhi: Two men died under mysterious circumstances on Friday here, the police said. The deceased have been identified as Firoz (23) and Danish (25), residents of Welcome in Northeast Delhi, they said. According to the police, they got information on Friday afternoon from the JPC Hospital that two persons were brought to the hospital and were declared dead on arrival, adding there were no external injury marks on either of them. During preliminary inquiry, it was found that both Firoz and Danish had stayed for the night with some women in Kabir Nagar, Welcome area, and their party continued till Friday morning, a senior police officer said. Around at 12 pm, they started feeling uneasy and were taken to the hospital. Their bodies have been shifted to the GTB Hospital mortuary for post-mortem examination, the officer said. Both the deceased had criminal cases against them, including a murder case against Firoz, the police said. Efforts are being made to ascertain the sequence of events and further investigation is in progress, they added.

Quack absconding since 2016 arrested

New Delhi: A 42-year-old quack was arrested who was absconding since 2016 and was practising allopathy medicine, the police said on Friday. According to the police, the accused was evading arrest by hiding in Malda in West Bengal and recently had shifted to Delhi. The police said the accused was residing in a posh area to evade arrest and was allegedly treating patients in JJ clusters to earn easy money. The accused has been identified as Krishna Biswas, they said. "The fake doctor had been evading trial proceedings since 2016 and was allegedly treating patients in JJ clusters of R.K. Puram, endangering their lives to earn easy money," DCP Rohit Meena said. The officer further said in August 2015, information was received by the Delhi medical council that a person named Krishna Biswas was treating patients with a fake degree of doctor in JJ clusters of Sector 6 and 7 of RK Puram in Delhi.

1,414 govt school kids passed Neet-UG

New Delhi: More than 1,400 students from Delhi government schools have qualified the Neet-UG this year, education minister Atishi said on Friday. The results for the medical entrance exam National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (Neet-UG) were announced by the National Testing Agency on Tuesday. Atishi said at a press conference that 1,414 students from Delhi government schools qualified the Neet-UG this year. The number has been increasing year after year. In 2020, a total of 569 students had qualified, Atishi said and added that this year's figure is almost two-and-a-half times higher.

MALIWAL ROW: COURT REJECTS BIBHAV'S BAIL

New Delhi: A court here on Friday dismissed the bail plea of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar for allegedly assaulting AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, saying he was facing "grave and serious" charges and that there was an apprehension that he could influence witnesses. Mr Kumar, who was sent to 14 days judicial custody last Friday, has been accused of assaulting Ms Maliwal on May 13 at the chief minister's official residence. He had moved the court for bail for a second time. His first bail plea was dismissed on May 27. Special judge Ekta Gauba Mann said, "...The investigation is at initial stage and there is fear in the mind of victim regarding her security as well as security of her family members as she is receiving continuous threats. There is also every apprehension that applicant or accused Bibhav Kumar would influence the witnesses, if at liberty." "So, I do not find any merit in the present bail application," the judge added while dismissing the plea.



Bibhav Kumar

■ Sangam Vihar is one of the areas that has been hit hardest due to population

Residents struggle for every drop as severe water shortage clutches Delhi

New Delhi, June 7: As winter gives way to summer every year, Sangam Vihar resident Om Lata fears the worst.

Jostling for space with neighbours, often getting into disputes, just to secure enough water from the tanker, Ms Lata's struggles find an echo in hundreds of thousands of Delhi residents as the national capital reels from a severe water shortage.

As the scorching sun batters Delhi, residents of many areas of the national capital have to contend with not just the extreme heat but also a severe water shortage.

Ms Lata, who lives in Sangam Vihar's L Block, emphasised the severity of the shortage, explaining how they have to buy water for everything—drinking, cooking, and cleaning.

She questioned how a family can survive under such conditions.

"We struggle with this problem every year. The thought of summer haunts us because we don't have water to drink. Residents fight over water in queues when the tanker arrives as everyone needs water for their families," she said.

Highlighting the severity, Ms Lata said, "We don't even throw away the dirty water."

Gajendra Pratap, a resident of Geeta Colony,



Delhi minister and AAP leader Atishi addresses a press conference in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

echoes Ms Lata's sentiments.

This issue has plagued Delhi for years. The scarcity begins as soon as the summer starts, he said.

Despite the Delhi government supplying water through tankers, it is insufficient to meet demand and people often return home empty-handed, he said.

"The tanker arrives at 7.00 am and runs out of water by 7.25 or 7.30 am," he said.

Sangam Vihar is one of the areas that has been hit the hardest by the shortage due to its high population density.

Sunita, another Sangam Vihar resident, said, "If you need water, you have to buy it. Otherwise, surviving the summer with one or two buckets of water daily is impossible, regardless of whether you

have kids at home."

A single tanker charges ₹3,000 and even after paying, they still have to wait hours for it to arrive.

Expressing her frustration that the government is not addressing their plight, Ms Sunita said, "Just think, in this heat people are getting sick and we don't even have water to drink."

The national capital has been grappling with a water shortage with the Delhi government accusing Haryana of not releasing its share of water.

The acute shortage has become an "existential problem" in Delhi, the Supreme Court observed on Thursday and directed the Himachal Pradesh government to release 137 cusecs of surplus water to the national capital and Haryana to facilitate its flow.

'Haryana reducing water flow to Delhi'

AVINASH PRABHAKAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

A day after the Supreme Court directed the Himachal Pradesh government to release 137 cusecs of surplus water to the national capital, city minister Atishi on Friday accused the Haryana government of reducing water flow to the national capital in the last three days.

The national capital of Delhi has been grappling with the water crisis this summer and the apex court has also said there should be no politics over water.

Ms Atishi said the city's water crisis would not be solved even if Himachal Pradesh releases water for it as Haryana has "reduced" its share.

She inspected the Wazirabad barrage earlier in the day and accused the Haryana government of "conspiring" against the people of Delhi by continuously stopping the capital's share of water and releasing less water into the Yamuna, even as the Supreme Court is trying to solve the crisis.

While inspecting the Wazirabad barrage, the city minister claimed Haryana

is not giving Delhi its rightful share of water and due to this, the water level has come down to 669.7 feet on June 7 as compared to 671.3 feet on June 2.

"The Supreme Court is trying to solve the water problem. It is continuously hearing this matter and has ordered a meeting of the Upper Yamuna River Board. It will hear the matter again on Monday. But for the last five days, when the hearing was on in the court, the Haryana government has been conspiring behind its back," she alleged.

"Himachal Pradesh is telling the court that it is ready to help, but the Haryana government is now hatching a conspiracy that even if Himachal Pradesh gives water, the problem of Delhiites will not be solved and that is why Haryana is constantly stopping the water that it has to send to Wazirabad," the minister alleged.

She said the issue will be brought before the top court and hoped that the capital will get its share of water and the additional water from Himachal Pradesh without any obstruction.

After LS setback, AAP focuses on Delhi polls

New Delhi, June 7: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) recovering from the loss in the Lok Sabha polls in Delhi has started focusing on the upcoming Assembly elections in the national capital next year, galvanising its MLAs and volunteers to enhance public outreach and undertake development works.

The AAP, despite massive back-to-back mandates in successive Assembly polls in 2015 and 2020 in which it won 67 and 62 seats respectively, met with disappointment in the recent Lok Sabha polls failing to win any of the four constituencies it contested in Delhi.

A senior party functionary said that despite the setback in the parliamentary polls, the AAP is focused on the Delhi Assembly polls due early next year.

"The party leaders and volunteers have been instructed to enhance public outreach in their respective areas. The MLAs have been instructed to ensure implementation of development works that were stalled in their constituencies due to the model code of conduct by utilising local area development funds," he said.

The BJP, which managed a clean sweep in the Lok Sabha polls for the third time in a row, won more

votes in 52 of the 70 Assembly segments spread across seven Lok Sabha constituencies, giving a wake-up call to the AAP.



BJP supporters celebrate outside the new Parliament in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

The AAP in Delhi has its task cut out with its convenor and chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in jail, which leaves its second line of leadership to deal

Delhi to turn into fortress for Modi swearing-in event

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet's swearing-in ceremony, the Delhi police commissioner Sanjay Arora has banned the use of sub-conventional aerial platforms like para-gliders, para-motors, hang-gliders, UAVs, UASs, microlight aircrafts, remotely piloted aircrafts, hot air balloons, small sized powered aircrafts, quadcopters or even by para-jumping from aircraft on June 9 and 10.

"It has been reported that certain criminal, anti-social elements or terrorists inimical to India may pose a threat to the safety of the general public, dignitaries and vital installations by the use of sub-conventional aerial platforms like para-gliders, para-motors, hang gliders, UAVs, UASs, microlight aircraft, remotely piloted aircraft, hot air balloons, small size powered aircraft, quadcopters or even by para-jumping from aircraft etc," the CP order read.

A multi-layered security with five companies of paramilitary personnel, NSG commandoes, drones and snipers will blanket the Rashtrapati Bhawan for the swearing-in ceremony scheduled on

■ **TOP LEADERS** of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bhutan, Nepal, Mauritius and Seychelles are likely to attend the swearing-in ceremony. Hotels in the city such as Leela, Taj, ITC Maurya, Claridges and Oberoi have already been brought under the security cover

May 9, the Delhi police officials said. The national capital will remain on high alert on the day as dignitaries from Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) nations have been invited to the ceremony, officials said.

According to officials, dignitaries attending the swearing-in will be given designated routes from their hotels to the venue and back.

Top leaders of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bhutan, Nepal, Mauritius and Seychelles are likely to attend the swearing-in ceremony. Hotels in the city such as Leela, Taj, ITC Maurya, Claridges and Oberoi have already been brought under the security cover.

Commandoes from the Delhi police's SWAT and NSG will remain deployed around the President's house and various strategic locations on the event day.

Child among 3 electrocuted, electricity dept staff booked

Noida, June 7: Three people, including a child, died due to electric shocks in two separate incidents in Greater Noida in two days, the police officials said on Friday. The police has charged unidentified electricity department employees with causing death due to negligence in connection with the death of the child on Thursday, they said.

A police official said Rabupura resident Shafiq told the police that his seven-year-old son died after an electric shock when he came in contact with a pole on a street in the town.

"Based on his complaint, an FIR under IPC section 304A has been lodged against unidentified employees of the electricity department," the official said, adding that the matter is being probed.

In the other incident, two men died in Attapir village of Greater Noida on Friday, according to the police.

"Sonu (28) and Harkiran (80) died of electric shock at a tubewell belonging to Ramesh, a co-resident of their village. A police team has reached the spot and taken the bodies into custody," a police spokesperson said.

