

# THE ASIANT AGE

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 2 JULY 2024



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**WINDOWS**



Avril Lavigne performs during the Glastonbury Festival at Worthy Farm in Somerset, England, on Sunday. — AP

**Neet-UG re-test result out, rank list of 1,563 candidates revised**

**New Delhi:** The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Monday announced the results for the re-test of the medical entrance exam Neet-UG. The re-test was conducted for a total of 1,563 candidates who were earlier awarded grace marks to compensate for the loss of time as the exam on May 5 started late at six centres. Meanwhile, the students who have been staging a sit-in at the Jantar Mantar have called for a march towards the Parliament on Tuesday to press their demands. For the retest conducted at seven centres on June 23 following a Supreme Court order, 48 per cent of the 1,563 candidates did not appear. **Full report on Page 2**

**BJP targets Didi over public flogging in WB**

**New Delhi:** Demanding West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's resignation over the deteriorating law and order in the state, the BJP on Monday highlighted the video of the public flogging of a couple that has sparked outrage in the country. **Full report on Page 3**

**HC junks Kavitha's bail pleas in ED & CBI cases**

**New Delhi:** The Delhi HC on Monday dismissed BRS leader K. Kavitha's bail pleas in two cases of corruption and money laundering linked to the alleged excise scam. Ms Kavitha had challenged the trial court's May 6 order by which her bail applications in the CBI and ED cases were dismissed. **Full report on Page 2**

**COUNTERPOINT**



Yesterday, we conducted a survey on water scarcity here, sir!

**WEATHER**

Max: 33°C  
Min: 27°C  
RH: 67%  
Rain: 9%

Forecast: Thundershower

**ASTROGUIDE**

**Krodhi:** Uttarayana  
**Tithi:** Jyeshtha Bahula Ekadasi till 8.43 am  
**Star:** Kritika till 4.39 am  
**Varjyam:** 5.03 pm to 6.36 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 8.25 am to 9.18 am; 11.15 pm to 11.59 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 3 pm to 4.30 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 7.23 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.28 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.38 AM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 4.05 PM**

- Storm in Parliament as ministers rush to counter LoP offensive
- Rahul raises Neet, Agniveer, Manipur, inflation, farmer issues

## Rahul in face-off with Modi as he calls BJP 'anti-Hindu'

VINEETA PANDEY  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

The Lok Sabha on Monday witnessed a fiery face-off between the Opposition and the Treasury benches during Rahul Gandhi's hard-hitting maiden speech as the Leader of the Opposition. Speaking during the motion of thanks on the President's address, Mr Gandhi targeted the government, raising issues of the Agniveer recruitment scheme, inflation, the Neet paper leak, violence in Manipur and the farmers' grievances, forcing the Treasury benches to constantly clarify and counter. But an unrelenting Rahul Gandhi hammered issues one after the other in his speech of close to two hours that saw several interruptions from the Treasury benches and interjections by Union Cabinet ministers. Mr Gandhi accused the BJP of doing the "politics of hatred" in the name of Hindutva and displayed



Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi during the ongoing session of Parliament in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

**Chair has no switch to turn off mics: Birla**

**New Delhi:** Rahul Gandhi on Monday reiterated his claim that his microphone was switched off in the LS. Speaker Om Birla countered, stating presiding officers lack control over members' microphones. **PAGE 3**

photographs of symbols and gods of different religions to convey that no

religion preaches hatred and violence. In his aggressive speech, which was at times laced with wit and humour too, Mr Gandhi targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet ministers several times and did not spare even the Lok Sabha Speaker. To counter him, the PM had to get up twice to respond and home minister Amit Shah interjected five times. In between, the

■ Turn to Page 4

**BJP demands Rahul apology, accuses him of 'lies' in House**

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

Attacking Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi for "combining lies and hatred in his speech" in Parliament, the BJP on Monday also attacked the Opposition leader for attacking Hindus "while professing brotherhood to all".

Leading the charge, BJP president and Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha J.P. Nadda targeted Mr Gandhi for failing to learn parliamentary norms and civility. The BJP president charged Mr Gandhi of blatantly lying on "many counts, including matters that concern our hardworking farmers and brave armed forces". Mr Nadda said the Congress MP was duly fact-checked by Union ministers for false claims on MSP and Agniveer and for his "own cheap politics, he won't even spare our farmers and security

"Rahul Gandhi must apologise to all Hindus for terming them as violent. This is the same person who was telling foreign diplomats that Hindus are terrorists. This intrinsic hate towards Hindus must stop," said Mr Nadda. He also demanded that Mr Gandhi apologise to Speaker Om Birla as the LoP's utterances towards the Chair were in poor taste. In his reaction to

■ Turn to Page 4



Indian players celebrate during the prize distribution ceremony after defeating South Africa by 10 wickets in one-off Test match at M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Monday. ■ Report on Page 8 — PTI

**Modi likely to address NDA MPs in Parl today**

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to address the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) parliamentary party meeting on Tuesday, in what will be his first speech to the MPs of the ruling alliance during the first session of Parliament since he assumed office for a third term.

Though Mr Modi in the past has addressed the NDA MPs on a few occasions, especially when he was elected as their leader ahead of all his three terms, he generally speaks at the meetings of BJP MPs during the parliamentary sessions.

This development assumes significance as the BJP, for the first time since 2014, has lost a majority in the Lok Sabha in the recently-held polls and depends on its allies for the government's continuation.

## Shah asks Opp. to avoid politics over new criminal laws

Govt open to changes if needed: HM

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

Amid the objections raised by the Opposition, including the Congress Party, over the implementation of the three new criminal laws which came into force on Monday, Union home minister Amit Shah said on Monday that these laws' emphasis was on justice, not punishment, and appealed to them not to indulge in politics, claiming that these laws have been brought after wide consultation.

Mr Shah, who spearheaded the three new criminal laws, however, maintained that he and the government are open for any constructive suggestions and, if required, changes in the laws could be incorporated.

Addressing a press conference in the Parliament House complex, he said: "I am ready to meet anyone who wants. We will meet and also review. But please, do not do politics," he said at the press conference, while reply-



Amit Shah

■ **REJECTING CRITICISM** that the new criminal laws were draconian and repressive, the home minister said the laws were modern, protect the rights of the victims, and fix accountability on the police forces

ing to questions on the protests by the Opposition leaders.

Rejecting criticism that the three new criminal laws were draconian and repressive, the home minister said the laws were modern, protect the rights of the victims, and fix accountability on the police forces. Saying that

■ Turn to Page 2

## Kharge hits out at Modi's poll speeches, slams RSS

Many of Cong president's remarks expunged in RS

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday for his election speeches and also levelled allegations against the ruling BJP's ideological parent RSS but most of his remarks were expunged by Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar. During his speech in the Upper House on the

■ **THE CONG** leader was backed by party colleague and former finance minister P. Chidambaram, who asked how an Opposition MP could authenticate what the Prime Minister has said other than by citing news reports

motion of thanks on the President's address, Mr Kharge, who is also the Congress president, mentioned comments made by Mr Modi in his poll rallies and presented statistics

showing the number of times the PM referred to minorities and Pakistan.

The Rajya Sabha Chairman asked him to authenticate his assertions and refused to accept newspaper clippings that the Congress leader showed to buttress his point. Mr Kharge was backed by party colleague and former finance minister P. Chidambaram, who asked how an Opposition MP could authenticate what the Prime Minister

■ Turn to Page 4

## Kejriwal moves HC over CBI arrest

Hearing set for today; Delhi CM also challenges remand till July 12

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

The Delhi high court will hear on Tuesday chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest by the CBI in a corruption case related to the alleged excise policy scam. The petition, filed on Monday, has been listed for hearing before Justice Neena Bansal Krishna.

The AAP convener has also challenged a June 26 order of the trial court by

■ **THE CBI** placed the Delhi CM under 'formal' arrest on June 26 in the corruption case and produced him before special judge Amitabh Rawat. The agency sought his custody for 5 days to confront him with the evidence.

which he was remanded to the CBI custody for three days. The trial court had on June 29 remanded Mr Kejriwal to judicial custody until July 12 as



Arvind Kejriwal

his three-day CBI custody ended in the excise policy case. After he was questioned by the Central agency in Tihar Jail in the corruption case linked to

the excise policy case on June 25, the court sent Mr Kejriwal to three-day CBI custody the next day.

The CBI placed Mr Kejriwal under "formal" arrest on June 26 in the corruption case and produced him before special judge Amitabh Rawat. The agency sought his custody for five days to confront him with the evidence in the present case of conspiracy.

While sending Mr Kejriwal to CBI custody, ■ Turn to Page 4

## US SC Trump immunity ruling may delay Jan. 6 trial till after Nov. polls

**Washington, July 1:** The US Supreme Court on Monday extended the delay in the Washington criminal case against Donald Trump on charges he plotted to overturn his 2020 presidential election loss, all but ending prospects the former President could be tried before the November election.

In a historic 6-3 ruling, the justices said for the first time that former Presidents have absolute immunity from prosecution for their official acts and no immunity for unofficial acts. But rather than do it themselves, the jus-



Donald Trump

tics ordered lower courts to figure out precisely how to apply the decision to Mr Trump's case.

The outcome means additional delays before Mr Trump could face trial in the case brought by special counsel Jack Smith.

The court's decision in a second major Trump case this term, along with its ruling rejecting efforts to bar him from the ballot because of his actions following the 2020 election, underscores the direct and possibly uncomfortable role the justices are playing in the November election.

The ruling was the last of the term and it came more than two months after the court heard arguments, far slower than in other epic high court cases involving the presidency, including the Watergate tapes case. — AP

■ More on Page 6



British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak during his visit to the Well Healthcare Supplies as he campaigns in Stoke, United Kingdom, on Monday. The Conservative Party leader makes his final appeal to voters as the election day approaches. — AP

**5-month jail & fine for Patkar in defamation case by Saxena**

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

A Delhi court on Monday sentenced activist Medha Patkar to five-month simple imprisonment in a 23-year-old case of defamation filed against her by Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena when he headed an NGO in Gujarat.

Metropolitan magistrate Raghav Sharma also imposed a fine of ₹10 lakhs on Ms Patkar.

The court sentenced Ms Patkar after considering the evidence before it and the fact that the case went on for over two decades. However, the court suspended the sentence for one month to enable her to file an appeal against the order.

Rejecting her prayer to release her on probation, the judge said: "Considering the facts... (damages, age and ailment (of the accused), I am not inclined to give excessive punishment." The offence entailed a maximum punishment of simple imprisonment of up to two years or a fine or both.

■ More on Page 2

SHORT TAKES

4 of a family killed in accident in Gurgaon

**Gurgaon:** Four persons, including three women, of a family were killed on the spot while two others were seriously injured in a road accident on the KMP Expressway on Monday afternoon, said the police. Hailing from Sikar in Rajasthan, the family was returning from Garh Ganga after the last rites of a family member when their Ertiga car rammied into a canter, they added. According to the police, the incident took place near Farukhnagar exit toll on the KMP Expressway at around 2.00 pm on Monday, leaving the car badly damaged. The deceased were identified as Brijesh Kaushik (52), his wife Sunita (48), his mother Kamla Devi (74) and his brother's wife Kiran Kaushik (46), residents of Neemka Thana Hasampur in the Sikar district of Rajasthan. The injured were identified as Himanshu (24) and Aakanshu (20), sons of Rakesh Kaushik, deceased Brijesh Kaushik's brother, said police. — PTI

Cong: Govt's aid for rain victims too low

**New Delhi:** Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav on Monday said that the city government should expedite payment of enhanced compensation of ₹1 crore to the families of 11 people, including children, who have died during the recent monsoon downpour. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government on Sunday announced a compensation of ₹10 lakhs each for the families of those who were killed in incidents of drowning after record rains on Friday. The compensation amount announced by the Delhi government is too low, and the amount should be increased to at least Rs one crore per family, as had been done in the case of Covid-19 pandemic deaths while on duty, Yadav said in a statement. Delhi water minister Atishi, who sat on a meaningless dharna demanding more water when the whole of Delhi was thirsting for potable water, should take strong steps to prevent such deaths, Mr Yadav alleged.

Delhi couple feared drowned in Rishikesh

**Dehradun:** A couple from Delhi were feared to have drowned in Ganga at Muni Ki Reti near Rishikesh on Monday, police said. State Disaster Response Force divers have launched a search operation in the river but the couple has not been found yet, police said. According to police, the couple went to Neem Beach around 1 pm to bathe in the Ganga. They disappeared in the waves after going a considerable distance in the river, police said quoting eyewitnesses. The man has been identified as Lovepreet (26), a resident of Sudarshan Park in West Delhi, and the woman as Neha Thakur (22) from Karol Bagh. — PTI

IMD PLANS 3 MORE RADARS IN DELHI-NCR

**Delhi-NCR** will get three more Doppler radars in the next two to three years, along with a flood warning model, additional automatic weather stations and rain gauges to improve weather forecasts, IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said on Monday. According to Mr Mohapatra, the rains that brought Delhi to its knees last week were not a result of a cloudburst but "it was close". "(Predicting) this kind of very confined activity, both in spatial and temporal terms, is a challenge not only in India but also throughout the world. Prediction becomes easier when you have a large-scale synoptic system," Mr Mohapatra said. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has undertaken a project to augment its observational and forecasting capability in Delhi-NCR, similar to what it did in Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai. It is also working on a flood warning system for the national capital, he said. He said, "Three radars of varying radius will be installed in the region in two to three years in addition to the three existing ones." The three functional radars are located at Palam, Ayanagar, and Mausam Bhavan.

Ordered to pay ₹10L damages to Delhi L-G in 23-yr-old case  
**Medha Patkar gets 5-month jail term in defamation case**

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

A Delhi court on Monday sentenced activist Medha Patkar to five months simple imprisonment in a 23-year-old defamation case lodged against her by Delhi lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena when he headed an NGO in Gujarat.



Medha Patkar

Metropolitan magistrate Raghav Sharma also imposed a fine of ₹10 lakh on Ms Patkar.

The court sentenced Ms Patkar after considering the evidence before it and the fact that the case went on for over two decades. However, the court suspended the sentence for one month to enable Ms Patkar to file an appeal against the order.

Rejecting her prayer to release her on the condition of probation, the

judge said, "Considering the facts...damages, age, and ailment (of the accused), I am not inclined to give excessive punishment."