The police said further legal proceedings are underway. — PTI

Enough proof to prosecute: CBI charges Kavitha in excise case

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

The CBI on Friday filed a supplementary chargesheet in a Delhi court against BRS leader K. Kavitha in the corruption case linked to the alleged excise scam, claiming there was sufficient evidence to prosecute her in the matter.

The central probe agency filed the final report before special CBI judge Kaveri Baweja, who will take cognisance of the matter on July 6. The chargesheet was filed under relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The judge also extended the judicial custody of Ms Kavitha, a member of the Telangana Legislative Council, till June 21 in the case.

The agency in its report also said that the investi-



K. Kavitha

gation was still going on and it may file a not her supplementary chargesheet in the matter.

She is daughter of former Telangana chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao was arrested by the CBI Tihaar jail in April, where she was lodged after her arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case related to the alleged scam.

Another central agency-Enforcement Directorate had arrested her (46) from her Banjara Hills residence in Hyderabad on March 15, and she was in judicial custody in the case.

She is currently in judicial custody (JC) in both the cases.

27-yr-old stabbed to death over teasing woman, 1 held

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

A 27-year-old man was stabbed to death by a man for allegedly teasing a woman in Southeast Delhi, an official said, adding that they have nabbed the accused.

The accused was identified as Mohd. Javed (35) and he is also history sheeter of Sunlight Colony police station.

According to the police, on Wednesday, a police control room (PCR) call was received regarding a stabbing incident at the station road at Sarai Kale Khan following which a

police team was rushed to the spot.

Upon reaching the scene, the police team found Rohit a.k.a Mogli, a resident of Sarai Kale Khan lying on road with stabbed injuries and he was shifted to AIIMS trauma where he was declared as brought dead.

"Despite a murder committed in the daylight in the crowded area, no person was willing to provide details of the accused person. Accordingly, as per facts and circumstances, a case was registered at the Sunlight Colony police station and investigation was taken up," said

deputy commissioner of police (Southeast) Rajesh Deo.

The DCP said that the informers were deployed in the area and it was revealed that the accused involved in the murder was also having criminal involvements and he fled from Delhi immediately after the incident.

However, the police team traced the accused to Uttar Pradesh. "Javed was nabbed from Uttar Pradesh and the blood-stained clothes worn by him at the time of incident as well as weapon of offence was also recovered at his instance," said the DCP.



SHORT TAKES

BJP fails to retain 26 reserved LS seats

New Delhi: The BJP lost to Congress or its allies in the INDIA bloc in at least 26 reserved Lok Sabha seats across the country where it had sitting MPs, with some of them Union ministers. The BJP, however, retained at least 42 reserved constituencies and on many other such seats some of its NDA allies such as the Janata Dal (United) and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) emerged victorious. The losing candidates from the saffron party in the recently-concluded general elections included Union ministers Arjun Munda, Kaushal Kishore, Nisith Pramanik and Bharati Pravin Pawar. Among the NDA candidates, Union minister Arjun Ram Meghwal won from Bikaner, Chirag Paswan from Hajipur and former Bihar CM Jitan Ram Manjhi from Gaya. Polls were held in 542 of 543 LS seats with Surat being won by the BJP uncontested. — PTI

MLA held for EVM damage gets bail

Bhubaneswar: Khurda BJP MLA Prashant Jagdev, who faces the charge of damaging an electronic voting machine (EVM), has been granted interim bail for three days — June 9, 10 and 11. The additional district judge granted the bail to the newly-elected BJP legislator. He has been granted bail on three grounds, including participation in the last rites of his nephew, attending the swearing-in ceremony of the new government and on health grounds. Mr Jagdev was arrested on the charges of toppling an EVM during the third phase of polling held in Odisha on May 25. His arrest had triggered great furore with the BJP accusing the BJD of hatching a conspiracy against him. BJP workers even gheraoed Khurda sub-collector's office, demanding his immediate release. "We had sought one month's bail on three grounds. One was his oath-taking ceremony. The second one was on health grounds and the third was to attend the death rituals of his nephew. Considering everything, the court has granted three-day bail," said his advocate Prabhat Dash.

Temple to open in Estonia on June 10

New Delhi: Estonia on Friday confirmed that one of the biggest Hindu temples in the European continent would open on June 10 at Lilleoru in the Baltic nation near the Estonian capital Tallinn. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiv and spans a 5,500 sq m area. The consecration will be conducted by priests from India in the presence of Estonian dignitaries and will include traditional rituals and prayers followed by cultural festivities. The temple has been described as an "archtecturaal" marvel and a "beacon of spiritual guidance".

ABHISHEK MEETS UDDHAV AHEAD OF MODI'S OATH

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, JUNE 7

Trinamul Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Thursday night called on Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray in Mumbai. The meeting between the two prominent INDIA bloc leaders assumed significance as it came amid government formation process by the BJP-led Nationalist Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the Centre. Mr Banerjee met Mr Thackeray at his residence "Matoshree" in Mumbai. The meeting lasted for around 90 minutes. Banerjee was accompanied by TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien. Speaking about the meeting, the Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party BJP is in a minority, but still efforts are being made to form the government. "Narendra Modi and his party is in a minority but they are still trying to form the government and cooking 'khichdi'. But we have doubt that they will not cook it the right way and this will be a loss to the country and there will be political instability," Mr Raut said.



Abhishek Banerjee

■ World leaders to attend oath-taking ceremony ■ Padma awardees among over 8K special guests to grace event

Central Vista, rail workers invited to PM's oath

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to take oath of office on June 9 for the third consecutive term, over 8,000 special invitations have been sent to the individuals from the different walks of life besides several world leaders from the neighbouring countries except Pakistan.

The swearing-in ceremony will be held on Sunday at 6 pm at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

According to the sources, the marginalised communities, ambassadors of the Viksit Bharat including Railway employees working on Vande Bharat and metro trains, sanitation workers, tribal women, transgender, the labourers who were engaged in the Central Vista project and rat-hole miners who assisted in rescuing 41 trapped construction workers in Uttarkashi collapsed last year, are likely to be invited for the oath taking ceremony. Invitations to a large number of the beneficiaries of the central government's schemes have also been sent, they said.

Asia's first loco pilot, Ms Surekha Yadav, will attend the oath-taking ceremony of Mr Modi as Prime Minister for a third

Modi asks MPs not to fall prey to hoaxes about ministries, portfolios

New Delhi, June 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged the NDA MPs not to fall prey to hoaxes about ministries and portfolios and claimed the "INDIA bloc" could also indulge in spreading "fake news" about such issues.

Addressing a meeting of the NDA parliamentary party, he said he did not find much truth in what was being aired on TV in the last couple of days.

"I did not find any truth in what is being run. I said one should ask where do they get such information from. There had not been such an occasion in the last 10 years, so there will be such excitement.

ASIA'S FIRST loco pilot Surekha Yadav will also attend oath-taking ceremony

term, an official from the Central Railways said on Friday. She is piloting the Vande Bharat train from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus-Solapur, is among ten loco pilots invited for the ceremony, the official said.

Apart from these, the prominent people from various professions like

Some people reach out to you and say they have high contacts and will make you minister... We fall for it thinking this could be a way to become a minister," the PM said.

He said now technology is such that people could also come out with a list of ministers with even his signatures on it.

"Some intelligent person may distribute portfolios. People are busy in forming government these days, distributing ministries. Those who know Modi know that all such attempts are useless. If you get a phone call, verify they are from the authority concerned or not," he said. — PTI

lawyers, doctors, artists, cultural performers and influencers have also been invited for the grand ceremony on Sunday.

PM Modi's monthly radio programme "Mann Ki Baat" participants who were acknowledged by him for their contributions to the nation and society are also expected to be presence at the ceremony while the prominent Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri awardees will also grace the occasion.

Court grants Rahul bail in defamation case by BJP

Bengaluru, June 7: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday was granted bail by a special court here in connection with a case filed by the BJP's Karnataka unit for issuing "defamatory" advertisements in mainstream newspapers.

The advertisement ahead of the Assembly polls last year accused the then BJP government in the state of indulging in large-scale corruption during its 2019-2023 rule.

The court had on June 1 granted bail to chief minister Siddaramaiah and deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar, who is also the state Congress chief, after they appeared before it in connection with the defamation case.

Judge K.N. Shivakumar had directed Mr Gandhi to appear before the court on June 7 without fail.

Mr Gandhi apologised to the court on Friday for seeking exemption from personal appearance in the last two hearings. The court accepted his apology and granted him bail on a surety of ₹75 lakhs. — PTI



Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray with Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Vijay Wadetiwar, newly-elected Congress MP Varsha Gaikwad and other party leaders during a meeting at Thackeray's residence in Mumbai Friday. — PTI

Knives out in MP Cong after LS polls wipeout

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, JUNE 7

The complete washout of the Congress in Madhya Pradesh in the Lok Sabha polls has triggered an infighting in the party, with a leader seeking to fix accountability for it on the state leadership.

Former Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Ajay Singh on Friday demanded the AICC leadership to

review the tenure of the state party chief Jitu Patwari in the wake of the party, for the first time, drawing a blank in the just-concluded polls in the state.

"In the 1984 LS polls, the Congress had won all the 40 seats in the undivided Madhya Pradesh. The party for the first time lost all the 29 seats in Madhya Pradesh in the 2024 general election. In Chhattisgarh, carved out of Madhya Pradesh in

RESPONSIBILITY SHOULD be fixed on the state party leadership, said former Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Ajay Singh

2000, too, the party could win one out of 11 seats," Mr Singh said, adding this was the worst debacle faced by the party in any elections in the state.

"Accountability should be fixed for the rout of the party in the elections.

The tenure of state Congress president Patwari should be reviewed," he demanded.

Holding the recent mass exodus in the party as one of the reasons for the party's rout in the polls in the state, he said that responsibility should be fixed on the state party leadership for not being able to arrest the desertion of leaders.

"Why no one in the party tried to stop the exodus of leaders in the

party," he wondered.

Mr Singh took an indirect dig at two Congress veterans and former chief ministers Kamal Nath and Digvijay Singh for not being able to come out of the Chhindwara and Rajgarh LS constituencies to campaign for the party candidates in other seats in the state.

While Mr Nath was camping in Chhindwara to campaign for his son, Mr Singh was contesting from the Rajgarh LS seat.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the media after his meeting with President Droupadi Murmu to stake claim to form the new government at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Friday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

Utterly unjustified: Taiwan on China's reaction to PM's greet

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

Taiwan on Friday lambasted Beijing and said it had "no right to comment" over the response of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to a congratulatory message from Taiwanese leader Lai Ching-te.

"China's unreasonable and arbitrary pressure and intimidation of Taiwan's international friends will only increase negative effects," it added.

It may be noted that China had on Thursday lodged a protest with India on the matter, after PM Modi thanked the Taiwanese leader for the congratulatory message over the recent NDA electoral victory and had pledged to work forward to closer ties as part of the economic and technological partnership between India and Taiwan.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson had

CHINA HAD lodged a protest with India after PM Modi thanked the Taiwanese leader for the congratulatory message over the NDA's recent victory in Lok Sabha elections

said in Beijing earlier on Thursday that China opposes all forms of official interactions between the Taiwan authorities and countries having diplomatic relations with China, adding, "China has protested to India about this."

Noting that "Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi responded to President Lai Ching-te's congratulatory message", Taiwan criticised the Chinese foreign ministry's "representations with India on this issue" and added that Beijing had "falsely claimed" that India should resist Taiwan's "political plots".

In a statement, Taiwan said, "While countries around the world are con-

gratulating India on its successful completion of parliamentary elections and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election, China is using political coercion and spreading fallacies in an attempt to confuse the international community, which in turn highlights the nature of its authoritarian system. It is not only an international practice for Taiwan and India to pay tribute to each other on the results of democratic elections, but it also demonstrates fully the friendship between the two sides and their firm belief in the universal value of democracy. Other countries have no right to comment."

It further stated, "Taiwan, the Republic of China, is not affiliated with the People's Republic of China. This is a status quo generally recognised by the international community," adding that Taiwan would "not give in because of China's intimidation and coercion".

Demand proper investigation into 'slapping' incident Farmer outfits back CISF constable

Chandigarh, June 7: Some farmer outfits on Friday threw their weight behind the CISF woman constable Kulwinder Kaur who allegedly slapped actor and BJP MP-elect Kangana Ranaut, saying the entire sequence leading to the incident needs to be investigated.

Mohali police SHO (airport) Periwinkle Grewal said the matter is under investigation.

CISF officials gave those from the Mohali police information regarding the incident, another police official told reporters. He added that footage from CCTV cameras are being scanned and after that the

next course of action will be taken.

Ms Ranaut, in a video message, had on Thursday said she was hit in the face and abused by the constable during security check at the Chandigarh airport, the ugly fracas breaking out two days after she was elected to the Lok Sabha from Mandi in Himachal Pradesh.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha were among the prominent outfits which said they stand in support of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) woman constable.

The constable, who



Kulwinder Kaur

appeared to be upset with Ms Ranaut over her stance on the farmers' protests, has been suspended and an investigation has been launched. The CISF, tasked with providing security at airports, had

also ordered a court of inquiry into the incident.

SKM (Non-Political) leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee general secretary Sarwan Singh Pandher met Punjab's director general of police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav for a proper investigation into the matter on Friday afternoon.

"The main issue which we raised is that there should be no injustice to the constable. We have been assured that investigations are being held in an impartial manner," Mr Dallewal said after the meeting. — PTI

Cong not sidelining me after loss: Adhir

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BERHAMPORE, JUNE 7

West Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Choudhury on Friday brushed aside rumours of being sidelined by his party after losing his Lok Sabha seat, Berhampore in Murshidabad, after 25 years.

Mr Choudhury claimed, "It is a rumour that the Congress high command is ignoring and sidelining me after my defeat in the polls. Our party president Mullikarjun Kharge has telephoned and invited me to join a crucial working committee meeting on Saturday in New Delhi. I will attend the meeting as a



Adhir Ranjan Choudhury

Congress working committee member."

He also blamed the Trinamul Congress for spreading the rumour. According to the former

Congress MP, he became a victim of two communal forces this time.

Mr Choudhury pointed out, "I have no personal grudge against anyone. After my defeat, TMC goons tortured Congress workers for voting for me and working for me actively. It is an act of revenge politics after the TMC's massive win.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
Name of Work and its location	30-Elect-31-T-2024-25-E3 Electrical work regarding heavy repairs to roof, wall plaster, replacement of deteriorated doors, windows and other allied works in connection with shifting of record room in old TA office at DKZ in the section of SSE/W/DKZ-1 under ADEN/E-IV.
Approx cost of the works in	Rs. 8.92 lacs
Address of the office	Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Earnest Money	Rs. 17900.00
Date & time of submission of tender	12.07.2024, 12.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender	12.07.2024, 12.00 Hrs
Website & notice board	www.irps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	
1712/24	

"This 18th Lok Sabha is a House of new energy..youthful energy and people have given the NDA government one more chance," he said, adding that he will hand over the list of ministers to the President before the swearing-in ceremony.

THE ASIAN AGE

8 JUNE 2024

A chance for INDIA bloc to play role of effective Opp.

The decision of the INDIA bloc with 232 members in the 18th Lok Sabha not to stake claim to form government through underhand deals goes well with the spirit of democracy, and is hence welcome. The Opposition bloc has indeed failed to muster the numbers needed to have a go at power, but it can take justifiable pride in the substantial advances it has made in its paramount mission to save the Constitution and democratic institutions in this country by propelling itself as a formidable force in the lower house of Parliament.

The INDIA bloc's good showing in the elections has many reasons, but the fact that it has created its own narrative for the national elections around the real life issues of the people such as unemployment, inflation, rural distress, reservation for backward classes and farmer issues comes up at the top.

Most topics on the INDIA agenda resonated with the people in the country — unemployment has hit historical levels, Agnipath scheme sealed the opportunity for lakhs of youth to have an honourable job and a decent career, while question paper leaks cast a shadow on governmental efforts. The people felt the Opposition leaders were taking up their causes when they talked about the other issues, too. As a result, the INDIA bloc has almost doubled its numbers compared with that in the previous House.

The NDA's campaign, led by no lesser than Prime Minister Narendra Modi, took a turn for the worse after the second phase of the poll with brazen communal statements filling the air, seeking to polarise voters on religious basis. Appeals to the Hindutva agenda returned with extra force, too.

The absence of the INDIA leaders, especially of the Congress, was referred to by senior BJP leaders repeatedly, cursing them with the wrath of the Hindu faithful. The Congress, however, refused to be drawn into the debate and held its position and talked politics. The strategy paid back handsomely.

The reverses the Congress suffered in the Assembly elections in the Hindi heartland helped the party approach the political situation from a realistic point of view, and not from a pedestal. It resulted in better coordination with the other partners. The thumping victory the bloc managed in Uttar Pradesh proved how important trustworthiness and pragmatism are in politics.

The alliance, however, missed certain opportunities that had been offered to it on the platter. The Congress-AAP alliance in Delhi was one such. It was capable of mounting a challenge to the BJP, especially after the arrest of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. However, the leadership of both the parties in the state failed to recognise it and one-upmanship proved a disaster. A different result in Delhi would have changed the outcome of the national election substantially.

The people have now given the INDIA bloc an opportunity to work as a responsible Opposition, supporting the government in matters of national concern while resisting its undemocratic, unilateral moves. A period in Opposition after fighting an election together could also make INDIA bloc a more cohesive unit capable of coming up with a solid alternative to be presented before the people. It is up to it to decide how to make the most of the opportunity.

Why not invite Pakistan PM too?

There is much to be said for the vision with which the interim government is handling the invitations to the swearing-in of Narendra Modi for the third time as Prime Minister of India. "Neighbourhood first" is the principle that is being upheld in invitations being extended to those closest to home like the leaders of Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Mauritius.

Good thinking has also been behind the compilation of the longer list that includes the public with space allocated for the heroic rat-hole miners who rescued workers from the road tunnel collapse in Uttarakhand, besides cleaners and conservancy staff, and Padma awardees, too.

There is grace in remembering the valour of the intrepid who paid no heed to their own safety in rescuing others, the sense of duty in people who must do the most menial jobs and upholding the dignity of labour and the accomplishments of those who have earned recognition in their chosen fields.

The list would, however, have been more complete had the Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his brother Nawaz Sharif been invited to join the others who lead countries in a region that may be fraught with issues and geopolitical tensions and yet no one is a sworn enemy of the other.

After all, this swearing-in ceremony of a Modi 3.0 government represents a shift in the political sands of India for the better which promises that hate, and baggage, will be pushed to the background while humanity and its more common everyday concerns take precedence.

An invitation to Pakistan would have recognised a message of contrition that came from across the border with Nawaz Sharif admitting that Islamabad had violated the Lahore Declaration he had signed with Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in 1999, with the Kargil war following soon afterwards.

It stands to reason that the senior Pakistan politician would not have spoken thus without tacit approval from the Pakistan Army. While the big issues of Pakistan's ISI sponsoring terror on Indian soil and Pakistan's old vanity subject of Kashmir, whose special status was withdrawn by India in 2019, may seem insurmountable problems, the least that can be done at such a time is to accept the olive branch.

Ignoring for the moment the China factor which will always be there in the region, India may do well to address bilateral issues and protect its interests, towards which restoration of trade ties, which would be beneficial logistics-wise to Pakistan, might well be a starting point to a more realistic position on relationships.

KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
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Subhani



Can the new NDA work together for survival?



Sanjeev Ahluwalia

Elon Musk cancelled a pre-poll meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on feeble grounds and went on a business call to China instead. In doing so, he displayed intuition (aided by AI?) that eluded the domestic pollsters after outcomes in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. In the end, the pollsters ate humble pie as the BJP struggled to a total of 240 seats out of 543, 32 short of a simple majority, and far below its 2019 level of 308 seats.

Even in Varanasi, the Prime Minister's adopted constituency, the win margin (difference between the votes of the winner and the next best candidate) was 1,52,513 (about 25 per cent). Observers were quick to point out that just 242 km to the west in the heart of Awadh, in Rae Bareilly, a family bastion passed on by Sonia Gandhi to Rahul Gandhi in this election, the win margin was 57 per cent. "Pappu", as the ruling alliance sometimes derisively refers to Rahul Gandhi, seems to have come a long way.

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections unleashed two tremors for the BJP. The first was the shock that the BJP is not "atma nirbhar" for survival. With just 240 seats versus the 272 needed to form a government, it now desperately needs the alliance partners — principally the 16 Telugu Desam Party seats in Andhra Pradesh and 12 JD-U seats in Bihar — to survive with a wafer-thin majority. This elevates the political profiles of both Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Nitesh Kumar within the NDA to "white knights" from their earlier status as junior alliance partners. The allocation of Union Cabinet portfolios will reflect this. If the BJP is to retain the core sovereign

portfolios of finance, home, external affairs and defence, it will have to give up other key portfolios — Power, petroleum and natural gas, coal and mines, IT, urban affairs and housing or railways. This will dissolve the existing close-knit, intra-party, walled pattern of functioning, with the Prime Minister's Office being the dominant driving force via a direct connect with top civil servants in the ministries.