The offence entailed a maximum punishment of simple imprisonment of up to two years or fine or both.

On May 24, the court had observed that Ms

KEY JUDGMENT

▶ THE COURT sentenced Medha Patkar after considering the evidence before it and the fact that the case went on for over two decades

▶ The offence entailed a maximum punishment of up to two years or fine or both

Patkar's statements calling Mr Saxena a "coward" and alleging his involvement in hawala transactions were not only defamatory per se but also crafted to incite negative perceptions about him.

Also, the accusation that the complainant was "mortgaging" the people of Gujarat and their

resources to foreign interests was a direct attack on his integrity and public service, it had said.

The arguments on sentencing were completed on May 30, following which the judgment on the quantum of sentence was reserved on June 7.

Ms Patkar and Mr Saxena have been locked in a legal tussle since 2000 after she filed a suit against him for publishing advertisements against her and the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA).

Mr Saxena, who then headed an Ahmedabad-based NGO named "Council for Civil Liberties," had also filed two cases against Ms Patkar in 2001 for making derogatory remarks against him on a TV channel and issuing a defamatory press statement.

HC denies bail to K. Kavitha in Delhi liquor policy case

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1:

The Delhi high court on Monday dismissed BRS leader K. Kavitha's bail pleas in two cases of corruption and money laundering linked to the alleged excise policy scam. Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma, who had reserved the order on the two bail pleas of Kavitha on May 28, rejected the petitions. A detailed order is awaited.

Ms Kavitha had challenged the trial court's May 6 order by which her bail applications in the CBI's corruption case as well as the ED's money-laundering case were dismissed.

Her lawyer submitted that of the 50 accused in the excise case, she is the lone woman and urged the court to consider granting her bail as law keeps women on a different pedestal. The CBI and ED opposed Ms Kavitha's bail pleas, saying she is powerful enough to influence witnesses.

She is in judicial custody in the two cases. The "scam" pertains to alleged corruption and money laundering in the formulation of the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22 that was later scrapped.

NTA declares re-test result, fresh rank list for Neet-UG

Students call for march towards Parl today to press for demands

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Monday announced the results for the re-test of the medical entrance exam Neet-UG.

The re-test was conducted for a total of 1,563 candidates who were earlier awarded grace marks to compensate for the loss of time as the exam on May 5 started late at six centres.

Meanwhile, the students who have been staging a sit-in at the Jantar Mantar have called for a march towards the Parliament on Tuesday to press their demands. For the re-test conducted at seven centres on June 23 following a Supreme Court order, 48 per cent of the 1,563 candidates did not appear.

The NTA said that 813 of the 1,563 candidates appeared for the retest while the others opted for the marks without the grace marks.

Allegations arose that the grace marks inflated scores, leading to six candidates from a single Haryana centre achieving a perfect 720, along with 61 others. Consequently, the top court ordered the cancellation of the grace marks and provided an option for a retest.

The students, who have been staging a sit-in at the

SC to hear plea on OMR sheet manipulation after 2 weeks

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1:

The Supreme Court on Monday posted for hearing after two weeks a plea alleging OMR sheet manipulation in the controversy-ridden Neet-UG, 2024. The plea came up for hearing before a vacation bench of Justice C.T. Ravikumar and Justice Manoj Misra.

The counsel appearing for the petitioner, who had taken the medical entrance exam, alleged that his OMR sheet was swapped.

The bench told the counsel that the petitioner was seeking per-

mission to appear in the retest that was held on June 23.

"The exam (retest) is over on June 23," the bench said.

The petitioner's counsel said several other petitions alleging irregularities and also seeking cancellation of Neet-UG, 2024, were pending before the apex court.

The bench initially said it would list the plea for hearing next week.

"If you are fortunate, then you will have some order in the other matter," it said. — PTI

Jantar Mantar here against the irregularities in NTA-held examinations—Neet-UG, PG, and UGC NET—have called for a march towards the Parliament on Tuesday to press their demands. The indefinite sit-in strike of the protesting students entered the sixth day on Monday.

Scores of students under the banner "India against NTA" gathered at the protest site to continue their agitation against alleged rigging in the said

examinations, which started last week on Wednesday.

The students called off their protest for the day after holding a demonstration and reiterated their demands, which included banning the NTA and Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation. The students also demanded a re-examination of Neet-UG for all and the reinstating of the old university-specific entrance exam system.

Boy strangles girl, burns body to hide theft

Minor girl caught 16-year-old boy stealing jewellery from her flat in Gurgaon

**Gurgaon, July 1:** A 16-year-old boy allegedly strangled his 9-year-old neighbour and set her body on fire after she caught him stealing jewellery from her flat at a housing society here on Monday, the police said.

The families of the victim and the accused both stay in two separate towers of Signature Global Solera, Sector 107, Gurugram and they were on good terms, they said.

The mother of the girl, a class 4 student, was at the house of the accused when he allegedly carried out the act around 11 am on Monday, police said.

The accused, a class 10

student, who has been apprehended by the police initially tried to claim that two thieves had entered the house and killed the girl but later confessed to the murder, police said.

He said that he was stealing the jewellery to repay a loan of ₹20,000, they said. The accused told police that he did not want to kill her but since the girl refused to be quiet, he strangled her as he was afraid of getting caught, a senior investigating officer said.

As per the police, on Monday morning the father of the victim went to the office, while the

mother and brother went to the house of the accused, which was in another tower in the same society.

Seeing the girl's mother in his house, the accused left the house saying he was going out for tuition but arrived at the victim's house. The police said an FIR has been registered at Rajendra Park police station.

The accused told police that he rang the bell and the girl, who was alone in the house, opened the door. He said he sat on the sofa and asked her for water and later also helped with her school homework, a senior

investigating officer said.

When she went to the toilet, he allegedly found keys to the locker from the drawer of the bed and stole some jewellery, the IO said.

This is when the girl came out from the toilet and she protested seeing the jewellery. The boy threw the jewellery out from the balcony but the girl continued protesting, which is when he starts hitting her, the officer said.

The officer said the boy then allegedly strangled her. After this, he allegedly set her body on fire using camphor from the home temple. After some time, the girl's mother

Cops book vendor under new laws; Shah says case dismissed

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

Soon after the three new criminal laws —

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) — came into force on Monday, the Delhi police began registering FIRs under the newly implemented criminal laws.

The first FIR which caught the media's eyes was lodged in the Central Delhi district in the wee hours of Monday under Section 285 of the BNS against a street vendor for allegedly obstructing a public way in Central Delhi's Kamla Market area.

However, hours later, Union home minister Amit Shah clarified that the cops used the provision to review it and dismissed the case.

Mr Shah said Delhi's case was not the first FIR registered in the country. He said the first case under the new laws was about a motorcycle theft registered in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior at 10 minutes past midnight.

He also said the Delhi police "dismissed" the case filed against the street vendor after an investigation.

"By using the provisions of review, the police has dismissed this case," he told the media. Meanwhile, Delhi police chief Sanjay Arora said the force has started regis-



A poster depicting the implementation of three new criminal laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam — being put by Delhi police to raise awareness in New Delhi on Monday.

tering FIRs under the three new laws. However, the National Hawker Federation slammed the first FIR and termed it "targeting the underprivileged" and a "misuse of power."

The Delhi police sources said that they will initiate the process of cancelling the FIR registered against the street vendor selling water and tobacco products from a cart that allegedly obstructed a public way.

The police will have to inform the court for formally cancelling the FIR, the sources said.

The FIR was registered under Section 285 of the BNS which states that "whoever, by doing any act, or by omitting to take order with any property in his possession or under his charge, causes danger, obstruction or injury to any person in any public way or public line of navi-

gation, shall be punished with fine which may extend to ₹5,000."

The police said 23-year-old Pankaj Kumar, a native of Patna, was found selling water, bidi, and cigarettes from a cart under a foot overbridge near the New Delhi railway station around 12.15 am.

The FIR, a copy of which is with this newspaper, stated that a patrol officer asked Mr Kumar to move his makeshift cart away from the path as it was hindering people's movement.

The officer also asked four-five passersby to become witnesses but they refused, the FIR stated.

After Mr Kumar ignored the officer's instructions, a case was registered at 1.30 am. He used the e-Praamaan app to record the seizures made, the FIR further stated.

Opp. creating constitutional crisis in Delhi, says Bansuri

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

In her maiden speech in the Lok Sabha, BJP's New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj slammed the Opposition on Monday, saying its members are creating a constitutional crisis in Delhi because Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is adamant that he will not leave his chair and run the government from jail.

Ms Swaraj talked about various schemes launched by the Narendra Modi government in the last 10 years and said while several countries are struggling with wars, India is heading towards becoming the third-largest economy in the world.

"The pathbreaking initiatives helped the NDA win a majority for a third term. The opposition, which imposed Emergency. Which murdered democracy, the



Bansuri Swaraj

he will not leave the chair and run the government from jail.

"First, Delhi was struggling for water and now, with water... There is a dearth of competence and talent... There is a policy paralysis and lack of governance...," she said.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Anurag Thakur initiated the discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the president's address on Monday. Ms Swaraj was the second BJP MP to participate in the discussion.

Engineer Rashid gets NIA's nod to take oath as MP

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday gave its consent to jailed Kashmir leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid, also known as Engineer Rashid, for him to take oath as an MP on July 5. Additional Sessions Judge Chandarjit Singh will on Tuesday pass an order on the interim bail plea of Mr Rashid, who is lodged in Tihar Jail in a 2017 terror funding case.

Mr Rashid won the Lok Sabha polls as an Independent candidate from the Baramulla constituency in Jammu and Kashmir by a margin of over 2 lakh votes against his nearest rival, National Conference leader Omar Abdullah.

32-year-old man stabbed to death in Delhi's Shahdara

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

A 32-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death near the railway tracks in the Nathu Colony area of Delhi's Shahdara, the police said on Monday.

The victim is yet to be identified, they said. A senior officer said the police

received a call around 8.15 pm about the stabbing incident close to the Nathu Colony flyover.

"Initial inquiry suggests that the man was stabbed to death by unidentified people. There were multiple stab injuries on his body. We also found ₹3,000 in his pocket," said DCP Surendra Chaudhary.

**MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI**  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT, SHAHDARA (NORTH) ZONE

**AUCTION NOTICE**

The unclaimed articles such as rebaries, wooden articles, iron articles ice cream trolleys, water trolleys, counter, pateelas (aluminium, steel & brass) etc. removed from public / municipal land footpaths during the course of conducting food hygiene raid by the Health Department will be auctioned on **05.07.2024 at 11.00 A.M** at Municipal Health Store situated at under the flyover, GT Road, Shahdara, Delhi in the presence of Board members. Every bidder shall have to deposit a sum of **Rs. 20,000/-** in account of security amount before giving the bid which shall be refunded/adjusted after the auction as per the decision of the members of the board constituted. The highest bidder shall have to deposit the amount of bid in cash at the fall hammer immediately.

Sd/-  
RO No. 11/DPI/MCD/2024-25 Dy. Health Officer, Shahdara (North) Zone

**DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
Adv. No. 2/2024/Consultant/Rect Cell/ Pers./DDA

**NOTICE**

Engagement of Consultants in DDA on short term contractual basis. Delhi Development Authority proposes to engage the following consultants purely on short term contractual basis:

Sl. No.	Name of Posts	No. of Consultants	Department
1.	Consultant	02	Architect
2.	Young Professional	02	Architect

The aspiring candidates are requested to submit the application in the prescribed format through online mode only at the email: [consultant.rc@dda.org.in](mailto:consultant.rc@dda.org.in) or before **23.07.2024**. For complete notification, bio-data format etc. kindly visit DDA's website [www.dda.gov.in](http://www.dda.gov.in) -- Jobs -- Select Job Category -- Jobs 2023-24.

For more details dial Toll Free No.: 1800110332 or Scan QR code

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SHORT TAKES

I am a Hindu and I am not violent: Patra

New Delhi: BJP MP Sambit Patra on Monday hit out at Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's remarks that ruling party members are "not Hindus" as they promote division and violence, and asserted Hindus have never committed violence. "Today, some people spoke against Sanatan dharma. It pains me to see the way Hindu traditions are being criticized. I am a Hindu, and I am not violent. Hindus have never committed violence. Today, the DMK criticised Hindus and said they enslave women. Hindus worship women as goddesses and not enslave them," the first-time MP said. Speaking in Lok Sabha earlier in the day, Mr Gandhi took a swipe at the ruling BJP, saying those who call themselves Hindus are engaged in "violence and hate" round the clock. Mr Patra also said people are happy that the Modi government has come back to power for a third term. — PTI

Sena (UBT) pick wins Parishad seat

Mumbai: In what comes as a shot in the arm of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), one candidate of Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) won the elections to the Maharashtra Legislative Council, while one is leading. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Anil Parab on Monday won the Maharashtra Legislative Council polls from Mumbai Graduates constituency by defeating the BJP's Kiran Shelar. Mr Parab received 44,784 votes while Mr Shelar got 18,772 votes. A total of 67,644 voters had exercised their franchise in the polling on June 26. Out of the total votes polled, 64,222 were held valid, and the quota for winning was 32,112 votes. Mr Parab polled 44,784 in the first preference voting and was declared elected. — PTI

'No welfare scheme will be withdrawn'

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh finance minister Jagdish Devda on Monday announced that no welfare schemes being undertaken by the state government would be withdrawn. "The ongoing schemes will be continued in the forthcoming Budget, which will be all-inclusive", Mr Devda said on the sidelines of the Budget session of the state Assembly on Monday. He said that the annual Budget for the state would be presented in the house on July three. "Our focus will be on capital expenditure. All the schemes will be continued as earlier", he added. Sources said that the state government was unlikely to increase the monthly incentive given to the beneficiaries of the "Ladli Behna" scheme, that had proved game changer for the ruling BJP in the 2023 state polls, as promised by the former CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

UPROAR IN MP ASSEMBLY OVER NURSING SCAM

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, JULY 1

The nursing college scam in Madhya Pradesh, currently being probed by CBI, on Monday rocked the Assembly, with the Opposition Congress demanding resignation of state minister Visvas Sarang in connection with the alleged scandal. Congress legislature party (CLP) leader Umang Singhar raised the matter in the House in the



Umang Singhar

morning session and demanded a discussion on the issue. The parliamentary affairs minister Kailash Vijayvargiya, however, argued that the matter was in the court and hence cannot be discussed in the house. The Opposition members, meanwhile, insisted on a discussion on the issue in the house. Mr Singhar alleged corruption in granting registration to some ineligible nursing colleges by the previous state government and said that around ₹3,00 crore was collected for giving registration to these colleges. He demanded Mr Sarang's resignation for the alleged scandal. The House plunged into chaos when the Opposition refused to budge from their demand.