The second tremor was the structural shift in electoral preferences across states. The biggest shock was the tidal wave of support in Uttar Pradesh for the Samajwadi Party, an INDIA alliance partner, which won 37 of the 80 seats, with the BJP left with 33. The Congress was a distant third with eight seats but the INDIA alliance, with 47 seats, won more than 50 per cent of the seats.

Similarly unsettling were the West Bengal results, where Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress swept the polls, with 29 of the 42 seats. The BJP was a distant second with 12 seats, whilst the Congress was reduced to just one seat. Rajasthan, where the BJP recently came to power in the Assembly polls, chose to play truant in the Lok Sabha elections and returned eight Congress seats, though with 14 out of 25 seats the BJP retained its electoral dominance. Haryana also chose to divide the 10 seats evenly between the BJP and the Congress. In Bihar, whilst the NDA remained dominant with Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) polling 12 seats, the same as the BJP, the balance of power shifts away from the BJP. In Maharashtra, attempting to cannibalise its alliance partner the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Tha-

ckeray) has not helped. The BJP got just nine of the 48 seats, its NDA alliance partners Shiv Sena (Shinde) got seven seats and the NCP (of Ajit Pawar) one seat. In comparison, the Congress got the largest number of seats (13) and together with its INDIA alliance partners — Sharad Pawar NCP (8) and the Uddhav Thackeray Shiv Sena (9) — a majority of 30 out of 48 seats.

It is unwise, however, to assume that the BJP's vote bank has dissipated. It won all 29 seats in Madhya Pradesh and 25 out of 26 seats in Gujarat. In the hill states of North India, the BJP is well entrenched. Himachal Pradesh, which recently elected a Congress government in the Assembly elections, kept its options open by giving a five out of five victory for the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections. In Uttarakhand, the five out of five win was unexceptional since the recent Assembly elections were also won by the BJP.

The BJP won all seven seats in Delhi, decimating the Congress and AAP. More importantly, the BJP's foray into the South continues unabated. In Karnataka, the BJP won 17 of the 28 seats. In Telangana, it won eight of the 17 seats, drawing level with the Congress. The Assembly elections, held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls, reflected continuity in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. But change was the leitmotif in the two larger states. In Odisha, the BJP triumphed by ejecting chief minister Naveen Patnaik, son of the legendary World War II pilot Biju Patnaik, who was chief minister (1961-

63) in a Congress government. The Biju Janata Dal (BJD), in power since 2000, was ripe for a drubbing after nearly a quarter century of decent but somnolent rule by Naveen Patnaik, who unbelievably, drafted a civil servant turned politician to manage the 2024 election. That the Indian political class and the electorate prefers a red line between the bureaucracy and politicians was amply displayed by the results. The BJP, with 78 seats, swept past the 73 seats needed for a majority. The BJD was reduced to 51 seats. The Congress came in third, with 14 seats.

In the Andhra Pradesh Assembly polls, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the original Andhra economic reformer, early digital governance aficionado of the 2000s, and the architect of the new bifurcated Andhra Pradesh in 2014, with its brand-new capital city at Amravati, struck a century with his Telugu Desam Party winning 135 of the 175 seats, leaving the earlier ruling YSR Congress with just 11 seats. Significantly, BJP came in third with eight seats, continuing to consolidate support across all five states in the South.

Management experts believe that in mergers, getting the senior executives to realign expectations is the most difficult part. This becomes worse in coalition politics, where oddballs cannot just be booted out. Cabinet colleagues, especially if they hold substantive portfolios, and alliance partners must be cajoled and negotiated with, not bludgeoned, or ignored into submission. Can Prime Minister Modi shed the President Xi style of "remote, unyielding supreme leadership" projected by him, retrieve his earlier collaborative inner self, and use his expertise at shaping political trends to ensure stability? The survival of the new NDA government is hostage to his personal transformation.

The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation

LETTERS
CLIMATE HELL

The recent report from the European Union's climate change monitoring service underscores a concerning pattern; for the past year, each consecutive month has broken temperature records, with an average increase of 1.63 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This sustained temperature rise demands immediate action to prevent further escalation into what UN Secretary-General António Guterres has termed "climate hell". India has experienced devastating heatwaves in recent months, resulting in 25,000 cases of heatstroke and 56 fatalities, highlighting the urgent need for global attention to address this pressing issue.

Amarjeet Kumar
Hazaribagh

MEDIA REMISS

VILE ABUSE of Muslims on social media has now shifted to the Hindus of Uttar Pradesh, especially Ayodhya for rejecting Mr Modi and the BJP. The loss of Ayodhya is galling because a completely unknown and unsung face has defeated a well-known BJP candidate. Those indulging in this abuse are outsiders, not local residents. The outsiders have absolutely no idea of the distress caused to the local population in providing top-class facilities for tourists visiting the temple. The media too failed to report the actual situation on the ground and the anger of the people.

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

WATER MAFIA

THE SUPREME Court's directive to Haryana to ensure that the additional water Himachal Pradesh has agreed to supply reaches Delhi underscores the issue of water politics in India. Since HP does not share a border with Delhi, the water must be routed through Wazirabad Barrage in Haryana and the Upper Yamuna River Board will measure the extra water entering Hathinikund before transporting it to Wazirabad and Delhi. Delhi is a political victim and the Supreme Court will monitor whether Haryana is cutting off water supply. Meanwhile, the Delhi government also needs to fix its inefficiencies, including water wastage reported to be over a shocking 50 per cent due to leakage, theft and tanker mafia.

Abhijit Roy
Jamshedpur

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"Sufis celebrate the vine
Which yields nectar to the cup
It's but a metaphor, a sign,
They plead with Saki to fill up
The Chalice they believe is God's
Divine Unity with their soul...
Oh Bachchoo, calculate the odds
Of Unity being beyond control?"

— From **The Must Calendar**, by Bachchoo

Did Sunak 'lie' in UK TV debate?
Immigration still poll hot button...

The 2024 elections are upon us in this year of world democracy. In Africa, eighteen countries go to the polls, in America fourteen, in Asia twenty-one, in Europe twenty-nine and then there's Australia and four Pacific territories.

The Mexican, South African and Indian ones are over, disappointing some and causing others to declare triumphs of democracy. I'll stay schtum — two of these are none of my business and one has to be so careful nowadays!

But then I have a vote in the July 4 UK general election. The campaigns of the parties are in full flow and various polls put Labour ahead of the Tories by 20 or 17 points.

The first TV debate of this election campaign between Hedge Soongone and Unkleir Starmer, the Labour leader, took place on Tuesday. Hedge repeatedly needed Unkleir, passing a campaigning message to the studio and viewing audiences, saying that an inde-

pendent review of tax pledges undertaken by the civil service predicts that Labour would put up taxes for every household by £2,000 a year. He repeated this taunt several times with something of a challenging smirk on his face.

The next morning the newspapers and channels revealed that Hedge had been, at best, "misleading the public" and at worst "lying through his teeth". They had discovered that James Bowler, the chief Treasury civil servant, had emphatically asserted in writing that the Treasury's civil service had made no such calculation or claim.

So, even if 51 per cent of viewers thought that Hedge had done better than Unkleir in the debate, the revelation that he had taunted the latter with a lie should now widen the gap in Labour's favour. Or does the British electorate want a PM with his ankle-length pants on fire?

In another peculiar incident, Hedge was being interviewed on some right-wing platform by a journalist interviewer called Piers Morgan — widely seen as Mr Vainglyro himself. These bods, talking about Hedge's vow to send illegal immigrants on flights to Rwanda, ventured into a bet. Morgan bet Hedge £1,000 that the flights would not take off before the election. This was noted by the media. Hedge is the richest PM Britain has had and £1,000 is probably what he pays for a pair of designer underpants. Morgan is not short of a penny or two either. Then Hedge calls the election and

says the Rwanda plan will be implemented after it.

Naturally, Morgan asks for the "grand" which Hedge owes him as a result of "losing" the bet. Hedge shamelessly protests that he won the bet because some weeks ago, one of these illegal immigrants, whose asylum claim failed, had volunteered to go to Rwanda and the Home Office gave him £3,000 to get on a flight. Hedge said this was tantamount to his Rwanda deportation pledge working so he wouldn't pay up. This was at best disingenuous and Piers Morgan protested in print.

As I said, the one grand is as nothing to either of these punters. They should, to my mind, have taken a bet which would really contain some jeopardy. They could, for instance, have wagered that the loser would get on a flight to Rwanda and stay there with his family and perhaps even with his associates — Hedge with Cruella Braverman, Ugly Patel, Clair Coutinho and a few others — and Morgan with the owners of and the presenter-colleagues on the right-wing TV channels for which he works or worked. None of them will be missed.

And that, gentle reader, is enough of one loser (as Donald Wigwam calls his opponents), and so on to the next who has, after insisting he would not, U-turnly announced his candidature for the parliamentary seat of Clacton in the East of England. This is Nigel Farage, who formed the UKIP party which

advocated a stronger Brexit than Boris Johnson at the time. The Party then became the Brexit Party and later called itself "Reform", its present name under whose banner Farage is standing. The Trumpeting epithet can be legitimately and literally applied to him as poor Nigel has stood in seven public elections, five for Westminster, and lost them all.

His first policy announcement on entering the fray was that his party would immediately stop all immigration, illegal and, under the comprehensive statement, possibly even the "legal" ones. No Johnny foreigner here! He hasn't said how he'd stop the wretched of the earth — and some chancers looking for a better life — coming over on boats. Would he get the Royal Navy or the Coast Guard to drown the boats by firing on them? Would he more humanely apprehend every boat and get the Navy to sail them off to Robinson Crusoe island or dump them on some other nation's unmanned shore? Of course, closing down all British work visa and student visa departments worldwide would stop the "legals" coming over also.

No hum — Reform won't form a government. Not now, and from the evidence of the British electorate in the past, ignoring the fascist Oswald Mosley and sending the xenophobe Enoch Powell to virtual exile as a Northern Ireland MP, not ever.

SHORT TAKES

104 KILLED IN VILLAGE ATTACK, SAYS SUDAN PANEL

Port Sudan, June 6: A Sudanese pro-democracy activists' committee on Thursday reported "more than 104" dead in a single day when paramilitary forces attacked a village, as the UN warned of mass displacement and starvation. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which have been at war with the regular army since April 2023, on Wednesday attacked the central village of Wad al-Noura in al-Jazira state "in two waves" with heavy artillery, the Madani Resistance Committee revealed.

NORWAY GAS FLOW TO UK RESUMES AFTER OUTAGE

Oslo, June 7: The flow of Norwegian gas to northern England via the Langede pipeline resumed on Friday as repairs were completed following a June 2 outage that triggered renewed concerns over energy security in Europe. "The ramp-up of the gas transport from the Nyhamna processing plant to the receiving terminal in Easington is ongoing," Norwegian pipeline system operator Gassco said. The outage was caused by a crack in a two-inch pipeline onboard Equinor's offshore Sleipner Riser platform.