'Muting of mics' again rocks Parliament

My mic was muted repeatedly, says Rahul; Speaker refutes claim

AGE CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, JULY 1

The controversy regarding the "switching off microphones" continued on Monday. Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday once again claimed his mic had been switched off in the House.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla reiterated the claim that the presiding officers don't have any switch or remote to turn off the microphones of members raising issues in the House. Speaking at "motion of thanks" on the President's address, Mr Gandhi said his mic had been switched off. Refuting the claims of the Leader of Opposition, Mr Birla said that his mic has never been muted and the presiding officers do not have any switch or remote control to turn off the microphones.



Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi during the ongoing Parliament session on Monday.

"The Chair only gives rulings or directives. The member whose name is called gets to speak in the House. The mic is controlled as per the directives of the Chair. The person sitting in the Chair does not have a remote control or a switch for the microphones," Mr Birla said. He also said the members of all political parties

have representation on the panel of chairpersons who preside over in the absence of the Speaker.

Mr Gandhi also claimed that whenever he spoke the word Ayodhya his mics were switched off. He also asked the Speaker why the Sansad TV cameras do not focus on him.

Earlier in the day, Mr Birla also took strong

objection to members casting aspersions on the Chair by alleging that when they rise to speak in the House, their microphones are turned off by the presiding officers.

"This is a matter of the dignity of the Chair. At least those who occupy the Chair should not raise such objections. K. Suresh also occupies the Chair. Does the Chair have control of the mic," the Speaker said, addressing the Congress veteran.

Rebutting the charge in Rajya Sabha also, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said, "I take strong exception to the statement by Pramod Tiwari. Nobody can switch off the mic. It's a fallacy being spread by few to diminish the institution."

Last week, Mr Gandhi also claimed his mic was switched off as he tried to raise the issue of Neet irregularities.

Ruckus in Maha House over Rahul's 'Hindu' jibe

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, JULY 1

The Maharashtra Vidhan Parishad on Monday witnessed unceremonious scenes over Lok Sabha Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi's alleged comments about the Hindu community. The ruling and Opposition legislators exchanged heated words due to which the House was adjourned for the day after frequent disruptions. Raising the issue in the Parishad, BJP MLC Prasad Lad demanded a resolution be passed in the Council condemning the Congress MP and sent to the Lok Sabha.

He said Mr Gandhi has insulted Hindus in the country calling them "violent" and demanded that Leader of the Opposition Ambadas Danve of Shiv

Sena (UBT) should reply on the issue. However, his demand evoked a sharp response from Mr Danve, who said the issue is not concerned with the House and sought deputy Chairperson Neelam Gorhe's intervention. "The so-called remarks were made by Gandhi in Lok Sabha and they are not related to the functioning of the state legislative council," he said.

There was an uproar in the House as the treasury and Opposition legislators traded strong words. It led to three adjournments of the Parishad with Mr Gorhe finally adjourning the house for the day.

Mr Lad demanded an apology from Mr Danve, accusing the latter of using abusive language and misbehaving with him.

New Odisha CM resumes janata darbar after decades

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, JULY 1

The chief minister's public grievance cell (CMPGC) in Odisha, which was virtually rendered defunct for years, re-opened on Monday under the new Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

Odisha new chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi sat for hours and listened to several grievances — bringing smiles on the faces of the people who came from far-flung areas of the state.

The hearing of grievances that started per the schedule at 11 am continued till afternoon. People were seen standing in long queues before the grievance cell to register the names.

The re-opening CMPGC assumes significance as former CM Naveen Patnaik — who ruled the state for 24 years (from 2000 to 2024) — did not come to the public grievance cell since 2008. A lot of people alleged that their grievances fell on deaf ears in the past government.

In fact, the CMPGC located in unit-v area here in the city had turned into a meeting place of a select number of senior officials of the previous government and certain Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leaders.

Odisha to plant 19L palm trees

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, JULY 1

The Odisha government on Monday announced to plant at least 19 lakh palm trees to reduce the number of deaths caused by lightning.

The palm trees will be planted by the forest and agriculture departments in different areas.

According to state government officials, palm trees were initially put in the endangered species list. However, later it was excluded from the list, leading to felling of these trees in a large scale.

'Talibani laws in WB': BJP on thrashing by TMC neta

Seeks Didi's resignation over poor law & order in WB

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 1

Demanding West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's resignation over the severely deteriorating law and order in the state, the BJP on Monday highlighted the video of a man flogging a couple in public and a TMC MLA's remarks of "justifying" the act by "linking it to kind of justice prevailing in Islamic nations", which the party claimed was "endorsement of a Talibani style" of dispensing justice in a country that believes in the Constitution.

While the NHRC has taken cognisance of the incident and issued notice, the West Bengal governor C.V. Ananda Bose has sought a report from the CM on this issue.

"A horrific video has come to light from West Bengal, reminding of the brutalities that exist only in theocracies. To make matters worse, the TMC cadre and MLAs are justifying the act. Be it Sandeshkhali, Uttar Dinajpur or many other places, Didi's West Bengal is 'Unsafe' for women," posted BJP president J.P. Nadda on a social media platform.

The man seen in the video beating up a couple with a bamboo stick was allegedly a local TMC leader from Chopra in



TMC MP Mahua Moitra speaks in the Lok Sabha during ongoing Parliament session on Monday.

Uttar Dinajpur district, where the incident occurred following a kangaroo court decision. The accused, Tajmul alias JCB, has been arrested.

"Just because INDIA bloc politics is built on appeasement, that means no laws or constitutional right to life and liberty don't apply," posted former union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar on a social media platform.

INDIA bloc won't allow 'bulldozer justice' prevail, says Kharge

Cong: Criminal laws passed forcibly

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

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

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik

Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) take into account some of the current social realities and modern-day crimes.

The new laws replaced the erstwhile British-era Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure or Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act (IEA), respectively.

In a post in Hindi on X, the Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "After the political and moral shock in the elections, Modi ji and the BJP are pretending to respect the Constitution, but the truth is that the three laws

of the criminal justice system, which are being implemented from today, were passed forcibly after suspension of 146 MPs."

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

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

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

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

'Northwest India records warmest June since 1901'

India likely to receive above average rainfall in July: IMD

New Delhi, July 1: India experienced 536 heatwave days this summer, the highest in 14 years, with the northwestern region recording its warmest June last month since 1901, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

The country recorded 181 heatwave days in June, the highest after 177 days in 2010, IMD director-general Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said at a virtual press conference.

"In 2024 summer, India experienced a total of 536 heatwave days, the highest after 2010 (578 days). In June, it experienced 181 heatwave days, surpassing 2010 (177 days)," he added. Mr Mohapatra said the monthly average maximum temperature in the northwestern India settled at 38.02 degrees Celsius, 1.96 degrees Celsius above normal. The average minimum temperature stood at 25.44 degrees Celsius, 1.35 degrees Celsius above normal.

Northwest India recorded a mean temperature of 31.73 degrees Celsius in June, 1.65 degrees Celsius above normal and the

highest since 1901. Northeast India recorded a 33-per cent rainfall deficit in June, which Mr Mohapatra attributed to the sluggish advance of monsoon over the northern and eastern parts of the country due to a lack of weather systems.

"Only one low-pressure area developed towards the end of June. Normally, we get three low-pressure systems. The Madden-Julian Oscillation was not favourable and therefore, we could not get enhanced convection and low-pressure systems," he said.

The absence of active western disturbances, mainly during the June 10 to June 19 period, was also a reason for the longer dry spell and heatwave prevailing over northwest and central India.

Mr Mohapatra said only three western disturbances, against a normal of four to five, were observed across north India (June 5-10, June 19-25 and June 26-28). India recorded more than 40,000 suspected heatstroke cases and over 100 heat-related deaths in one of its hottest and longest heatwaves. — PTI

country as a whole is most likely to be above normal — more than 106 per cent of the long-period average of 28.04 cm. "Normal to above-normal rainfall is most likely over most parts of the country except many parts of northeast India and some parts of northwest, east, and southeast peninsular India," he said. — PTI

Modi assures Central aid Rains in Arunachal compounded floods: Sarma

Assam flood situation worsens, PM dials Sarma

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, JULY 1

As the flood situation deteriorated in Assam again, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday spoke to Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and assured full cooperation from the Central government.

In what was said to be the second wave of flood, over 2,70,000 people in 14 districts of the state have been affected due to the flood.

Informing that the state government has alerted its machineries to help the flood-hit people, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told reporters that second wave of floods have inundated 698 villages so far. "We have sent ministers and MLAs to these flood-hit areas to help the flood affected people," the chief minister said.

Mr Sarma said that heavy rain in neighbour-



A person with disability in a wheelchair being assisted to cross a waterlogged street after heavy rainfall in Dibrugarh, Assam, on Monday.

ing Arunachal Pradesh has aggravated the flood situation.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi called me a short while ago to enquire about the flood situation in Assam. I explained to him that Assam is experiencing a second wave of floods this year due to heavy rains in

Arunachal Pradesh and part of our upper Assam districts. I also briefed him about the relief measures undertaken by the state government. He assured me of full cooperation from the government of India in this hour of crisis," the chief minister said. Union minister of ports,

Over 43% of forest camps in Kaziranga park submerged

Golaghat/Jorhat (Assam), July 1: With worsening flood condition in Assam, rising water levels have impacted more than 43 per cent of the 233 forest camps at Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, an official report said on Monday.

As a significant portion of wildlife habitat is now submerged, scores of animals have started crossing the National Highway 715

in search of higher ground towards the southern direction in East Karbi Anglong district. However, no death of animals has been reported as of now due to floods or accidents. Floodwaters have submerged a total of 101 forest camps, of which six have been vacated, across Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, a flood report said. — PTI

the flood victims. "In view of the flood in Dibrugarh town, took stock of the conditions and directed officials to take immediate measures to mitigate the situation," he said.

The death toll rose to 34 with the deaths of two children in the Dhemaji district on Sunday. — PTI

Now, agnipariksha for Rahul: Anurag

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 1

BJP leader Anurag Thakur on Monday took a swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and said he was enjoying power without responsibility till he became the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Mr Thakur was speaking after moving the "motion of thanks on President's Address" in the Lok Sabha.

Initiating the discussion, the BJP MP said that the Lok Sabha elections have kept those against the Constitution in the Opposition benches for the third time.

Congratulating Mr Gandhi on becoming the Leader of Opposition, Mr Thakur said that the Congress leader now has power with responsibility, so the absentee landlordism will not work. "For the last many years, Gandhi was enjoying



Anurag Thakur

power without responsibility," the BJP MP said and asserted that it was an "agnipariksha" for the Congress leader now. "The person who was used to bunking, would he be able to sit in the House till late as the prime minister does?... He is not there (even) now," the BJP leader remarked.

Mr Gandhi was not in the House when Mr Thakur made the remarks, which were protested by the Opposition members.

In a jibe at the Congress, former Union minister said they have been adamant on proving that "99 is more than 240" (tally of the Congress and BJP in the LS elections).

SHORT TAKES

4 Naxals involved in attack on CRPF held

**Sukma:** Nine Naxalites, including four allegedly involved in blowing up a mini-truck with an IED resulting in the death of two CRPF CoBRA personnel last month, were arrested from two places in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, the police said on Monday. The four involved in the blast incident were apprehended on Sunday from the forests between Timmapuram and Tekalgudam villages. Kunjam Rama (35), Barse Bichchem (40) are members of DAKMS (Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Majdoor Sangthan), which is a frontal wing of the Maoists, while Kunajim Joga (22) and Kunjam Bheema (21) are militia members, he said. The four were allegedly part of the Naxal group that blew up a truck carrying rations for security personnel near Timmapuram village, killing constable Shailendra (29) and driver Vishnu R (35) of CoBRA's 201st battalion on June 23. — PTI

India, Pak exchange list of prisoners

**New Delhi:** In a customary practice, India and Pakistan exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously in New Delhi and Islamabad, the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody on Monday. India reported having 366 civilian prisoners and 86 fishermen in its custody, who are Pakistani or are believed to be Pakistani. Meanwhile, Pakistan stated that it has 43 civilian prisoners and 211 fishermen in its custody, who are Indian or are believed to be Indian. New Delhi also asked Islamabad to expedite the release and repatriation of 185 Indian fishermen and civilian prisoners who have completed their sentence. In addition, Pakistan has been asked to provide immediate consular access to the 47 civilian prisoners and fishermen in Pakistan's custody.

Kerala, WB top in species discoveries

**Kolkata:** Kerala and West Bengal are the top two states in the number of discoveries of new animal species last year, the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) said in a report. The highest number of 101 discoveries were reported from Kerala, while West Bengal recorded 72. Tamil Nadu became the third state on the list with 64 discoveries last year, according to the ZSI report released on Sunday. "ZSI scientists have found 641 faunal species in 2023 in the country and the information was updated in the latest records," ZSI director Dhriti Banerjee said. The mission of the Kolkata-headquartered 109-year-old organisation is to trace all faunal species, she said. "This is imperative to save the bio-diversity of our system," Ms Banerjee said. — PTI

'Army capable of facing all challenges'

Crucial to equip soldiers with modern weapons, tech, stresses Gen. Upendra

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 1

Amidst ongoing stand-off with China at the Eastern Ladakh, new Indian Army Chief Gen. Upendra Dwivedi on Monday said that the Army is ready and capable to face all current and future security challenges facing the country. Speaking to the media after inspecting a guard of honour at the South Block in Raisina Hills, Gen. Dwivedi said the Army is facing "unique operational challenges" and to remain prepared for such threats, it is crucial to continue equipping the soldiers with the latest weapons. He said he would focus on ensuring that the Army is ready to operate in the "full spectrum of conflict". "It will be my endeavour to ensure that the Indian Army is always ready to



General Upendra Dwivedi inspects a guard of honour at South Block in New Delhi on Monday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

operate in the full spectrum of conflict, maintaining complete synergy with the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and other stakeholders," said Gen. Dwivedi a day after he assumed charge of the 1.3 million-strong force. Gen. Dwivedi said the

Indian Army is on the "path to modernisation" and it aspires to be "Atmanirbhar" (self-reliant) in defence. "To achieve this, we will encourage indigenous initiatives and induct maximum war systems and equipment that are manu-

Lt. Gen. N.S. Raja takes charge as Army's vice-chief

**New Delhi:** Lieutenant General N.S. Raja Subramani on Monday assumed the position of vice-chief of Army staff. Lt. Gen. Subramani was commissioned into the Garhwal Rifles in December 1985. Before taking over as vice-chief of Army staff, he headed the Lucknow-based Central Command. He possesses insightful knowledge and a deep understanding of operational dynamics on both the Western and Northern Borders. He holds a master of arts degree from King's College London and an M.Phil. He is an alumnus of the Joint Services Command Staff College, Bracknell (UK).

MP mulls more teeth to cattle smuggling law

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JULY 1

The Madhya Pradesh government is seriously contemplating to make the anti-cow slaughter and cattle smuggling laws more stringent. The issue was discussed by the state cabinet which met here on Monday minutes before the Budget session of the Assembly commenced, official sources told this newspaper. Madhya Pradesh has one of the most stringent anti-cow slaughter and cattle smuggling laws in the country, with penalties including up to seven years of imprisonment and mandatory confiscation of vehicles used in cattle smuggling. Sources said that the state government is con-

sidering making the laws more stringent by increasing the penalties. Chief minister Mohan Yadav has earlier said that his government would not compromise on protection of cows and would take strong action against cattle smuggling and cow slaughter. The state Cabinet on Monday cleared the proposal to rename the post of vice-chancellor (Kulpati) of universities to "Kulguru". The CM who chaired the meeting said that the move was aimed at establishing a link with "sanskriti (culture)" and "guru parampara" (tradition). Taking to X, the chief minister's office said that all university vice-chancellors in Madhya Pradesh will now be referred to as Kulgurus.



Rescue work underway after an overhead water tank collapsed on Sunday in Mathura. At least two women died and 11 people were injured after getting buried under the debris of the tank, according to officials. — PTI

Despite diversities, India is one: RSS chief Bhagwat

**Ghaziपुर/Mirzapur (UP), July 1:** Whatever it might appear from the outside, love for the motherland prevails everywhere and India is one nation despite its diversities, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said Monday at the launch of a book on war hero Abdul Hamid. The event was held in Ghaziपुर's Dhamapur village, where Hamid was born on this day in 1933. He was posthumously decorated with the Param Vir Chakra for his bravery during the India-Pakistan war in 1965. Mr Bhagwat said India is a vast country with numerous languages and ancient traditions. Naturally, there will be many customs and forms of worship, he added. "Despite these diversities, our country has been functioning as one nation for thousands of years, and we are one nation and one society," the



Mohan Bhagwat

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leader said. Giving an example, he said, "Whenever a country attacks our nation, as China and Pakistan have done, all countrymen forget their differences and stand together because unity is in our roots." This is because Indians not just love their country but worship it, he said. "Whatever it might seem on the outside, there is love and devotion towards motherland India everywhere. The ideals of our ancestors who shed blood and sweat for our motherland and the ancient cul-

ture unite us all. These are the things that make us one." He called heroes like Abdul Hamid an inspiration for instilling courage among people beyond what scriptures and speeches can achieve. Hamid's son Jainul Hassan was present at the launch of *Mere Papa Param Vir*. Mr Bhagwat travelled to Ghaziपुर from Varanasi, where he had taken part in another event. Later, he reached Devraha Baba Ashram situated in Amravati at Vindhyaachal in the Mirzapur district in the evening. He will stay there tonight, Narayan Baba, a senior priest of the Devraha Ashram, said. Giving details about the stay, Narayan Baba said Bhagwat will pray at the temple on Tuesday and offer bhog of 5,000 laddus to Hanumanji. He will leave in the afternoon. — PTI

HC tells TMC's Saket Gokhale to apologise to ex-envoy Puri

NEW DELHI, JULY 1: The Delhi high court directed TMC leader Saket Gokhale to apologise and pay ₹50 lakh damages to former diplomat Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri, for his defamatory tweets against her over the purchase of a property in Switzerland.

Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani also restrained the TMC MP from publishing any more content on any social media or electronic platform concerning his imputation. Ms Puri approached the high court in 2021, alleging that Mr Gokhale tarnished her good name and reputation by making reckless and false allegations about her financial affairs in the context of an apartment that she owned in Geneva. — PTI

Militant, 18 others flee from PoK jail; Army, BSF on alert

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, JULY 1

The Army and Border Security Force (BSF), which are at the forefront of defending the line of control (LoC) and international border (IB) with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir, have been alerted following the escape of 19 prisoners, including a dreaded militant commander, from a jail in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). On Sunday night, Ghazi Shehzad, who had been arrested on charges of terrorism by PoK police last year, and 18 other prisoners escaped from a low-security jail in the Rawalakot area after taking the police personnel guarding the premises hostage. One inmate, identified by his first name Khayam and jailed on drug-related charges, was killed in a shootout between the pris-

oners and the security guards during the jailbreak. It is not clear if the escaping prisoners had acquired weapons before the jailbreak or they used those snatched from the security guards during the reported scuffle. A police source in J&K's Poonch district said that the security forces have been asked to remain vigilant to ensure that Shehzad or any other escapees do not sneak into J&K. Reports from across the LoC said that Shehzad owes allegiance to Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and Hafiz Muhammad Saeed-led Jama'at-ud-Da'wah. Shehzad had been active in J&K before

his arrest for his alleged involvement in terror violence during the heyday of militancy in the erstwhile state. One report said that he was sent back to Pakistan in a prisoners' exchange. On returning to PoK, he had established an arms training camp for militants who would be then pushed to the Indian side of the de facto border to attack the security forces and carry out other violent acts, the reports said. These reports quoting official sources in Muzaffarabad also said that Shahzad, a resident of PoK, had launched his own militant outfit and named it as Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Jammu and Kashmir (The movement for defence of Jammu and Kashmir) some time ago. According to these reports, Shehzad is believed to be the mastermind of the jailbreak.

■ BJP MLAs seek probe against Uddhav for Ghatkopar tragedy Hoardings row rocks Maha Assembly

PRASAD PATIL MUMBAI, JULY 1

The Maharashtra Assembly on Monday saw a major showdown between the legislators of BJP and Shiv Sena (UBT) over the alleged illegal hoardings in Mumbai. BJP legislators demanded investigation against Uddhav Thackeray, while Shiv Sena (UBT) members accused the BJP of playing politics over the "sensitive issue". During the discussion over the tragic incident last month when a hoarding collapse

claimed 17 lives, state minister Uday Samant assured the House that the government will soon introduce a comprehensive policy regarding hoardings in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. NCP (SP) MLA Jitendra Awhad started the discussion on the calling attention motion moved by MLAs from all parties regarding the Ghatkopar hoarding tragedy. Referring to the suspension of Government Railway Police commissioner Quaiser Khalid for giving permission to the

illegal hoarding on the railway land, Mr Awhad asked why the police officer was singled out and demanded action against Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officers who allowed the hoarding to come up. Minister Samant informed the House that the concerned BMC officers had raised objection over the said hoarding several times, but the GRP overlooked it. After that BJP legislator Ram Kadam alleged that Bhavesh Bhide, director of Ego Media Private

Limited, which had erected the structure, had links with Mr Thackeray. Another BJP legislator Nitesh Rane alleged that Bhide was a "sleeping partner" of Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Sunil Raut. Mr Raut, who was present in the house, in turn alleged that Bhide was connected to a former Lok Sabha representative of the BJP. "If it is proven that I have any connection with Bhide, I will resign. If it is not proven, those making allegations against me should resign."

Rahul in face-off with Modi

■ Continued from Page 1  
defence minister, agriculture minister, rural development minister and commerce minister also tried to counter Mr Gandhi's multi-pronged attack. Mr Shah asked Mr Gandhi to authenticate his claims against the government. "All religions and all our great men talk about non-violence and fearlessness, but those who call themselves Hindus are engaged in violence, hate and falsehood round the clock... Aap Hindu ho hi nahi (You are not Hindus)," said Mr Gandhi, pointing towards BJP MPs, leading to an uproar from them. The ministers demanded an apology from Mr Gandhi for targeting the Hindu religion. Prime Minister Narendra Modi immediately got up to say that calling the whole Hindu society violent was a serious matter. Mr Shah sought the Congress leader's apology to the House and the country for hurting the feelings of crores of people who take pride in identifying themselves as Hindus. However, Mr Gandhi did not stop. "You are not true Hindus. The BJP doesn't represent Hindus. Narendra Modi is not

the entire Hindu samaj, RSS is not the entire Hindu samaj. You are not the custodians of Hinduism," continued Mr Gandhi, amid thumping of tables by the Opposition. Later, his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who watched him speak from visitors' gallery along with their mother, Rajya Sabha MP Sonia Gandhi, said: "He (Rahul) cannot insult Hindus. He said it very clearly. He talked about the BJP, he talked about BJP leaders." Hitting back, Mr Shah mentioned the 1984 anti-Sikhs riots, saying he has no right to talk about non-violence when the Congress had spread "terror" in the country. The Opposition countered him by mentioning the violence in Godhra (Gujarat) and Manipur. Taunting the BJP, Mr Gandhi said he was happy that the saffron party was now talking about the Constitution, given the fact that in the last ten years there has been a full-scale systematic attack on the Constitution and its principles. He added millions have resisted the ideology of the BJP and the attack on the Constitution and alleged that all those

who resisted were crushed, jailed, threatened and attacked. "Not only the Opposition but anyone who resisted the concentration of power and wealth, be it minorities, Dalits, were crushed, jailed, threatened. I myself faced relentless attacks. There were 20-plus cases (against me), (my) house was taken away. I faced 55 hours of interrogation (by ED)," Mr Gandhi said. Despite these challenges, he said he feels proud of the collective effort to protect the Constitution. "It feels nice that BJP people are now repeating 'Jai Samvidhan' after me," he said. In a rare move by any MP, Mr Gandhi displayed photographs of Lord Shiva followed by symbols of Islam and photos of Guru Nanak, Jesus Christ, the Buddha and Mahavir to convey that all religions spread love and tolerance and not hatred and violence. Speaker Om Birla tried to stop Mr Gandhi from showing the photographs "saying people worship them". But the LoP did not stop. At one point he placed all the photographs on the table of the Speaker, but then Mr Gandhi had many more of their copies with him. He

pulled them out one after another to make his point. Mr Gandhi made sarcastic comments on the PM, saying that he has a "direct connection with God" and that "he is not biological", as claimed by Mr Modi in media interviews during the elections. "PM said Gandhi is dead and a movie revived him", said Mr Gandhi, while continuing his attack. Rahul Gandhi also did not spare Speaker Om Birla and had a verbal exchange with him on switching off the mikes and not showing him on camera while he was speaking. Mr Gandhi remarked that he saw Mr Birla bow down before the PM. "I noticed something. When I shook your hand, you stood straight and shook my hand. When Modi ji shook your hand, you bowed down and shook his hand," he said. Mr Birla said that he was keeping the tradition of bowing to elders. "The Prime Minister is the Leader of House. My culture and traditions say, in personal as well as public life, and on this seat, I should bow to those who are elders and those who are equal should be treated equally, that is what I have learnt," Mr Birla said.

BJP demands Rahul apology

■ Continued from Page 1  
Mr Gandhi's first speech as LoP, Union minister S. Jaishankar said: "This is now the Leader of the Opposition. Who attacks Hindus while professing brotherhood to all. Who disparages the Indian Army's bravery, while expressing concern for their welfare. Who tears up Cabinet decisions, while preaching respect for the Constitution. Welcome to the politics of the Congress Party." Accusing the Congress leader of insulting crores of Hindus, home minister Amit Shah, in a post on X, said Mr Gandhi insulted "crores of Hindus" by saying that "Hindus commit violence, lie and spread hatred" and demanded an apology from him. Union ministers Ashwini Vaishnaw and Kiren Rijiju, while addressing the media, accused Mr Gandhi of denigrating the responsible position of the LoP with his "extremely irresponsible" speech in the Lok Sabha. Mr Rijiju said the BJP had challenged many of the claims made by the Congress leader in his speech and had sought action from the Speaker. He will have to substantiate or tender an apology, the parliamentary affairs minister said. Rejecting Mr Gandhi's allegations on the Agnipath scheme and compensation for the residents of Ayodhya during development projects there, Mr Vaishnaw said over Rs 1,253 crores in compensation was given to local shopkeepers and others, and they were helped in relocation.

Kharge slams Modi's poll speeches

■ Continued from Page 1  
has said other than by citing news reports. The Chair, however, did not accept the arguments and expunged the remarks made by Mr Kharge from the record. Mr Kharge insisted that he was only seeking to highlight the divisive nature of the speeches delivered by the PM. Leader of the House and BJP president J.P. Nadda too objected to the remarks by Mr Kharge. He said the Congress leader had no knowledge about the RSS and whatever Mr Kharge was saying about the organisation was regrettable. Mr Kharge said there was no vision or direction in the

President's address to Parliament. He attacked the ruling party for only offering slogans and not doing development work. He claimed there was no mention of the poor, Dalits and minorities in the President's address. Mr Kharge said while the Opposition talks about the plight of the common man, Mr Modi only does "Mann Ki Baat", the PM's monthly radio programme. Mr Kharge pointed out that Prime Minister Modi has not visited strife-torn Manipur. He also appealed to the Rajya Sabha Chairman to put back the statues of Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar back in their original locations. The Congress chief also

mentioned the massive Neer row in his reply, claiming the government initially denied any paper leak. He added the government later clarified and accepted that irregularities took place. "This election witnessed that a major issue was protecting the Constitution. The BJP said it will amend the Constitution. But the elections proved issues keep coming and going but the Constitution will thrive, democracy will survive, elections will keep happening and we will also be here," Mr Kharge said. "The common people supported the Opposition in this fight. They took a major step towards protecting the Constitution," he added.

son" and that he could influence the witnesses or tamper with the evidence in the case. The agency sought 14-day judicial custody for Mr Kejriwal, saying it was required "in the interest of the investigation and justice". Thereafter, when the matter was listed on June 29, special judge Sunena Sharma allowed the CBI plea and remanded Mr Kejriwal to judicial custody till July 12. Mr Kejriwal was first arrested on March 21 by the ED in the excise policy matter.