VATICAN ARRESTS EX-STAFF OVER MANUSCRIPT SALE

Vatican, June 7: Vatican police arrested a former employee for allegedly trying to sell to the city-state a 17th-century manuscript by Italian Baroque master Gian Lorenzo Bernini that had previously disappeared from archives, a Vatican spokesman said. Experts said the 18-page document, with gilded miniatures, contains the first details of the decorative features in the canopy of St. Peter's Basilica designed by sculptor and architect Bernini. Bernini is considered the leading master of Italian Baroque architecture.

ANTWERP PORT CLOSES DOCK DUE TO OIL SPILL

Brussels, June 7: Authorities at the port of Antwerp have closed a dock and are using drones to monitor the fallout from an oil spill that occurred while a ship was bunkering at one of its docks, a port spokesperson said. Belgium's biggest port closed its Deurganck Dock as well as the Kieldrecht lock, the largest lock in the world when considering water volume, to prevent the spill's spread. The port spokesperson said 20 ships needed to be cleaned from the oil before they could leave the dock, as well as the dock's walls and water.

SAMSUNG STAFF STAGE FIRST EVER STRIKE: UNION

Seoul, June 6: Workers at Samsung Electronics in South Korea staged the first ever strike at the company on Friday, the head of a major union representing tens of thousands of people said. Management at the firm has been locked in negotiations with the union over wages since January but the two sides have failed to narrow their differences. "The first strike at Samsung Electronics is taking place today through the use of paid leave, and it is understood that many employees are participating," Son Woo-mok, head of the union said.

NEPAL RECALLS ENVOYS FROM 11 COUNTRIES

Kathmandu, June 7: Nepal government has recalled ambassadors from 11 countries, including those serving in India and the US and appointed under the Nepali Congress' quota, three months after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" terminated his alliance with the party and joined hands with KP Sharma Oli. Despite strong reservations from Deputy Prime Minister and minister for foreign affairs Narayan Kaji Shrestha, the government on Thursday recalled these ambassadors, including Nepal's envoy to India Shankar Sharma.

28 killed as Israel hits Gaza, tanks advance

Fresh offensive after 40 people killed in attack on school

Cairo, June 7: Israel bombarded central and southern areas again on Friday, killing at least 28 Palestinians, and tank forces advanced to the western edges of Rafah.

A month after rumbling into Rafah, tank-led forces have advanced to the southwest fringes of the city that skirts the Gaza Strip's border with Egypt, residents said.

They said tanks were stationed in the al-Izba district near the Mediterranean coast while snipers had commandeered some buildings and high ground, trapping people in their homes. They said Israel machine-gun fire had made it too dangerous to go out.

Gaza health officials said two Palestinians had been killed in Rafah from tank shelling. In central Gaza, Palestinian medics said at least 15 people died overnight in Israeli bombardments. "I think the occupation forces are trying to reach the beach area of Rafah. The raids were tactical, they entered under heavy fire and then retreated," one Palestinian said.

In Khan Younis, north of Rafah, an Israeli airstrike on a house killed eight people and wounded several, including children, medics said. In north Gaza, three Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a Gaza City school building that was sheltering displaced families, rescue workers said.

Hamas said on Friday militants in Deir al-Balah shelled a house where Israeli troops were barricaded, killing some and



Palestinians pray for people killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip at a hospital in Deir al Balah on Friday.

UN SEES RISK OF ISRAEL-LEBANON CONFLICT GETTING BROADER SOON

United Nations, June 7: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called Thursday for an end to hostilities along the

demarcation line between Lebanon and Israel, warning of the risk of a broader conflict.

— Reuters

wounding others. It said helicopters were seen landing to extricate the stricken Israeli unit.

The Israeli military focused on central Gaza in its latest update, saying it had killed "dozens" of militants and destroyed more militant infrastructure in continuing operations in the al-Bureij refugee camp and nearby city of Deir al-Balah.

Israel's military blames Hamas for Gaza's high civilian death toll, accusing it of operating within densely populated neighbourhoods, schools and hospitals as cover, something it denies. UN and humanitarian officials

accuse Israel of using disproportionate force in the war, which it denies.

On Thursday, Israel hit an al-Nuseirat school building and a Hamas official said 40 people were killed including women and children sheltering at the UN site. "It's just another horrific example of the price that civilians are paying," that Palestinian men, women and children who are just trying to survive, who are being forced to move around in sort of a death circle around Gaza, trying to find safety, are paying," UN spokesperson

Stephane Dujarric said.

— Reuters

Desi flavour in UK poll



SNP leader John Swinney (centre) and parliamentary candidate Chris Stephens (right) during their visit to Glasgow Gurdwara while on the general election campaign trail on Friday.

— AP

China patrols waters near disputed islands, irks Japan

Tokyo, June 7: Japan lodged a protest against Beijing on Friday after four armed Chinese coast-guard vessels entered waters that Tokyo considers its territory.

The Japanese government said it was the first time that four Chinese vessels carrying what appeared to be cannons had entered its territorial waters in the East China Sea surrounding the islands, which Tokyo calls the Senkaku and Beijing calls the Diaoyu.

"I am not in a position to

state what the Chinese side's intentions are, but the intrusion of vessels belonging to China's coastguard into (our) territory is a breach of international law," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said.

China's coastguard said that it had patrolled the waters with weapons. It said its patrol was a "routine action" to safeguard sovereignty and a "necessary step" for peace and stability as well as to counter Japan's "negative moves".

— Reuters

HOUTHIS DETAIN 9 UN STAFFERS IN CRACKDOWN

Dubai, June 7: At least nine Yemeni employees of United Nations agencies have been detained by Yemen's Houthi rebels under unclear circumstances, authorities said Friday, as the rebels face increasing financial pressure and airstrikes from a US-led coalition. Others working for aid groups also likely have been taken.

The detentions come as the Houthis, who seized Yemen's capital nearly a decade ago and have been fighting a Saudi-led coalition since shortly after, have been targeting shipping throughout the Red Sea corridor over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip.

But while gaining more attention internationally, the secretive group has cracked down at dissent at home, including recently sentencing 44 people to death.

Regional officials, speaking to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorised to brief journalists, confirmed the UN detentions. Those held include staff from the UN human rights agency, its development program, the World Food Program and one working for the office of its special envoy, the officials said. The wife of one of those held is also detained.

— AP

Biden sorry for delay in sending arms to Ukraine

Paris, June 7: U.S. President Joe Biden met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Paris on Friday, apologized for congressional delays in approving the latest US aid package, and announced a fresh \$225 million tranche on the sidelines of D-Day events.

The meeting was their first face-to-face encounter since Zelenskyy visited the US in December, when the two pressed Republicans to overcome opposition in their party to more support for Ukraine. They will meet again next week at a G7 summit in Italy, as rich Western nations discuss using Russian assets frozen after the Ukraine invasion to provide \$50 billion for Ukraine. Zelenskyy said last month that Western countries are taking too long to make decisions about aid.

"You haven't bowed down, you haven't yielded at all, you continue to fight in a way that is ... just remarkable," Biden told the Ukrainian leader at the start of their meeting. "We're not going to walk away from you." Biden apologized to Zelenskyy for the delays before the last US aid package passed in Congress in April.

— Reuters



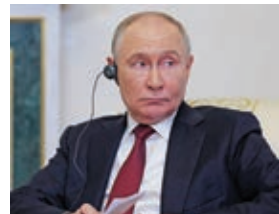
US President Joe Biden meets Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Paris on Friday.

— AP

Putin to boost trade in BRICS currencies

St Petersburg, June 7: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russia would seek to boost the share of settlements conducted in the currencies of BRICS countries — the group of economies which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

"Last year the share of payments for Russian exports in the so-called 'toxic' currencies of unfriendly states halved, while the share of the rouble in export and import transactions is



growing — it is approaching 40 per cent today," Putin said.

Russia regularly refers to the mostly Western nations that have imposed sanctions on it over the war in Ukraine as "unfriendly countries".

— Reuters

Trump: Biden border order to go

Phoenix, June 7: Donald Trump said he will reverse US President Joe Biden's order clamping down on illegal border crossings, in his first campaign event since becoming a convicted felon.

The expected Republican Party nominee also threatened to impose tariffs on countries that do not stem the flow of migrants into the United States, as he seeks to make

electoral capital on an issue polls show resonates with voters.

Asked by an audience member at an event in the must-win state of Arizona what he would do to shut off the flow of people entering the US via the southern border — including migrants from China and the Middle East — Trump said he would use economic measures.

"We have tremendous

economic power... if China or some other country is behaving badly, we have things called tariffs that are so severe," he said.

"We are going to be so tough and if a country is not going to behave, we're going to tariff the hell out of that country," he added, without giving details on what size or kind of tariffs he would impose.

— AFP

Sunak apologises for leaving D-Day

London, June 7: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak apologised Friday for leaving D-Day commemorations in France early to return to the election campaign trail a decision slammed as disgraceful by his political rivals.

Sunak, who is fighting to keep his job in Britain's July 4 election, said that, on reflection the decision was a mistake. Sunak was not alongside leaders including US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy for the major memorial event at Omaha Beach in Normandy on Thursday. Former Prime Minister David Cameron, who is now foreign minister, represented the U.K.

Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, the current favorite to win the election, attended and was pictured meeting Zelenskyy and other leaders.

Sunak had earlier attended a ceremony at the British memorial in Normandy alongside King Charles III and surviving World War II veterans. He also attended a commemoration in Portsmouth, England, the day before.

Sunak wrote on X, for-

merly Twitter, that the 80th anniversary of the Allied invasion that helped free Europe from the Nazis should be about those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. The last thing I want is for the commemorations to be overshadowed by politics.

He added: On reflection, it was a mistake not to stay in France longer and I apologise," he wrote.

The prime minister recorded an interview with broadcaster ITV on Thursday after returning from France, though he said that was not the reason he cut short his trip.

Sunak insisted he stuck to the itinerary that had been laid out for him for D-Day weeks before he called the election.

On reflection it was a mistake not to stay longer and I've apologized for that, but I also don't think its right to be political in the midst of D-Day commemorations," he said.

— AP

TALKS WITH ONLY THOSE WHO WIELD REAL POWER IN PAK, SAYS IMRAN

Islamabad, June 7: Pakistan's jailed former PM Imran Khan said on Friday that dialogue would be held only with those who wield real power in the country.

The PTI founder said this during an informal chat with journalists in the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi after hearing of the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case.