Kejriwal moves HC over CBI arrest

■ Continued from Page 1  
the trial court refused to declare his arrest illegal, as sought by the defence counsel, saying "the timing may be circumspect but it is not the clear criterion for declaring an arrest illegal". "The trial court said: "Investigation is the prerogative of the investigating agency, however, there are certain safeguards provided in the law and at this stage, on the material on record, it cannot be said that the arrest is illegal. The agency, however, should not be overzealous."

In its remand application before the trial court, the CBI had claimed Mr Kejriwal "did not cooperate" during the custodial interrogation. "He also evaded questions regarding the transfer and utilisation of ill-gotten money to the tune of ₹44.54 crores for the Goa elections by his party during 2021-22," the CBI claimed, adding Mr Kejriwal was "deliberately and intentionally evading the just and relevant questions related to the case."

The CBI also said the Delhi CM is a prominent politician and a "very influential per-

THE ASIAN AGE

2 JULY 2024

Uphold rule of law as mob lynching, hate crimes rise

India woke up to a new legal regime on July 1 that will cover the administration of criminal justice in its entirety, consigning the Raj-era laws to history in the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling the last general elections as the sign of Indian people's unwavering faith in the country's Constitution and democratic process. The newfound optimism about the Constitution and the new set of laws notwithstanding, a series of events in the preceding weeks have dealt a body blow to the idea of the rule of law in the country, if the reports about mob lynching and moral policing across the country offer a clue.

The latest bout started in the last week of May in Gujarat when a man was lynched for ferrying buffaloes in Gujarat. It was followed by the more gruesome one in which two cattle transporters from Uttar Pradesh were killed, and a third was critically injured on June 7 in Raipur in Chhattisgarh. Two weeks later, a 30-year-old man was killed in Aligarh on suspicion that he was an armed robber. Houses of 11 people who kept beef were demolished at government's behest saying they were built on government land in Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh. Clashes erupted over the alleged transportation of cows for slaughter ahead of the Bakrid festival on June 15 in Medak in Telangana. Similar incidents were reported from Odisha and Himachal Pradesh.

**A government which swears by the Constitution and the law must ensure that the law-breakers are dealt with the strongest possible way and that the arms of the state must protect the innocent citizens.**

If these were hate crimes, and the victims of murderous attacks were Muslims, the reports that have emanated from West Bengal are reflective of a breakdown of rule of law in the state. While one person was killed by a lynch mob on suspicion of theft in Jhargram district last week, more than a dozen cases of mob attack were reported from various parts of the state. And the most worrisome among them was the surfacing of a video of a man, allegedly a leader of the ruling Trinamul Congress, assaulting a couple for their 'illicit relationship' in Uttar Dinajpur district. The lynching of a transgender in Telangana in February this year alleging him to be a child lifter was reflective of the liberties people take with transgender people in our country for long.

Cow vigilante groups that would chase people who make a living by trading in cattle sprouted with unprecedented frequency after the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014. Several instances followed, forcing the Prime Minister to warn people against taking law into their hands. Mr Modi's words were disregarded not only by the lynch mobs; a member of his council of ministers received and even garlanded a gang at his home when its members were released from jail on bail.

India cannot afford a repeat of the same sequence of criminal acts anymore. This nation, as Mr Modi reiterated, is bound to its Constitution. It is the job of the governments at the centre and in states to ensure that the people, irrespective of their caste, creed or religion, enjoy the fundamental rights including the right to life the statute book guarantees.

The government claims that the intent of the new set of criminal laws is to ensure justice though even well-meaning people fear it would substantially deplete people's right vis a vis the state. A government which swears by the Constitution and the law must ensure that the law-breakers are dealt with the strongest possible way and that the arms of the state must protect the innocent citizens.

Biden dilemma for Democrats

The race to the White House is quite unlike the proverbial one between the hare and the tortoise. This contest between two candidates aged 82 and 78 seeking a second term has all the contours of a spoon and lime race between grandparents at a school fete.

It was supposed to be a close-run race between two occupants of the White House — incumbent Joe Biden and his predecessor Donald Trump, that is until the great American reality show of a presidential debate came along, up to which point Mr Biden had reasons to be optimistic of holding off the maverick former president.

Mr Biden's halting show in the televised debate, charitably described as a fiasco, has put the Democrats on the horns of a dilemma. Do they now ask their candidate to step down so they may choose a more dynamic leader and speaker who can relate to the young and the uncommitted voters whose votes may ultimately swing the polls?

Sticking to his powerful seat like a limpet to a rock, Mr Biden is unwilling to even contemplate giving up on the race to The Oval office, even as his family urges him on to look beyond the 'blip on the campaign radar', which is what the President's faithful are calling his disastrous debate performance.

It is not as if the challenger Mr Trump came away smelling of roses from the debate even if he carried off his regular bluster in a stronger voice, but laced with the usual dose of innuendo, fake facts and delusions. But that is the crux of the debate now — do the Americans choose a President who was incomprehensible and shows the signs of aging visibly or another who might not accept the verdict even were he to be beaten fair and square at the very polls in which he is a candidate?

And yet, for all the fuss that the American people and media make of the debate and their possible effect on the poll outcome, the real tiebreakers are the voters of the 7 swing states who usually decide whether a Democrat or a Republican goes to the White House.

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Subhani



Rethink Speaker's role: Can we look outside the system?



Mohan Guruswamy

Addressing the Assam Assembly last year, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who was recently elected to a second term, said: "Democracy is based on debates and dialogue. But continuous disruption of debates in the House and lack of decorum is a matter of concern. While it is natural for the treasury and Opposition benches to disagree, dissidence should not lead to an impasse."

After flagging the issue, he should have introspected on the role of the Speakers in our system, and his own role. Legislatures and Parliaments, while meant to be self-governing, are still in dire need of governing. In India and elsewhere, these elected institutions zealously guard their independence against the other branches of the government. However, since the Speaker too is a directly elected member of the House, he or she is a creature of our politics and political system. How the office conducts itself depends on the individual, but sadly in our system the political chief executives tend to overawe this office and more often the Speaker ends up more as a mere servitor of the political grandees.

Of course, a Speaker can well be assertive and choose to do the right thing, even if it incurs the disapproval of the political masters. But that has seldom happened in India. Increasingly, the presiding officers are the instrumentality by which governments control elected legislatures and even subvert mandates and majorities, by suspending members to reduce the Opposition's numbers. The system of a neutralised Speaker has largely worked in the House of Commons, but not so in the Lok Sabha. Here the Speaker has become a mere political minion serving the convenience of the masters.

**The system of a neutralised Speaker has largely worked in the House of Commons, but not so in the Lok Sabha. Here the Speaker has become a mere political minion serving the convenience of the masters.**

government by discussion and debate, for the method of making choices is by common consent and acceptance.

A prime prerequisite for democratic functioning is institutional order and coherence. Nothing much needs to be said as to how dysfunctional our Parliament and legislatures have now become. The blight has been a long time in the making and they have now become forums more for political vaudeville than thoughtful consideration of the nation's many problems.

The first Lok Sabha worked for almost 4,000 hours while the 16th Lok Sabha functioned for just 1,615 hours. Dr Jessica Seddon, a senior fellow at IIT Madras' Centre for Technology and Policy, recently wrote a perceptive paper titled "The Limits of Control in Parliament", in which she examined the institutional arrangements that preclude intelligent and patient discussion of vital matters in either House of Parliament. Dr Seddon writes:

"Parliamentary process is currently stacked against constructive debate. It awards the government substantial control over what comes up for discussion, limits the avenues for alternatives to be articulated and seriously considered, and more or less precludes coalitions that cut across government and Opposition lines. In doing so, it also effectively absolves the Opposition from any responsibility to highlight specific problems, propose new solutions and build issue-based coalitions around common interests. If delay, disruption and shouts of 'no' are the only feasible forms of public dissent, it's hard to ask people to hold their rep-

resentatives accountable for more."

The evolution of our politics into a non-ideological political competition has seen the demise of discussion and debate within Parliament. The expansion of 24x7 television news channels and their vacuous talk shows aimed at garnering TRPs rather than spreading light has only accelerated this process.

Parliament still meets and passes bills and enacts laws, but most of this is done without the debate and discussion that they require and which we expect. Even the Union Budget is barely discussed. Many a time Parliament even functions without a quorum.

This convention of having a Speaker from within the political system needs to be re-examined. We might be better served by having legislatures presided over by an eminent and commonly trusted individual, perhaps like a retired Chief Justice, who might bring a more enlightened view of right and wrong to the office?

Then there is the Anti-Defection Act that seriously limits free discussion by muzzling inner-party discussion and expression of dissent. This law disrespects the essential reality that Members of Parliament or the state legislatures are the representatives of the people. That they are members of a political party is only incidental. The elected members are intended to represent and protect the interests of the people who elect them, and not that of a handful of leaders. It makes them subservient to the whip on the pain of expulsion.

This tyranny of the whip has turned our MPs virtually into marionettes that are forced to act according to the wishes of their party's leadership. Most party leaderships are now vested within families and clans, and the leadership is usually hereditary or extra-institutional. So where do we go from here? And where will we discuss and debate just that?

*The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, has held senior positions in government and industry*

LETTERS

TWISTED JUSTICE

The Tamil epic *Silappathikaram* says that the Madurai king, Pandian Nedunchezhiyan, realising he has committed a grave mistake in ordering the death of Kovalan, husband of Kannaki, openly laments his "Sengol" got twisted. Unable to bear the injustice done with his judgment, he falls down dead from his throne. His wife, Queen Kopperundevi, too, falls dead. This being the kind of sanctity attached to the Sengol, is it justifiable to have it installed prominently in our Lok Sabha. Isn't Samajwadi MP R.K. Chaudhary justified in asking for its removal?

**Tharcus S. Fernando**  
Chennai

THREAT OF ANARCHY

INDIA IS likely to see a transformative shift in the criminal justice system by implementing three ground-breaking laws from July 1. The biggest fear is the institutional readiness for these new laws, which requires a nationwide audit. There has been no in-depth assessment of readiness across criminal justice institutions in various states. Not to mention the confusion that will arise while shifting from the old to new laws. These laws should be implemented only after a thorough and independent audit of the institutional readiness is done. A phased implementation just to test the waters will be a more sensible step.

**Noopur Baruah**  
Tezpur, Assam

VEGETABLE ROULETTE

THE PRICE of tomatoes and onions has skyrocketed, and risen to Rs 80 and Rs 60/kg respectively, surpassing the price of petrol. Tomatoes are an important dietary source of lycopene, a powerful antioxidant that is linked to several health benefits. Potatoes, tomatoes and onions are vital ingredients in Indian cooking, and any big price hike in these items can disrupt the monthly budget of households. Onions are needed not only for daily cooking but also for making salads, *poha*, *bhajiyas*, etc. It is also needed for garnishing *raitas*. The government must take immediate steps to lower the price of tomatoes and onions, to give relief to citizens.

**Jubel D'Cruz**  
Mumbai

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: [asianage.letters@gmail.com](mailto:asianage.letters@gmail.com).



Aakar Patel

On Friday, June 28, India's external affairs ministry put out a strong statement against a report from the United States state department on religious freedom in India. Our statement said that "as in the past, the report is deeply biased, lacks understanding of India's social fabric and is visibly driven by vote bank considerations and a prescriptive outlook. We therefore reject it". Our statement further went on to attack the primary report on which the US state department was basing its observations. We said that this primary report was "a mix of imputations, misrepresentations, selective usage of facts, reliance on biased sources and a one-sided projection of issues".

There are a couple of hundred words added to this which talk about our laws and our sovereignty, but sadly do not address the specific accusations that the US state department has made. What were these?

America's secretary of state Antony Blinken said these two things: "In India, for example, Christian communities reported that the local police aided mobs that disrupted worship services over accusations of conversion activities or stood by while mobs attacked them and then arrested the victims on conversion charges." He added: "In India, we see a concerning increase in anti-conversion laws, hate speech, demolitions of homes and places of worship for members of minority faith communities."

This is a fact. We cannot both be proud of the BJP's bulldozer culture and disown it. It would

have been appropriate for us to have addressed these things specifically, but we chose not to. Instead, we ended our statement with the words that "in 2023, India has officially taken up numerous cases in the US of hate crimes, racial attacks on Indian nationals and other minorities, vandalism and targeting of places of worship, violence and mistreatment by law enforcement authorities". We will come to this later, but first let us understand what this US report is that has India upset.

It is an annual report put out by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). It claims to be an independent and bipartisan (meaning comprising both Democratic and Republican members) US federal (or central) government entity.

For the last five years, every year, it has been recommending sanctions against Indian leaders and institutions. Each year, the US federal government, first under Donald Trump and then under Joe Biden, has been avoiding imposing sanctions.

If readers remember the US visa ban on Narendra Modi (then chief minister of Gujarat) 20 years ago, it was because he was put on the USCIRF sanctions list and the then President (George W. Bush) had enforced the sanctions against Mr Modi for the Gujarat pogrom.

Their 2020 report says: "India took a sharp downward turn in 2019. The national government used its strengthened parliamentary majority to institute national-level policies

violating religious freedom across India, especially for Muslims." Our external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar's response was to say that the USCIRF was "biased and its tendentious comments against India are not new".

Last year, after India for the fourth year running made it to the list of nations persecuting minorities, our foreign ministry said the report was "biased and inaccurate" and reflected a "severe lack of understanding of India and its constitutional framework, its plurality and its democratic ethos".

This is inaccurate. I have engaged with the USCIRF and find them to be extremely knowledgeable about India.

See this note by one of the USCIRF commissioners, Johnnie Moore, in the 2021 report. He writes: "I love India. I have floated early in the morning down the Ganges in Varanasi, walked every alley in Old Delhi, stood in awe of the architecture in Agra, sipped tea next to the Dalai Lama's temple in Dharamsala, circled the shrine in Ajmer, and looked in awe at the Golden Temple. All along the way, I have met Christian brothers and sisters who serve the poor selflessly, often in difficult circumstances. Of all the countries in the world, India should not be a country of particular concern. It is the world's largest democracy and it is governed by a pristine Constitution. It is diversity personified and its religious life has been its greatest historic blessing. Yet, India does seem to be at a crossroads. Its democracy -- still

young and freewheeling -- is creating through the ballot box difficult challenges for itself. The answer, of course, is for India's institutions to draw upon their rich history to protect their values. India must always resist allowing political and inter-communal conflict to exacerbate by religious tensions. India's government and people have everything to gain and absolutely nothing to lose from preserving social harmony and protecting the rights of everyone. India can. India must."

These are the people whose views we are dismissing and calling biased. Even if we are to assume that the USCIRF is biased as Mr Jaishankar and the external affairs ministry claim, this is not relevant. What they say is relevant. Is it true that Indian minorities are being persecuted by law and policy under the BJP? The answer is obvious to anyone who opens a newspaper and switches on their television set.

Our response threatening to take up violations in the United States against their minorities is welcome. As a democracy which says it respects human rights, it is our obligation to point out flaws in other nations, especially in our friends. However, this should be a deep exercise, such as the one the USCIRF conducts, and not as a throwaway statement in angry response to well-founded and accurate accusations against us.

*The writer is the chair of Amnesty International India. Twitter: @aakar\_patel*



SHORT TAKES

**CAR DRIVES INTO CROWD, KILLS 9 NEAR SEOUL HALL**

Seoul, July 1: A car hit pedestrians near Seoul city hall, killing nine people and injuring at least four, South Korean media reports said, citing police and fire officials. A police official told Reuters officers were investigating at the scene, and declined to give further information. YTN TV reported that the vehicle rammed into pedestrians standing on the crosswalk after hitting two other cars. A police officer was administering CPR to a person on the ground at the site of the accident, according to a video provided by a witness to Reuters.

**NORWAY LIMITS PVT ISLAND SALE FEARING CHINA**

Copenhagen, July 1: Norway said on Monday it had demanded the owner of a private property on the Arctic Svalbard islands obtain the government's consent before selling the property, over concerns national security interests could be jeopardised through a sale. The company AS Kulspids, which owns Soere Fagerjord in Svalbard, must obtain consent from the ministry of trade, industry and fisheries before negotiating a sale of the property, the Norwegian government said in a statement.

**ALBANIA'S WORLD FAMOUS AUTHOR KADARE NO MORE**

Tirana, July 1: Albanians mourned Ismail Kadare, their "greatest cultural monument", Monday after the acclaimed novelist - tipped several times for the Nobel literature prize - died of a heart attack at a Tirana hospital aged 88. Prime Minister Edi Rama led the tributes with the president of neighbouring Kosovo Vjosa Osmani hailing Kadare's "remarkable contribution to Albanian and world literature". Through the epic sweep of novels like "Broken April" and "The General of the Dead Army", the writer used metaphor and quiet sarcasm to chronicle the grotesque fate of his country and its people.

**MAURITANIA PREZ RE-ELECTED COMFORTABLY**

Nouakchott, July 1: Mauritania's incumbent President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani has comfortably won re-election at the helm of the vast desert nation, seen as a rock of relative stability in Africa's volatile Sahel region.

The former army chief won just over 56 percent of the vote, the Independent National Electoral Commission said Monday, giving him a second five-year term during which Mauritania is set to become a gas producer. Dozens of supporters massed outside Ghazouani's campaign headquarters in the capital Nouakchott after the final provisional results.

**NEPAL BUDDHA GETS 10-YR JAIL FOR CHILD SEX**

Kathmandu, July 1: A Nepali court on Monday sentenced a man whose followers believe him to be a reincarnation of Buddha to 10 years in prison for child sexual abuse. Ram Bahadur Bomjan, known as "Buddha boy" by his devotees, became famous as a teenager after followers said he could meditate motionless for months without water, food or sleep. He was convicted of child sexual abuse last week by the court in Nepal's southern town of Sarlahi.

**BIGGEST POLITICAL PARTY IN FIJI DEREGISTERED**

Suva, July 1: The largest political party in Fiji was deregistered on Monday, less than two months after its former leader and ex-prime minister Frank Bainimarama was jailed for perverting the course of justice. Opposition party FijiFirst held the most seats in the country's 55-member parliament, but was turfed out of power in 2022 by a three-way coalition. Since its election defeat, the party has been thrown into disarray. Bainimarama was jailed earlier this year after a court found he used his political clout to smother a police probe.

**Trump has immunity for official, not pvt acts: SC**

Throws out decision to reject Trump bid to shield himself

Washington, July 1: The US Supreme Court for the first time on Monday recognised that ex-presidents have immunity from prosecution for certain actions taken in office, as it threw out a judicial decision rejecting Donald Trump's bid to shield himself from criminal charges involving his efforts to undo his 2020 election loss.

The court ruled 6-3 that while former presidents enjoy immunity for actions they take within their constitutional authority, they do not for actions taken in a private capacity. The ruling marked the first time since the nation's 18th century founding that the Supreme Court has declared that former presidents may be shielded from criminal charges in any instance.

Chief Justice John Roberts announced the landmark ruling on behalf of the court's six-justice conservative majority. The court's three liberal justices dissented.

The decision came in Trump's appeal of a lower court ruling rejecting his immunity claim. The court decided the case on the last day of its term.

Trump is the Republican candidate challenging Democratic President Joe Biden in the November 5 US election in a rematch from four years ago. The court's slow handling of the blockbuster case already had helped Trump by making it unlikely that any trial on these charges



Donald Trump



People hold anti Trump signs in front of the US Supreme Court in Washington DC on Monday.

**Trump thinks he's above law: Biden**

Washington, July 1: Joe Biden's reelection campaign team slammed Donald Trump on Monday after the US Supreme Court ruled that he enjoys some immunity from prosecution as a former president.

"Donald Trump snapped

brought by Special Counsel Jack Smith could be completed before the election. Trump had argued that he is immune from prosecution because he was serving as president when he took the actions that led to the charges. Smith had opposed presidential immunity from prosecution based on the principle that no one is above the

law. During April 25 arguments in the case, Trump's legal team urged the justices to fully shield former presidents from criminal charges - "absolute immunity" - for official acts taken in office. Without immunity, Trump's lawyer said, sitting presidents would face "blackmail and extortion" by political rivals due to the threat of future prosecution.

The court's 6-3 conservative majority includes three justices Trump appointed. Smith's election subversion charges embody one of the four criminal cases Trump has faced.

Trump, 78, is the first former US president to be criminally prosecuted as well as the first former president convicted of a crime.

**TRUMP SAYS SC OPINION IS WIN FOR DEMOCRACY**

Washington, July 1: Donald Trump hailed a "big win" for democracy after the US SC ruled that presidents have presumptive immunity for official acts - a decision set to delay his trial for conspiring to overturn his 2020 election loss.

Marked by high turnout of nearly 68 per cent that reflected the high stakes, voters handed the Marine Le Pen's National Rally a strong lead, with about 33 per cent of the vote.

The number includes the votes from a group of conservative candidates of The Republicans party

**French far-right leads in first round of elections**

Paris, July 1: France's National Rally surged into the lead in the first round of legislative elections, according to results released early Monday, bringing the far-right party to the brink of power and dealing a major blow to President Emmanuel Macron's centrists in an election that could set the country, and Europe, on a starkly different course.

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

Marked by high turnout of nearly 68 per cent that reflected the high stakes, voters handed the Marine Le Pen's National Rally a strong lead, with about 33 per cent of the vote.

The number includes the votes from a group of conservative candidates of The Republicans party



Supporters of Marine Le Pen react after the release of projections based on the actual vote count.

**THIS IS** all really dangerous, Even the complete victory of the radical right of (Marine) Le Pen's camp does not signal the loss of power by the centre represented by President (Emmanuel) Macron.

- DONALD TUSK, Polish Prime Minister

**LAST WEEK,** we saw (Joe) Biden lose the debate (against Donald Trump). And now Macron's party has lost, coming in third place in the legislative elections. The heads of state in power are suffering resounding defeats.

- VYACHESLAV VOLODIN, Speaker of the Russian Duma

who had allied with the far-right party in the first round.

The New Popular Front, a leftist alliance, finished second with about 28 per cent. The president's centrist group came third with around 20 per cent,

according to figures released by the Interior Ministry.

Macron and his allies, as well as politicians on the left, are still hoping they can head off an outright win by the National Rally.

**Australian visa fees for global students doubled**

Melbourne, July 1: Australia has more than doubled the cost of student visa fees for international students from \$710 to \$1,600, a move which will impact lakhs of Indians planning to study in this country.

The move has triggered outrage from student representatives who say that the price hike will drive potential students to competitors. ABC News reported on Monday.

From July 1, the international student visa fee has risen to USD 1,600 from USD 710. The federal gov-

ernment said the additional revenue will help fund initiatives in education including cuts to graduate debt, financial support for apprentices, and the ongoing implementation of its migration strategy, the report said.

"International education is an incredibly important national asset and we need to ensure its integrity and quality," Minister for Education Jason Clare said in a statement.

According to the Indian High Commission in

Canberra, the number of Indian students enrolled for studying in Australia is estimated at around 1,20,277 as of August 2023, making Indian students the second largest cohort of foreign students in Australia.

Meanwhile, Yeganeh Soltanpour, the national president of the Council of International Students Australia, slammed the decision, noting the fee increase, combined with high deposit costs, places extra strain on international students, the ABC report said.

**LANKA VOICES CONCERN OVER SAILOR'S DEATH**

Colombo, July 1: Sri Lanka has voiced its concern to India over the death of a naval sailor who was killed in a recent operation to seize an Indian trawler allegedly engaged in illegal fishing in the island nation's territorial waters.

The Sri Lankan High Commissioner in Delhi Kshenuka Seneviratne has conveyed the message to External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, sources in the foreign ministry here said on Monday.

On June 25, off the coast of Point Pedro in the north, a senior sailor from the Navy Special Boat Squadron sustained critical injuries due to the aggressive manoeuvres of the Indian trawler, resisting its seizure, a statement issued by the Sri Lankan Navy said last week.

Unfortunately, the senior sailor succumbed to his injuries after being admitted to the Teaching Hospital, Jaffna, it added. The Navy said that 10 Indian fishermen were arrested and their trawler was seized.

The 10 arrested fishermen have been charged with the murder of the sailor as well as causing damage to the Naval property. The hearing of the case is fixed for July 22 in Mallakum in Jaffna. A post-mortem of the deceased sailor has determined that his death was an accident.

- PTI

**Hurricane Beryl gets stronger in Caribbean**

Port of Spain, July 1: Hurricane Beryl strengthened as it churned toward the Caribbean's Windward Islands on Monday, according to officials, threatening devastating flooding and storm surges as life-threatening high winds picked up speed. People in a broad swathe of the Eastern Caribbean boarded up shops, stocked up on food and filled their cars with fuel as the storm approached.

"Beryl is expected to remain an extremely dangerous major hurricane when it reaches the Windward Islands this morning," the US National Hurricane Centre said in its latest advisory, urging residents to heed any evacuation orders or other preparedness guidance from officials.

Beryl's rapid rise marks an unusually fierce and early start to this year's Atlantic hurricane season - the earliest Category 4 storm on record, according to NHC data. The prime minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Ralph Gonsalves, said he was expecting a natural disaster that could continue for days. In the capital of Kingstown, conditions around the main harbor worsened on Monday morning, with some damage to building roofs reported, caused by intensifying winds.

At Category 4 strength on the Saffir-Simpson five-point scale, Beryl is packing maximum sustained wind speeds of 209 kmph, with some higher gusts, and is located about 145 km south-southeast of St. Vincent. It is moving west-northwest at a speed of 32 kmph and is forecast to cross many of the central Caribbean's most populated islands through Wednesday as it barrels toward the Gulf of Mexico, the NHC added.

The core of the hurricane will likely bring "potentially catastrophic wind damage" as it moves through parts of the Windward Islands, with St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada, most at risk, the centre said. Hurricane warnings were in effect for Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Tobago. A tropical storm warning was issued for Martinique, Trinidad and St. Lucia, with storm watches issued.

- Reuters



People queue outside a bus station in Scarborough, Trinidad and Tobago, before the arrival of Hurricane Beryl on Monday.

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- AFP

**GREECE PM WARNS OF TOUGH SUMMER AFTER FIRES**

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- AFP

**Israel tanks advance after missile strikes**

Gaza Strip, July 1: The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad fired a barrage of rockets into Israel on Monday as fighting raged in Gaza and Israeli tanks advanced deeper in parts of the enclave, residents and officials said.

The armed wing of Islamic Jihad, an Iranian-backed ally of Hamas, said its fighters fired rockets towards several Israeli communities near the fence with Gaza in response to "the crimes of the Zionist enemy against our Palestinian people".

The volley of about 20 rockets caused no casualties, the Israeli military said. But the attack showed militants still possess rocket capabilities almost nine months into an offensive that Israel says is aimed at neutralising threats against it.

Residents of several neighbourhoods in eastern Khan Younis, which is in southern Gaza, said they had received audio messages from Israeli phone numbers ordering them to leave their

**BIBI: MILITARY CAPABILITY OF HAMAS AFFECTED**

Jerusalem, July 1: Israel is almost finished with eliminating Hamas' military capabilities in the Gaza Strip, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday. "We are advancing to the end of the phase of eliminating the terrorist army of Hamas, and there will be a continuation to strike its remnants," Netanyahu said, according to a statement from his office.

homes. "For your safety, you must evacuate immediately to the humanitarian zone," army spokesperson Avichay Adraee posted on social media platform X in a call to residents and displaced people living in those areas.

Some suggested this could mean Israeli forces will return to the area.

- AFP

**CHINA'S TEST ROCKET CRASHES DURING LAUNCH**

Beijing, July 1: A powerful Chinese rocket crashed after an "accidental launch during a ground test on Sunday due to a structural failure, a private company responsible for the rocket said. Space Pioneer, said in a statement that the Tianlong-3 rocket was unexpectedly launched during a static-fire test at a facility in Gongyi county in Henan province.

**CHEMICALS TO MAKE DRUGS FROM CHINA HELD**

Rome, July 1: Italian authorities announced Monday the seizure of more than six tonnes of chemicals from China allegedly intended to produce illegal drugs, including ecstasy, worth more than \$678 million.