"We will talk with those who have power. They (parties in the government) do not have power," 71-year-old Khan said, adding that during the meeting about the Punjab election on 14 May 2023, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) members had said that Pakistan Army Chief Gen. Asim Munir had decided against holding the election.

The powerful Pakistan Army, which has ruled the coup-prone country for more than half of its 75-plus years of existence, has wielded considerable power in matters of security and foreign policy. When pointed out by a journalist that the Supreme Court has also now asked him to talk to other political parties, Khan said he did not even negotiate with (PM) Shaukat Aziz during the Musharraf era.

— PTI

FEAR | FLIGHT

Aviation experts assert that flying remains among the safest forms of travel

Aerophobia rises in Singapore after turbulence

Singapore, June 7: More people in Singapore are seeking treatment for aerophobia — the fear of flying — following the severe turbulence incident that struck a Singapore Airlines flight over the Irrawaddy Basin in Myanmar last month.

Aerophobia can range from slight uneasiness to very severe panic attacks triggered by a thought or impending occasion of flying, according to a Channel News Asia report on Friday. While aviation experts say that flying remains among the safest

forms of travel, some service providers have seen a spike in people seeking to address this fear, according to the report.

On May 21, SQ321, en route from London to Singapore, encountered extreme turbulence. The Boeing 777-300ER aircraft was carrying 211 passengers and a crew of 18 when it made an emergency landing at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport.

One passenger a 73-year-old British man died and dozens were injured, some of them seriously. Some SQ321 passengers

● **AEROPHOBIA CAN range from slight uneasiness to very severe panic attacks triggered by a thought or impending occasion of flying, according to a Channel News Asia report on Friday.**

Painted a harrowing scene in an interview with the channel.

Those who were unbelted flew out of their seats and onto the ceiling of the plane, before slamming back down. Others described the experience

as akin to riding a roller coaster. A few days later, turbulence on a Qatar Airways flight from Doha to Dublin in Ireland also led to several injuries.

Specialist psychology clinic Psych Connect used to receive a query about aerophobia once every few months, but now gets at least two enquiries daily.

The clinic's founder, Dr Sanveen Kang, said the Qatar Airways incident was a double whammy for people who thought SQ321 was a rare event. I think the timing of these two events is also quite notable

because they're right before the holidays with the local schools, and with the international schools, they are (going) for summer break. So, people have been travelling for two to three months, she said.

Because of Singapore's limited geographical landscape, many leave the country for holidays as well, she noted.

We don't have the opportunity, apart from some of the surrounding regions, to get on a boat and go on holiday. If we want to leave Singapore and experience other cultures, we are very

limited by flying, the Channel report quoted Dr Kang as saying.

Even if people were not on the affected flights, they could be developing aerophobia after listening to passengers' accounts and reading about the challenges they faced, Dr Kang pointed out. It is a reinforcer for those who are predisposed to such anxieties, she said. When people talk to their friends and family members about such incidents and their fears, this normalises such anxiety as well, added Dr Kang.

— PTI

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	76,693.36	2.16
Nifty 50	23,290.15	2.05
S&P 500*	5,344.69	0.15
Dollar (₹)	83.38	0.11
Pound Sterling (₹)	106.69	0.02
Euro (₹)	90.81	0.001
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	71,736▼1,395	1.91
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	80.14	0.34
IN 10-Yr bond yield	7.017	0.003
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.301	0.019

* As of 8:30 PM IST

TVS Srichakra launches new industrial tyres

Manufacturers of two, three-wheeler and off-highway tyres TVS Srichakra has launched new steel belted agro-industrial radial tyres to be used in agricultural and industrial applications. The tyre has been designed for use in compact wheel loaders and backhoe loaders engaged in agricultural and industrial applications, said company business head Karthikeyan S in a statement on Friday.



Tata launches Altroz Racer in three trims

Tata Motors introduced the Altroz Racer, a sporty version of its hatchback in three trims. The starting price is ₹9.49 L. "Its high power output combined with a tech-first approach, makes the Racer desirable for the new gen customers who are connected, fashion forward and want to drive a car that makes them stand out," said Vivek Srivatsa, chief commercial officer, Tata Passenger Electric Mobility.

Kishore Soan takes additional charge as ESIC DG

The labour ministry on Friday announced that Kamal Kishore Soan has taken additional charge of Director General of Employees' State Insurance Corporation. Soan's appointment is effective from May 31. He has experience in governance and management of various departments in Jharkhand, including land revenue management and district administration, agriculture, health, and transport, a statement said.

TCS launches GenAI platform WisdomNext

TCS said it has launched a Gen AI platform WisdomNext. It aggregates multiple generative artificial intelligence technologies into a single interface and enables companies to adopt technology at scale, lower costs and operate within a regulatory framework. "TCS AI WisdomNext helps customers unlock the potential of their data," said Siva Ganesan, head, AI.Cloud unit, TCS.

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FY25 GDP growth at 7.2%: RBI

RBI panel keeps repo rate unchanged at 6.5% for eighth straight policy meeting

Mumbai, June 7: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday revised upwards the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal to 7.2 per cent from 7 per cent on rising private consumption and revival of demand in rural areas. RBI's Monetary Policy Committee, consisting of three RBI and an equal number of external members, kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for an eighth straight policy meeting and stuck to its relatively hawkish stance of "withdrawal of accommodation", RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said in his statement.

Unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy, Das said National Statistical Office (NSO) pegged India's real

MONETARY POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

- Repo rate was last hiked in February 2023
- Focus on withdrawal of accommodative monetary policy stance to bring down inflation
- Inflation forecast for FY25 kept at 4.5%
- Food inflation still remains a concern
- Forex reserves at a high of \$651.5 billion
- Bulk deposit threshold limit kept at ₹3 cr from ₹2 crore
- RBI to set up Digital Payments Intelligence Platform to mitigate payment fraud risks
- Auto replenishment of balance Fastag, NCMC, and UPI-Lite wallets brought under the e-mandate framework

gross domestic product (GDP) growth at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

"During 2024-25 so far, domestic economic activity has maintained resilience," he said,

adding that manufacturing activity continues to gain ground on the back of strengthening domestic demand.

Also, the services sector maintained buoyancy, as

evident in available high-frequency indicators.

In his monetary policy statement, Governor Das said private consumption, the mainstay of aggregate demand, is recovering with steady discretionary spending in urban areas.

The revival in rural demand is getting a fillip from improving farm sector activity, and investment activity continues to gain traction on the back of ongoing expansion in non-food bank credit.

He also said the forecast of above normal southwest monsoon by the India Meteorological Department is expected to boost kharif production and replenish reservoir levels.

"Real GDP growth for 2024-25 is projected at 7.2

per cent with Q1 at 7.3 per cent, Q2 at 7.2 per cent, Q3 at 7.3 per cent, and Q4 at 7.2 per cent. The risks are evenly balanced," he said.

When the projected GDP growth of 7.2 per cent for FY25 materialises, it will be the fourth consecutive year with growth at or above 7 per cent.

The healthy balance sheets of banks and corporates, the government's thrust on capex, high capacity usage, and business optimism augur well for investments, he said.

"While we do consider the impact of monetary policy in advanced economies on India, our actions are determined by domestic growth-inflation conditions and outlook," he further said. —PTI

RBI flags rise of unsecured loans

Mumbai, June 7: Banks need to re-strategise their business to deal with the persistent gap between credit and deposit growth, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday.

He also said that further actions on moderating growth in unsecured loans could be taken, if required.

In November last year, RBI had flagged certain concerns on excessive growth in the unsecured retail loans and over-reliance of NBFCs on bank funding.

"Recent data suggests that there is some moderation in these loans and advances. We are closely

monitoring the incoming data to ascertain if further measures are necessary," he said.

"The message is to convey that RBI is watchful of every aspect of financial sector especially in the banking sector. We are agile, we are watchful and if and when some further measures are required, we will come," he told reporters.

Das said that the boards and top management of regulated entities should ensure that risk limits and exposures for each line of business are kept well within their respective risk appetite framework. —PTI

RBI brought 100MT gold from UK to store locally, says Das

Mumbai, June 7: The Reserve Bank of India has brought 100 metric tonnes of gold reserve from the UK to India as there is enough domestic storage capacity, and nothing more should be read into it, Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday.

The RBI moved 100 metric tonnes of its gold stored in the UK to domestic vaults in FY24. This is one of the biggest movements of gold undertaken by the country since 1991, when pledging a substantial part of the gold holding to tide over a foreign exchange crisis resulted in its movement out of vaults.

The quantum of gold



stored outside was static for a long time, Reserve Bank of India Governor Das said here.

"In recent years, the data shows that the Reserve Bank is buying gold as a part of its reserves, and the quantum was going up. We have domestic (storage) capacity," he said.

Therefore, it was decided to move part of the reserve outside India to be stored within the country, he said, adding, "That's it. Nothing more should be read into it".

The country's overall gold holding increased by 27.46 metric tonnes in FY24, and it stands at 822 metric tonnes, as per official data.

A part of the precious metal is stored abroad, the sources said, adding that India also had its holding with the Bank of England like other countries.

The movement of 100 MT gold into India has taken the overall quantity stored locally to over 408 metric tonnes. —PTI

ADANI GETS O&M CONTRACT FOR KOLKATA PORT

New Delhi, June 7: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) said it secured a five-year operation and maintenance contract for the container facility at the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Kolkata.

APSEZ has to deploy cargo handling equipment within seven months from the letter of acceptance date, the company said in a statement.

The presence of APSEZ at the dock is likely to improve connectivity between the terminal and its container ports, particularly with the transhipment hubs at Vizhinjam and Colombo that are targeted for commissioning during the year, it further said. —PTI

India's rapid growth aiding start-ups return to India

New Delhi, June 7: India's strong growth is leading to a trend of 'reverse flipping' as domestic start-ups that once used to move abroad for capital access and tax benefits are now returning home, a top government official has said.

Commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal also said that the digital economy along with emerging technologies like AI and the rise of data centres were key to future Indian growth.

He was speaking at an event in Singapore organised by the commerce ministry to showcase various investment opportunities in India. It was organised on the sidelines of the inaugural Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Clean

Markets make fresh highs on GDP upgrade

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 7



Market rose more than 2 per cent making fresh highs. The Sensex rose to 76,795, intra-day as RBI revised GDP growth rate for current fiscal to 7.2 per cent and kept repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent.

The Sensex gained 2.16 per cent or 1,618 points to close at 76,693. The Nifty-50 gained 468 point or 2.05 per cent to close at 23,290.15 after clocking a new high of 23,320.2.

BSE's market capitalisation surged to over ₹423.49 lakh crore or \$5.08 trillion making investors richer by over ₹7.6 lakh crore.