Italy's financial police said two shipments contained enough so-called "drug precursors" to produce more than 63 million MDMA pills, the synthetic drug known as ecstasy, which police said was enough to "flood" Europe.

**CHINA DEPLOYS 2ND AIRCRAFT CARRIER IN SCS**

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

**BINARY CHOICE Paid ad-free option of social media giant found illegal, paves way for big fine**

**EU accuses Meta of breaking digital rules**

Brussels, July 1: The EU accused Facebook owner Meta on Monday of breaching the bloc's digital rules, paving the way for potential fines worth billions of euros.

The charges against the US tech titan follow a finding last week against Apple that marked the first time Brussels had levelled formal accusations under the EU's Digital Markets Act (DMA).

The latest case focuses on Meta's new ad-free subscription model for Facebook and Instagram, which has sparked multi-

ple complaints over privacy concerns.

Meta's "pay or consent" system means users have to pay to avoid data collection, or agree to share their data with Facebook and Instagram to keep using the platforms for free. The European Commission said it informed Meta of its "preliminary view" that the model the company launched last year "fails to comply" with the DMA.

"This binary choice forces users to consent to the combination of their personal data and fails to

**MEGA EUROPEAN UNION PROBE**

The latest case focuses on Meta's new ad-free subscription model for Facebook and Instagram, which has sparked multiple complaints over privacy concerns.

The findings come after the commission kickstarted a probe into Meta in March under the DMA.

Meta insisted its model "complies with the DMA". Under the DMA, the EU labels Meta and other companies, including Apple, as "gatekeepers"

provide them a less personalised but equivalent version of Meta's social networks," the EU's powerful antitrust regulator said

in a statement. The findings come after the commission kickstarted a probe into Meta in March under the DMA,

which forces the world's biggest tech companies to comply with EU rules designed to give European users more choice online.

Meta insisted its model "complies with the DMA". "We look forward to further constructive dialogue with the European Commission to bring this investigation to a close," a Meta spokesperson said.

Meta can now reply to the findings and avoid a fine if it changes the model to address the EU's concerns. If the commission's view is confirmed however, it can slap fines

of up to 10 percent of Meta's total global turnover under the DMA. This can rise to up to 20 per cent for repeat offenders. Meta's total revenue last year stood at around \$135 billion. The EU also has the right to break up firms, but only as a last resort.

Under the DMA, the EU labels Meta and other companies, including Apple, as "gatekeepers" and prevents them forcing users in the bloc to consent to have access to a service or certain functionalities.

- AFP



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	79476.19	0.56
Nifty 50	24141.95	0.55
S&P 500*	5,457.04	-0.06
Dollar (₹)	83.44	-0.05
Pound Sterling (₹)	105.73	-0.24
Euro (₹)	89.77	-0.53
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	71,679.97	0.10
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	85.30	0.35
IN 10-Yr bond yield	7.016	0.008
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.439	0.096

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Govt seeks views on reviving SEZs to facilitate trade

The commerce ministry has sought views of different departments on proposed measures to revive special economic zones (SEZs) and facilitate business transactions between SEZ and the domestic market, an official said. The official said that the ministry has suggested allowing the sale of products manufactured in SEZs in Indian market on payment of duty foregone on inputs to help promote value addition.



## Govt cuts price of commercial LPG cylinder

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) announced a reduction in the prices of commercial LPG gas cylinders by ₹30, the new price at ₹1,646 in Delhi, effective from July 1. Meanwhile household gas prices remained unchanged. Besides, the OMCs also informed that jet fuel or aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price has also been hiked by 1.2 per cent (₹1,179.37) to ₹96,148.38 per kilolitre in the national capital.

## Brainbees gets nod for initial public offering

Brainbees Solutions popular as FirstCry, a multi channel retailing platform for mothers, babies and kids products has received the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) approval for its proposed initial public offering (IPO). FirstCry public offer comprises fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to ₹1,816 crore and an offer for sale of over 5.43 crore equity shares by the selling shareholders.

## LIC redesignates chair Mohanty as CEO and MD

Public sector behemoth Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has announced the redesignation of its chairman, Siddhartha Mohanty, as chief executive officer and managing director, effective June 30, 2024. Throughout his career at LIC, Mohanty has held several key positions, including chief operating officer and chief executive officer of the insurance major's housing finance arm LIC Housing Finance Ltd.

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## Passenger vehicle sales rise 3.6% to 3.4L units in June

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, JULY 1

Passenger vehicle (PV) wholesales grew 3.6 per cent to 3.4 lakh units in June, primarily driven by new launches and robust demand for SUVs amidst heatwave across the country last month.

Automakers had dispatched 3.28 lakh passenger vehicles to dealers in June last year.

In the January-June period, the PV sales also rose 7.6 per cent to 21.68 lakh, compared to 20.15 lakh units during the same period in 2023.

"Compared to June 2023, this year saw a growth of only 12,000 vehicles. This increase has come from the launch of new models," Partho Banerjee, senior executive officer, marketing and sales at Maruti Suzuki India said.

PV wholesales at Maruti increased by 3 per cent year-on-year to 1.37 lakh units in June, compared to 1.33 lakh units during the same month in 2023.

Sales, however, at Hyundai were flat at 50,103 units last month. "SUVs have contributed strongly, accounting for 66 per cent of our domestic sales. The new Hyundai Creta has been a key driver for domestic H1 sales with 91,348 units sold," said Tarun Garg, COO, Hyundai Motor India.

Sales at Tata Motors also dipped 8 per cent to 43,624 units in June.

"The passenger vehicle industry saw a decline in retails in May and June, influenced by the general elections and heat waves across the country. Tata



● IN THE January-June period, the PV sales also rose 7.6 per cent to 21.68 lakh, compared to 20.15 lakh units during the same period in 2023.

Motors wholesales of 1.38 lakh cars and SUVs in Q1 FY25 remained flat compared to Q1 FY24," said Shailesh Chandra, MD, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility.

Sales at Mahindra jumped 23 per cent at 40,022 units, compared to 32,588 units in June 2023.

"We sold a total of 40,022 SUVs in June, which has been a momentous month, as we rolled out the 2,00,000th XUV700," said Veejay Nakra, president, automotive division, M&M.

Sales at Toyota Kirloskar Motor went up a record 40 per cent year-on-year to 27,474 units last month.

Kia sales also soared 9.8 per cent to 21,300 units last month, compared to the 19,391 units sold in June 2023.

While sales at Honda Cars stood at 4,804 units, JSW MG Motor retailed 4,644 units in June.

## Mfg. rebounds on high demand

### Firms increase hiring at fastest pace in over 19 years: Survey

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

India's manufacturing activity in June witnessed a rebound, thanks to strong demand leading to the fastest rate of hiring in more than 19 years, a private survey showed on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India manufacturing purchasing managers' Index or PMI increased from 57.5 in May to 58.3 in June, indicating a sharper improvement in business conditions. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

June data showed that the stronger expansion in sales at manufacturers in India was largely due to

buoyant underlying demand, higher export volumes and successful advertising.

As a consequence of ongoing increases in new order intakes, firms stepped up recruitment. The rate of job creation was sharp and the strongest seen since data collection started in March 2005.

Maitreyi Das, global economist at HSBC, said that the Indian manufacturing sector ended the June quarter on a stronger footing.

"The headline manufacturing PMI rose by 0.8 percentage points to 58.3 in June, supported by increased new orders and output. Consequently, firms increased their hiring at the fastest pace in



● NEW EXPORT orders increased substantially in June. Companies attributed higher inflows of new work from overseas to better demand from Asia, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Europe and the US.

over 19 years and input-buying activity also rose during the month," Das said.

On the price front, Das further said that input costs moderated slightly in June, but remained at elevated levels.

"Manufacturers were able to pass on higher costs to customers, as demand remained robust, resulting in improved

margin. While the overall outlook for the manufacturing sector remains positive, the future output index receded to a three-month low, albeit it remains above the historical average," Das added.

However the survey said that staff expenses reportedly intensified in June, which coupled with rising material and transportation costs caused another

overall increase in operating expenses.

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

"Meanwhile, new export orders increased substantially in June. Companies attributed higher inflows of new work from overseas to better demand from Asia, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Europe and the US. The outlook for the manufacturing sector remained positive, with nearly 29 per cent of panellists expecting output growth over the coming year," the survey noted.

## GST helped in reducing prices of appliances, mobiles: Govt

FC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

With reduced tax rates, goods and services tax (GST), which completed 7 years of implementation on Monday, has brought happiness and relief to every home through reduced taxes on household appliances and mobile phones, the finance ministry said on Monday.

"With reduced tax rates on household goods after GST implementation, #7yearsOfGST has brought happiness and relief to every home through lower GST on household appliances and mobile phones," the ministry said in a post on X. The theme of the 7th

● THE THEME of the 7th goods and services tax Day is "Sashakt Vyapar Samagra Vikas" (empowered trade overall growth).

GST Day is "Sashakt Vyapar Samagra Vikas" (empowered trade overall growth). The GST taxpayer base has increased to 1.46 cr in April 2024 from 1.05 cr as of April 2018.

"We have witnessed a quantum jump in taxpayers base along with improved compliance," central board of indirect taxes and customs (CBIC) chairman Sanjay Kumar Agarwal said.

## NIVA BUPA FILES PAPERS TO RAISE ₹3,000 CR VIA IPO

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, JULY 1

Niva Bupa Health Insurance filed a draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) for approximately ₹3,000 crore initial public offering (IPO).

Niva Bupa IPO is a mix of fresh issuance of ₹800 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to ₹2,200 crore by promoter and investor selling shareholders.

Meanwhile, Healthcare solution provider Sagility India also filed DRHP for an IPO an OFS of over 98.44 crore shares.

Precision engineering company Shivalik Engineering Industries filed DRHP for an IPO. The IPO is a mix of fresh issue of shares up to ₹335 crore and an OFS of up to 4.13 million equity shares.

## Demand for consumer goods to rebound on rural growth

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, JULY 1

Consumer companies are likely to see a recovery in volume growth in FY25 as private consumption picks up with better rural growth. The overall consumption growth in FY24 was mostly price-led and inflationary.

In nine months of FY24 results of large consumer players showed nil to lower single-digit volume growth. This was partly due to subdued rural growth, which is more volume focused.

India Ratings expects overall volumes to recover gradually in FY25, led by the rural segment as the staples pack is more rural market focused and the weakness in real wage



growth may still be fresh in consumer's mindset. Consumption growth had plummeted to 4 per cent in FY24 against 6.8 per cent in FY23.

A rise in private consumption is likely in FY25, led by a volume-led recovery in rural demand.

While growth rates would remain polarised with premium products and services showing higher growth rates than the value segment, the growth disparity would moderate

in FY25.

After a weak FY24, the recovery in rural demand in FY25 would be led by the expectations of a normal monsoon and moderating inflation, which would support volume growth in the staples categories like food, home care and personal care.

Over FY20-FY23, the discretionary segment has outperformed the staples category, as discretionary is more urban focused. These include consumer durables, jewellery, paints and quick service restaurants.

Segments such as quick service restaurants and jewellery have shown robust growth backed by store expansion and strong underlying demand trends.



## RBI TO EASE CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS

FC BANKING BUREAU  
MUMBAI JULY 1

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said that it has joined with the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and central banks of four Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) countries to collaborate on project Nexus - a platform to facilitate instantaneous cross border retail payments.

Nexus, conceptualised by the innovation hub of the BIS, aims to connect the FPSs of four Asean countries (Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand); and India, who would be the founding members and first mover countries of this platform.

"The central bank has been collaborating bilaterally with various countries, tries to link India's fast payments system (FPS) - the unified payments interface (UPI), with their respective FPSs for cross-border person to person and person to merchant payments," the RBI said.

## Markets hit new levels, m-cap at ₹443 lakh cr

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, JULY 1

Market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty-50 gained over half per cent to close at new highs on heavy buying by domestic institutional investors.

The Sensex gained 443.46 points or 0.56 per cent to close at new all time high of 79,476.19 while the Nifty-50 closed at 24,141.95 up 0.55 per cent or 131.35 points.

Broader markets also rallied which led to BSE's market capitalisation stood at over ₹443.05 lakh crore (\$5.31 trillion).

BSE mid-cap index gained 1.11 per cent while BSE small-cap index gained 1.58 per cent.

Domestic institutions were net buyers of equities worth ₹3,917.43 crore while foreign portfolio investors were net sellers by ₹426.03 crore.

"The month of July commenced on a positive note, dismissing any overly stretched parameters. The sustained uptrend is driven by sectoral rotation, broader participation, and a notable absence of challenges and pessimism on a global scale," said Osho Krishan, senior analyst - Technical & Derivative Research, Angel One.

IT stocks were in focus



and the BSE IT index clocked a maximum gain of 1.84 per cent. Tier II IT firms registered even bigger gains. Telecom index also gained 1.03 per cent, followed by consumer durables (0.88 per cent).

"Quality companies are getting disproportionate flows while fund managers are forced to allocate capital even at elevated valuations. However, we are extremely bullish as we expect buoyancy in tax collections, stability in policy environment, new expected private capex, increased efficiency of PSU to name a few but perhaps most importantly, as soon as allocation to Indian government bonds due to inclusion in the JPM GBI index will bring in flows to bond markets, but also bring flows to the equity market to maintain bond vs equity allocation in global portfolios," said Abhishek Banerjee, smallcase Manager and Founder, Lotusdew, a wealth management firm.

## HIGH RANGE Committed to offering electric versions of entire lineup this decade: CEO

### Mercedes-Benz to unveil new models

Sindelfingen, Germany, July 1: Mercedes-Benz is gearing up to unveil a slew of new models after its first generation of battery cars fell short.

The product offensive over the next two to three years will also see the S-Class maker pivot to spending more on its lucrative lineup of fuel-burning vehicles. Top-level buyers in particular keep reaching for our high-tech combustion-engine cars, chief executive officer Ola Kallenius said.

"We need flexibility for longer, until deep into the 2030s," Kallenius said,



● THE PRODUCT offensive over the next two to three years will also see the S-Class maker pivot to spending more on its lucrative lineup of fuel-burning vehicles

keeping intact the company's goal of being carbon-neutral by 2039. "We remain committed to offering electric versions of the entire lineup this decade but we have to ensure our combustion-

engine cars remain competitive."

The premium carmaker has pared back plans on electrification after demand slowed. But Mercedes is also trailing rivals like BMW AG after

its EV lineup put off buyers with high prices and design missteps. Battery vehicle sales fell 9 per cent during the first quarter to 50,500 units while its Munich-based competitor surged to 82,700 vehicles.

The EQS, available since 2021 and billed as one of the most significant launches in decades, in particular has fallen short, drawing unflattering comparisons to a jelly-bean amid low sales.

The \$117,100 sedan's sloping roof to maximise aerodynamics cramped many of the chauffeur-driven customers, espe-

cially among buyers in China, who missed status-symbol details like Mercedes' characteristic three-pointed star on the hood.

Next year will kick off the next generation of vehicles built on new underpinnings, starting with the entry-level CLA coupe and later the GLE SUV. During a preview of the upcoming suite of cars in Sindelfingen, Kallenius was keen to demonstrate sufficient roominess in even the smaller models, squeezing his tall frame into the back seats.

— Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

David wants Kohli to win WTC Final

**Bridgetown:** Staying true to his no-nonsense taskmaster image, outgoing India head coach Rahul Dravid had an assignment for star batter Virat Kohli even on his last day at work and within hours of India winning the T20 World Cup.

"All three white ticked off, one red to go. Tick it," Dravid told Kohli in a video of the Indian dressing room celebrations shared by the ICC on its Instagram page.

By three white he meant the limited-overs global trophies — the T20 World Cup, the ODI World Cup and the Champions Trophy — all of which Kohli has collected as a player.

What's left now is winning the World Test Championship Final.

The 35-year-old Kohli, who retired from T20 Internationals after the World Cup triumph here on Saturday, merely smiled at Dravid as he repeated himself to assert his point, albeit with a warm smile on his face.

"Go tick it." — PTI

No Virat in the ICC Team of Tourney

**Dubai:** The International Cricket Council has picked six Indians in its 'Team of the Tournament' for the just-concluded T20 World Cup but there was no place for star batter Virat Kohli, who played a match-winning knock in the final against South Africa. In his new role as an opener, Kohli had an underwhelming World Cup before rising to the occasion in the big final where he was adjudged man-of-the-match for his 59-ball 76.

India pipped South Africa by seven runs in a sensational comeback in the death overs to win their second T20 World Cup title after 17 years.

The ICC XI featured Indian skipper Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel and two pacers in Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh.

**ICC Team of the Tournament:** Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh (all Indians); Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Rashid Khan, Fazalhaq Farooqi (Afghanistan); Marcus Stoinis (Australia) and Nicholas Pooran (West Indies); 12th man: Anrich Nortje.

It was God's plan: SKY on his catch

**New Delhi:** "It was god's plan," Suryakumar Yadav said on Monday as he reminisced his incredible match-defining catch in the T20 World Cup final against South Africa, which is being lauded across the board as the perfect execution of athleticism, balance and game awareness.

"I am just grateful to be in that moment to do something special for the country...god's plan it was," Suryakumar said when asked about the catch that has become a standout moment from the game.

Needing 16 runs from the final over, South Africa had the big-hitting David Miller on strike.

He hit a wide full toss from Hardik Pandya but Suryakumar steadied himself on the ropes, caught the ball, released it just as he went over the boundary ropes and then came back in to complete an astonishing catch.

For many old-time fans, it brought back memories of the brilliant catch that Kapil Dev took in the 1983 World Cup final against the mighty West Indies.

— PTI

RCB name Karthik as batting coach

**Bengaluru:** Former India wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik, who announced his retirement from all forms of cricket last month, on Monday was appointed as batting coach and mentor by Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

"Welcome our keeper in every sense, Dinesh Karthik back into RCB in an all new avatar. DK will be the batting coach and mentor of RCB Men's team," RCB posted on 'X', formerly twitter.

"You can take the man out of cricket but not cricket out of the man! Shower him with all the love, 12th Man Army," the post added.

— PTI

# OLD MELODY

## BCCI asserts seniors will be there in CT, WTC teams

**Bridgetown, July 1:** BCCI Secretary Jay Shah on Monday asserted that "seniors will be there" in next year's Champions Trophy and the World Test Championship final if India qualifies for it, while a decision on whether Hardik Pandya succeeds Rohit Sharma as the next T20 captain will be taken solely by the selectors.

Talking to select media here, Shah lauded the contribution of senior players in the side's T20 World Cup triumph at the end of which skipper Rohit, senior batting star Virat Kohli and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja announced their retirement from the shortest format's international assignments.

"Transition has already happened with three greats retiring," Shah said when asked about his thoughts on the team's next phase following the retirement of the seasoned trio.

"The way this team is progressing, our target is to win the World Test Championship final and Champions Trophy. There will be a similar squad playing there. The seniors will be there," he added.

This means that fitness permitting, senior players are likely to be available for the nine ODI matches that India will play before the Champions Trophy scheduled in February-March in Pakistan.

India's ODI assignments before that include three games each against Sri Lanka (away), New Zealand (home) and England (home).

On Hardik Pandya's all-round performance in the World Cup and chances of him taking over captaincy from Rohit in the T20 format, Shah said:

"Captaincy will be decided by the selectors and we will announce it after discussing with them. "You asked about Hardik, there were lot of questions over his form

## TEAM INDIA REMAIN STRANDED IN BARBADOS DUE TO HURRICANE

**Bridgetown (Barbados), July 1:** The victorious Indian cricket team remains stranded in Barbados after a Category 4 hurricane hit the Caribbean islands here in the wee hours of Monday, delaying its departure back home by at least another day. The Rohit Sharma-led side has stayed put in a five-star hotel since its triumph over South Africa in the T20 World Cup final here on Saturday.

As per the forecast, life-threatening winds and storm lashed Barbados and nearby islands on Monday. The country,

with a population of close to three lakh, has been in a lockdown since Sunday evening.

The main international airport is shut until further notice with water and electricity supply also getting disrupted.

"Like you people, we are also stuck here. First we need to see how to get the players and everyone out of here safely and then we will think about the felicitation upon arrival in India," said BCCI secretary Jay Shah, who got here ahead of the big final.

The squad, along with top BCCI officials including Jay Shah, was supposed to leave for India via a charter flight on Monday but it was not possible due to the closure of the airport. The BCCI is also trying to get the travelling Indian media out of the hurricane-hit region.

"There was a charter flight we were trying for Monday but the airport is shut so that option is gone. We are in touch with multiple charter operators but it all depends on the airport operations. As per the current state of affairs, no plane can land or take off."

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but we and selectors showed faith in him and he proved himself."

Pandya served as Rohit's deputy in the format.

India broke the shackles of a tormenting 11-year run during which the side failed to win a single ICC title.

### NEW HEAD COACH FROM LANKA SERIES

The Indian cricket team will have a new head coach from the limited-overs series in Sri Lanka starting later this month, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Monday but did not reveal who has been finalised to succeed the outgoing Rahul Dravid.

Former opener Gautam Gambhir is expected to succeed Dravid as the India head coach. The Cricket Advisory Committee has also conducted the interviews for the high-profile job and short-listed Gambhir and former India women's coach W. V. Raman.

The appointment of a selector will also be made soon, said Shah.

The Indian team is due to tour Sri Lanka for three T20Is and as many ODIs starting July 27.

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Carlos Alcaraz of Spain returns to Mark Lajal of Estonia during their first round match of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London on Monday.

## Alcaraz starts title defence with win

**London, July 1:** Carlos Alcaraz defeated 269th-ranked qualifier Mark Lajal at the start of his Wimbledon title defence on Monday as Andy Murray decided whether or not to call a halt to his All England Club singles career.

As action got under way, Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka was heading home after withdrawing from the tournament with a shoulder injury.

Two-time Wimbledon semi-finalist Sabalenka, ranked third in the world, is one of eight players to have pulled out since the draw was made.

Alcaraz, still only 21, is chasing his fourth Grand Slam title and hopes to become just the sixth man after Rod Laver, Bjorn Borg, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic to win the French Open and Wimbledon back-to-back.

Opening the Centre Court programme, the Spanish star recovered from a break down in each of the first two sets to see off the dreadlocked Lajal 7-6 (7/3), 7-5, 6-2.

"He played a really good match, he obviously surprised me a little bit because I didn't have the chance to see him play a lot," said Alcaraz.

Russian fifth seed Daniil Medvedev reached the second round and admitted he was happy not to be playing on the All England Club's famed Centre Court.

Medvedev, a semi-finalist last year, hit 16 aces in his 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 win over

### RESULTS

**Men's 1st rd:** Denis Shapovalov (CAN) bt Nicolas Jarry (CHI) x19) 6-1, 7-5, 6-4; Grigor Dimitrov (BUL) x10) bt Dusan Lajovic (SRB) 6-3, 6-4, 7-5; Shang Juncheng (CHN) bt Christian Garin (CHI) 7-5, 6-4, 6-4; Stan Wawrinka (SUI) bt Charles Broom (GBR) 6-3, 7-5, 6-4; Zhang Zhizhen (CHN) x32) bt Maxime Janvier (FRA) 7-6 (7/4), 6-3, 6-2; Jan-Lennard Struff (GER) bt Fabian Marozsan (HUN) 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 6-2, 6-3; Daniil Medvedev (RUS) x5) bt Aleksandar Kovacevic (USA) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2; Borna Coric (CRO) bt Felipe Meligeni Alves (BRA) 6-3, 7-6 (7/2), 6-3; Frances Tiafoe (USA) x29) bt Matteo Arnaldi (ITA) 6-7 (5/7), 2-6, 6-1, 6-3, 6-3; Brandon Nakashima (USA) bt Sebastian Baez (ARG) x18) 6-2, 6-3, 6-4; Jordan Thompson (AUS) bt Pavel Kotov (RUS) 5-7, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4; Fabio Fognini (ITA) bt Luca Van Assche (FRA) 6-1, 6-3, 7-5; Casper Ruud (NOR) x3) bt Alex Bolt (AUS) 7-6 (7/2), 6-4, 6-4.

**Women's 1st rd:** Zhu Lin (CHN) bt Irina-Camelia Begu (ROM) 6-0, 6-4; Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (RUS) x25) bt Taylor Townsend (USA) 7-6 (7/4), 6-1; Arantxa Rus (NED) bt Yuan Yue (CHN) 6-2, 6-3; Maria Sakkari (GRE) x9) bt McCartney Kessler (USA) 6-3, 6-1; Daria Kasatkina (RUS) x14) bt Zhang Shuai (CHN) 6-3, 6-0; Dayana Yastremska (UKR) x28) bt Nadia Podoroska (ARG) 6-1, 7-6 (7/1); Varvara Gracheva (FRA) bt Lesia Tsurenko (UKR) 6-3, 6-1; Great Britain (BEL) bt Heather Watson (GBR) 7-5, 6-4; Marta Kostyuk (UKR) x18) bt Rebecca Sramkova (SVK) 6-3, 6-2; Anca Todoni (ROM) bt Olga Danilovic (SRB) 7-5, 6-1.

Aleksandar Kovacevic of the United States.

Three-time Grand Slam title winner Stan Wawrinka won his Wimbledon opener at the age of 39, beating British wild card Charles Broom 6-3, 7-5, 6-4. "I think there is enough reason to keep playing. I don't want to go home," said Wawrinka, who made his debut at Wimbledon in 2005.

— AFP



India Women players celebrate with the trophy after defeating South Africa in an one-off Test at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Monday. India Women won by ten wickets.

## India down gritty Proteas in one-off Test

**C. SANTHOSH KUMAR CHENNAI, JULY 1**

India women clinched their third consecutive Test victory on Monday but only after a gruelling

toil against a spirited South Africa at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium. The 10-wicket victory helped India equal the longest winning run in women's Test history, a record shared with their own hat-trick between 2006 and 2014 and Australia's three such streaks.

Harmanpreet Kaur & Co, fresh off their dominance in the ODI series against the same opponents in

Bengaluru, had continued their ascendancy early in the Test. However, the Proteas women scripted a story of extraordinary determination post-lunch on Day 2. India's first innings total of 603/6 declared seemed insurmountable, leaving many to believe the visitors would struggle to avoid the follow-on. They defied expectations.

Beginning the final day at 232 for two, South Africa managed to post a total of 373, making India sweat for 154 overs in their second innings. India chased down the target of 37 in 9.2 overs, but the South Africans, with limited red-

ball exposure, deserved credit for making it a real contest.

Skipper Laura Wolvaardt and one-drop Sune Luus spearheaded the revival with splendid centuries, while Nadine de Klerk's resolute batting

kept the contest alive until the final session. Indian bowlers faced a tough challenge, particularly in the morning session, where 30 overs yielded 70 runs and three wickets. The afternoon session saw a more subdued performance from South Africa, scoring 34 runs in 29 overs with de Klerk playing a grafter's role.

The red-soil pitch at Chennai, known for being slow and low, added to the challenge, making it a true test of character for both teams.

Off-spinner Sneha Rana, who added two more wickets to her first-innings haul of eight, became only

the second Indian to achieve a 10-wicket match haul, following in the footsteps of the legendary Julhan Goswami.

India's skipper, Harmanpreet Kaur, who equalled Mithali Raj's record as India's most successful women's Test captain with three wins, praised her team's perseverance.

"We had to work hard for it. It was not easy to field for so many overs. Hats off to our bowlers, especially our spinners.

"They kept bowling and had that belief that they could take those wickets to win us the game," Harmanpreet said.

### BRIEF SCORES

India 603/6 decl & 37/0 in 9.2 overs bt South Africa 266 & 373 in 154.4 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 122, Sune Luus 109, Nadine de Klerk 61; Sneha Rana 2/111, Deepti Sharma 2/95, Rajeshwari Gayakwad 2/55).

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— AFP

the tournament. That set up a quarterfinal meeting with Switzerland on Saturday in Duesseldorf.

**GEORGIA GIVE SPAIN SCARE**

There was also a scare for Spain in the late game in Cologne, as they fell behind against Georgia when Robin Le Normand put through his own net in the 18th minute.

It was the eighth own goal scored at this year's competition and the first time Spain had conceded at all after they registered three clean sheets during the group phase.

However, Spain had beaten Willy Sagnol's Georgia side twice in qualifying, winning 7-1 away and 3-1 at home, and their class ultimately told on a rainy night.

— AFP