All round buying saw BSE Mid-cap index gain 1.28 per cent and BSE Small-cap index gained 2.18 per cent.

IT stocks outperformed on hopes of softening of interest rates worldwide after European Central Bank cut interest rate by 25 basis points for the first time in five years.

Nifty IT index surged 3.37 per cent while Nifty Bank surged 1.04 per cent, other gainers included Nifty auto (2.56 per cent), oil & gas (2.10 per cent), realty (2.08 per cent) and oharma (1.80 per cent).

Foreign portfolio investors turned net buyers after three sessions of heavy selling by ₹4,391.02 crore. The domestic institutions booked profit and were net sellers by ₹1,289.75 crore.

"Domestic markets shrugged off the weak global cues, as investors cheered the RBI's higher growth forecast which propelled Sensex to a

● IT STOCKS outperformed on hopes of softening of interest rates worldwide after European Central Bank cut interest rate by 25 basis points for the first time in 5 years. The Nifty IT index surged 3.37 per cent.

fresh high above the 76k-mark," said Prashanth Tapse, analyst, Mehta Equities.

"Arrival of monsoon on time raised hopes of softening inflation. With election uncertainty over, investors are hopeful that focus will shift to reforms and the upcoming Union Budget," said Tapse.

Global cues added to the positivity with the European Central Bank announcing interest rate cut by 25bps for the first time in nearly five years, moving faster than its US and UK counterparts. Now, hopes have revived that the US Fed might cut interest rates in September based on recent macro data points, said Siddhartha Khemka, head, retail research, MOFSL.

Next week, focus will be on allocation of cabinet portfolios. Market will continue to be volatile with upward bias, said Khemka.



WHATSAPP PLANS AI ASSISTANT FOR BUSINESSES

California, June 7: Meta Platforms Inc. is adding new artificial intelligence features to its messaging app WhatsApp, including an AI assistant that can help businesses connect with customers, answer questions, and sell their goods and services via chat.

WhatsApp will soon test the new AI-powered assistant with businesses in India and Singapore, followed by Brazil. These new products were built for businesses that handle customer service queries and interactions.

The new features will support more than 200 million businesses that rely on WhatsApp to chat with their customers, the company said.

"Any business should be able to quickly stand up an agent that can talk to your customers, provide support and facilitate commerce," Meta chief executive officer Mark Zuckerberg had said on Thursday when he announced the new assistant during an event in São Paulo. —Bloomberg

BSE denies tech glitch on election results day

New Delhi, June 7: Leading stock exchange BSE on Friday said lag in receiving payments from banks led to delay in assigning net asset value (NAV) to investors who bought mutual funds on June 4 and there was no technical glitch at its end.

Many investors had complained on social media for failing to square off their positions.

Several investors purchased their mutual funds before the cut-off time, although they were assigned the NAV, which determines the fund's value for June 5 instead of June 4. This resulted in substantial financial losses to such investors.

"It is hereby clarified that there was no technical glitch at BSE Clearing

House (ICCL) on June 4th. Prima Facie, there was a lag in receiving details of credit /payments from payments aggregator(s) / bank(s) for few customers which led to the delayed NAV," BSE said in a statement.

The clarification came after several broking platforms alleged BSE for a glitch in the mutual fund system of the exchange on June 4, which led the orders to go through the next day (June 5), when the equity markets had partially recouped some of their losses.

Market crashed on June 4 the day of Lok Sabha election results in which ₹31 lakh crore investors' wealth was wiped out, the worst single-day fall in four years. —PTI

Apple planning to launch Passwords app

California, June 7: Apple Inc. will introduce a new homegrown app next week called Passwords, aiming to make it easier for customers to log in to websites and software, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The company is planning the new app as part of iOS 18, iPadOS 18 and macOS 15, the next major

versions of its iPhone, iPad and Mac operating systems, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the initiative hasn't been announced. The software, which can generate passwords and keep track of them, will be unveiled June 10 at Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference. The new app is powered

by the iCloud Keychain, a long-existing Apple service that can sync passwords and account information between different devices. This capability was previously hidden inside the company's settings app or presented when a user logs in to a website.

By turning the feature into a dedicated app,

Apple is trying to get more people to use secure passwords and bolster the privacy of its devices.

The new app will take on password managers like 1Password and LastPass, and Apple will allow users to import passwords from rival services.

A representative for Apple declined to comment. —Bloomberg

FREEZE | FRAME

Matches scheduled to coincide with peak viewership hours in Asia

Ad rates zoom for India-Pak T20 clash

New York, June 7: Global firms are splurging on advertising for the upcoming cricket match between India and Pakistan held in the US, tapping into the spending power of the South Asian diaspora.

The rival countries are set to play each other on June 9 in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in New York's Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, a venue erected in three months using modular stands from the Formula 1 Grand Prix arena in Las Vegas. The tournament is being held in the US for the first time

ever, and games will also be played in Caribbean nations.

The clash has added significance given Pakistan on Thursday fell to a shock defeat to the US, a major boost to the host nation playing in their first ever World Cup and ranked 18th in the world behind Nepal and the UAE.

Ad slots for the game could sell for as much as ₹40 lakh (\$48,000) for 10 seconds, said Santosh N., managing partner at D&P Advisory, which provides sports valuation services. "The India-Pakistan game



always commands a premium."

A 10-second slot for India games would be fetching about ₹20 lakh on average, he added. In comparison, a Super Bowl ad is a reported \$6.5 million for

30 seconds, and about £400,000 (\$511,000) for 30 seconds during the 2022 football World Cup for UK advertising.

Multinational firms like Emirates Group, Saudi Aramco and Coca-Cola Co. are among the companies sponsoring the monthlong tournament. The matches have also been scheduled to coincide with peak viewership hours in South Asian countries. For example, the India-Pakistan match will be played at 10:30 am in New York on Sunday, when it will be evening in India.

During the Cricket

World Cup held in India last year, a 10-second slot was estimated to cost ₹30 lakh. The higher pricing compared to the T20 World Cup reflects the greater hype for the sport when held in India, according to Chandrashekar Mantha, partner at Deloitte India. He added that some advertising budget will already have been allocated to the Indian Premier League, which concluded two weeks ago.

Indians in the US are among the wealthiest groups with a median income of about \$1,20,000. —Bloomberg

IMF tells nations to work on fiscal consolidation

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 7

The International Monetary Fund has advised countries, including India, to begin fiscal consolidation in order to bring fiscal positions back to pre-pandemic levels.

When asked about the concern IMF expressed about the governments being tempted to increase public spending during election years in countries, including Mexico and India, Julie Kozack, director of the communications department said in a press briefing that IMF's advice at the time of the Spring Meetings still remains.

"Our advice is that this is the time for countries to really begin fiscal consolidation, and it's important to bring fiscal positions back to their pre-pandemic levels. So countries do need decisive efforts to safeguard public finances and to rebuild fiscal buffers," she said.

"This is really our key message coming out of this publication at the Spring Meetings, that now is the time for countries to



rebuild fiscal buffers at a time when debt pressures are high and deficits are high. And this advice holds in an election year, but irrespective of whether there are elections this year, it is the right advice in our assessment at this time," she added.

The global economic outlook has improved relative to where the IMF had expected it, she said.

"Inflation has been declining, and we assessed in April that risks to the global outlook were balanced. Despite the resilience of the global economy, many countries are continuing to struggle with high levels of debt and high fiscal deficits," she said.

CRICKET

ICC MEN'S
T20 WORLD CUPPAGE
8

SHORT SINGLES

Scotland trounce
Namibia to go top

Captain Richie Berrington cupstaged his Namibian counterpart in leading Scotland to a table-topping, five-wicket victory in Group B at the T20 World Cup at Kensington Oval here on Thursday.

Thwarted by the weather in their opening fixture against England two days earlier at the same venue, Berrington's composed unbeaten 47 off 36 balls (two fours, three sixes) and timely support of the aggressive Michael Leask (35 off 17 balls, four sixes) paced the Scots to a winning total of 157 for five with nine balls to spare.

Their combined effort in a fifth-wicket partnership of 74 rendered Gerhard Erasmus' all-round contribution in vain after the Namibian captain had topscored with 52 out of a total of 155 for nine, followed by figures of two for 29 off four overs as Scotland wobbled at 73 for four in the 11th over.

This was Scotland's first-ever victory over Namibia in a T20 International and lifts them to the head of the standings on three points from two games in a group that also includes the defending champions England and 2021 winners Australia.

Brief scores: Namibia 155/9 in 20 overs (Gerhard Erasmus 52, Zane Green 28; Brad Wheel 3/33, Brad Currie 2/16) lost to Scotland 157/5 in 18.3 overs (Richie Berrington 47*, Michael Leask 35; G. Erasmus 2/29; Bernard Scholtz 1/20).

Canada defeat
Irish by 12 runs

Canada joined USA to conjure 'Upset No. 2 of the tournament by beating Ireland by 12 runs in their Group 'A' match of the T20 World Cup in New York on Friday. The second successive defeat left Ireland at the bottom of the table and starting down the barrel. A modest target of 138 was too much for the Irish, who could only manage 127 for 7 in the stipulated overs. There was no cream in the top order which collapsed badly, leaving No.6 George Dockrell (30 not out) and Mark Adair (34) with too much to do. They put on 62 runs off 41 balls for the seventh wicket though, but that was not enough.

Brief scores: Canada 137/7 in 20 overs (Nicholas Kirton 49, Shreyas Movva 37; Craig Young 2/32, Barry McCarthy 2/24) beat Ireland 125/7 in 20 overs (George Dockrell 30 not out, Mark Adair 34; Jeremy Gordon 2/16, Dillon Heyliger 2/18) by 12 runs.

England set to
face Australia

Defending champions England will look to restitch their T20 World Cup campaign through an improved bowling effort when they face old rival Australia in a Group B match on Saturday.

England's opening game against Scotland was rained off after the latter made 90 for no loss in 10 overs, forcing the teams to take home a point each.

But even those 60 balls showed the need for England to buckle up in the bowling department, to begin with.

Scottish openers George Munsey and Michael Jones scored freely against all England bowlers, and Australia carry far more lethal guns in their line-up.

David Warner and Marcus Stoinis showed the extent of damage they can do while outclassing Oman in their tournament opener.

Once again, there will be a lot of focus on Jofra Archer, who gave away 12 runs in two overs against Scotland, as the pacer continues his comeback trail into top-flight cricket after injury.

Dallas (USA), June 7: Newcomers USA on Thursday shocked former champions Pakistan via the Super Over to record their biggest win in a T20 World Cup match that reflected the shambolic state of affairs in the Asian giants' cricket.

The result was reminiscent of Pakistan's three-wicket loss to Ireland in the 2007 ODI World Cup in the West Indies, which knocked them out of that tournament.

USA thus jumped to the top of Group A with two wins from as many games ahead of the clash against India. USA had defeated Canada by seven wickets in their opener.

Opting to field, left-arm spinner Nosthush Kenjige scalped three wickets for 30 runs as Pakistan found it difficult to press the accelerator and were restricted to 159 for seven.

While chasing, USA ended on the same score, reaching 159 for 3 with skipper Monank Patel (50 off 38), Aaron Jones (36 not out of 26) and Andries Gous (35 off 26) leading from the front.

In the Super Over bowled by Mohammad Amir, USA piled up 18 runs, eight of which came from extras.

Saurabh Netravalkar then kept his cool and bowled brilliantly to give away just 13 runs for a famous win.

In another embarrassment for Pakistan, they took longer time than usual to come out to bat in the Super Over, keeping the USA fielders waiting and getting the on-field umpires involved.

Earlier, USA's decision to bowl first worked as Mohammad Rizwan was dismissed in second over, caught by Steven Taylor off Netravalkar (2/18).

USA started their chase on a bright note, scoring 44 runs in the powerplay.

Patel led from the front as he played his shots to pick up consecutive boundaries off Shaheen Shah Afridi in the fourth over. Naseem Shah gave Pakistan the first breakthrough when Taylor nicked one to Mohammad Rizwan behind the stumps. Bur new man Andries Gous meant business as he picked up two fours in the same over.

US
HEY!American idols upset former world
champions Pakistan in group game

USA's Saurabh Netralvakar celebrates after his team beat Pakistan in Super Over in the T20 World Cup Group A at the Grand Prairie Cricket Stadium in Grand Prairie, Texas on Thursday.

— AFP

Patel showed his prowess through the off-side, picking up two consecutive boundaries off Iftikhar Ahmed through the cover region. Patel was at his destructive best as he first hit Afridi over mid-off for a boundary and then clobbered the bowler over his head for a six to bring up his 50 off 34 balls. A 68-run second wicket stand was finally broken by Rauf, who got the better of Gous

with a quick delivery.

Wickets were the need of the hour for Pakistan and they picked up the important scalp of Patel, who edged one to Rizwan off Mohammad Amir.

Aaron Jones (36 not out off 26), who played a blinder against Canada in their last match, lived up to the expectations and in the company Nitish Kumar (14 not out off 14) took the match into Super Over.

With 12 needed off three balls, Jones smashed a full toss of Rauf over square leg for a six and then got a single to bring down the target to five off last ball.

Earlier, Pakistan lost Usman Khan as he mistimed a Kenjige delivery.

Fakhar Zaman tried to force his way with his aggressive instincts but fell short when he paddle-swept a simple catch to Taylor off Ali Khan in the

SCOREBOARD

Pakistan: Mohammad Rizwan c Taylor b Netravalkar 9, Babar Azam lbw Jasdeep Singh 44, Usman Khan c Kumar b Kenjige 3, Fakhar Zaman c Taylor b Ali Khan 11, Shadab Khan c Netravalkar b Kenjige 40, Azam Khan lbw Kenjige 0, Iftikhar Ahmed lbw Netravalkar 18, Shaheen Shah Afridi not out 2 3, Haris Rauf not out 3. Extras: (11-4, 2-4) 8. **Total: (for 7 wickets in 20 overs) 159.**

Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-14, 3-26, 4-98, 5-98, 6-125, 7-139.

Bowling: Nosthush Kenjige 4-0-30-3, Saurabh Netravalkar 4-0-18-2, Ali Khan 4-0-30-1, Harmeet Singh 4-0-34-0, Jasdeep Singh 3-0-37-1.

USA: Steven Taylor c Mohammad Rizwan c Naseem Shah 12, Monank Patel c Mohammad Rizwan b Mohammad Amir 50, Andries Gous b Haris Rauf 35, Aaron Jones not out 36, Nitish Kumar not out 14. Extras: (1b-1, w-11) 12.

Total: (for 3 wickets in 20 overs) 159.

Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-104, 3-111.

Bowling: Shaheen Shah Afridi 4-0-35-0, Mohammad Amir 4-0-25-1, Naseem Shah 4-0-26-1, Haris Rauf 4-0-37-1, Shadab Khan 3-0-27-0, Iftikhar Ahmed 1-0-10-0.

Super Over: USA 18/0 in 1 over. Pakistan 13/1 in 1 over

fifth over, as Pakistan slumped to 26 for 3.

Shadab Khan (40 off 25) eased the pressure by hitting Jasdeep Singh for two consecutive sixes and then skipper Babar Azam (44 off 43) finished with a boundary to pick up 20 runs from the 10th over.

With the momentum on their side, the Pakistani duo went on the offensive and smashed Harmeet Singh to all parts of the ground. But then Kenjige picked up two wickets -- Shadab and Azam Khan -- off consecutive deliveries to bring USA back into the contest. Azam fell short of another fifty as he was caught in front of the wicket by Jasdeep. Towards the end, Iftikhar Ahmed (18 off 14) and Shaheen Afridi (23 not out off 16 balls) played good hands to take Pakistan beyond the 150-run mark.

POINTS TABLE

GROUP A						
TEAMS	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
USA	2	2	0	0	4	+0.626
INDIA	1	1	0	0	2	+3.065
CANADA	2	1	1	0	2	-0.274
PAKISTAN	1	0	1	0	0	0.000
IRELAND	2	0	2	0	0	-1.712

GROUP B						
TEAMS	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
SCOTLAND	2	1	0	0	3	0.736
AUSTRALIA	1	1	0	0	2	+1.950
NAMIBIA	2	1	1	0	2	-0.309
ENGLAND	1	0	0	1	1	000
OMAN	2	0	2	0	0	-0.975

GROUP C						
TEAMS	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
AFGHANISTAN	1	1	0	0	2	+6.250
WEST INDIES	1	1	0	0	2	+0.411
UGANDA	2	1	1	0	2	-2.952
PNG	2	0	2	0	0	-0.434
NEW ZEALAND	0	0	0	0	0	000

GROUP D						
TEAMS	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
SOUTH AFRICA	1	1	0	0	2	+1.048
NETHERLANDS	1	1	0	0	2	+0.539
NEPAL	1	0	1	0	0	-0.539
SRI LANKA	1	0	1	0	0	-1.048
BANGLADESH	0	0	0	0	0	000



Hyderabad's Vincent Vinay Kumar (from left) with USA players Jasdeep Singh, captain Monank Patel and Nisarg Patel in this file photo.

Hyderabad hand
in USA's big win

MOSES KONDETY | DC
NEW YORK, JUNE 7

The United States may have defeated former champion Pakistan in the ongoing T20 World Cup but there is a Hyderabad hand in the historic victory. Meet Vincent Vinay Kumar Dasari, who has worked with this determined bunch and built them into world beaters.

The Level 'B' certified coach from the National Cricket Academy-BCCI with an 18-year experience worked with an assorted American bunch as their Batting Coach, and punched big time. The team went through the grind during a camp in Bengaluru last year and won the ICC T20 World Cup Qualifying 1 tournament in Namibia.

Vincent, who played 33 Ranji Trophy matches for Andhra in the 1990s, was in fray to be the Head Coach and was the first to be interviewed before Australian international Stuart Law was commissioned for the job.

"I am so happy for the side, which is a blend of players of Indian, West Indian and Pakistani origins. They all mingled and gelled well on the ground," Vincent, who is currently in the US on a visit, told this newspaper. The secret of Team

● Vincent Vinay Kumar, a Level 'B' certified coach from the National Cricket Academy-BCCI has worked with this assorted bunch of American players as their batting coach, running them through a camp in Bengaluru last year, following which they won an ICC qualifying event.

USA's success is mental preparation. "During my stint, I had worked on the players' mindset as much as their batting skills. I told them that they should not treat any team as a big side," the 55-year-old informed.

One line Vincent told players that certainly had an impact was: "Don't ever think that you are the underdogs, just fight it out."

They did and slayed a Goliath on Thursday to become the toast of the nation and the talking point of cricket and the outside world.

Vincent does keep in touch with players. He congratulated Aaron Jones, who has been shining with the bat for the USA, on the big win. The explosive batsman replied with: "Thanks coach. All your hard work is paying off now."

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Praggu goes down
fighting to Caruana

Stavanger (Norway) June 7: Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa went down fighting against Fabiano Caruana of United States while world No.1 Magnus Carlsen inflicted an Armageddon defeat on France's Firouzja Alireza in the penultimate round of Norway Chess tournament, here.

With 16 points in his bag, Carlsen stretched his lead to 1.5 points over nearest rival Hikaru Nakamura, who was in for a shock as World Champion Ding Liren, for once, did not blow his position away.

Praggnanandhaa, despite the loss against Caruana in

Armageddon, is still third on 13 points, a full point ahead of Alireza. Caruana on 10.5 comes in next in standings ahead of Liren (6), who spoiled Nakamura's party.

In the women's section, R Vaishali succumbed to another loss at the hands of Tingjie Lei of China and was relegated to fourth spot while Koneru Humpy went down to leader Wenju Ju of China.

Wenju Ju of China strengthened her claim for the title by moving to 16 points. Tingjie Lei and Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine follow her 1.5 points behind while Vaishali on 11.5 is a distant fourth. — PTI

Swiatek to clash with Paolini

Paris, June 5: Iga Swiatek will play first-time Grand Slam finalist Jasmine Paolini as she goes in search of a third successive French Open title, with 17-year-old Mirra Andreeva's remarkable run ending in tears on Thursday.

World number one Swiatek defeated US Open champion Coco Gauff 6-2, 6-4 to extend her winning streak in Paris to 20 matches and continue the Pole's dominance of her American rival.

Swiatek has now won 11 of her 12 matches against Gauff, all in straight sets, and could become only the fourth woman to win four Roland Garros titles in the



Poland's Iga Swiatek returns to USA's Coco Gauff during their semi-final match of the French Open at Roland Garros in Paris on Thursday.

— AFP

Open era -- after Justine Henin, Chris Evert and Steffi Graf. She immediately grabbed the initia-

tive against Gauff with a break in the opening game of the match. Swiatek withstood break points in

her first two service games, before striking again to move up a double break at 4-1.

She closed out the first set without trouble, but Gauff threatened a fight-back when she nosed 3-1 ahead in the second set after wiping away tears following an argument with the chair umpire over a line call. Swiatek though responded the very next game and won four in a row, eventually clinching victory on her fourth match point.

Paolini will be the unexpected challenger to Swiatek's crown on Saturday after the 28-year-old Italian swept past Andreeva 6-3, 6-1. — AFP