

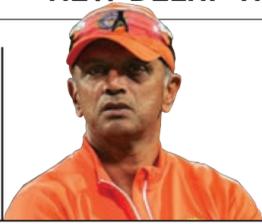
# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI THURSDAY 11 JULY 2024



## NATION | 2

**Kejriwal is 'kingpin', direct beneficiary of Delhi liquor scam, ED informs court**



## WORLD | 6

**Rahul Dravid refuses ₹2.5cr extra bonus for T20 World Cup win**

## DELHI AGE | 16

**Amitabh faces backlash for 'throwing' gifts at fans; netizens term it bheekh**



www.asianage.com

RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

Vol. 31 No. 146 | 16 PAGES | ₹5.00

### WINDOWS



Vicky Kaushal during the promotion of his film *Bad Newz* in Jaipur on Wednesday. — PTI

### 18 killed, 19 injured as Delhi-bound bus hits tanker in Unnao

**Unnao (UP):** Eighteen people were killed and 19 injured when a double-decker sleeper bus headed for Delhi hit a milk tanker on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway here on Wednesday, officials said. The accident occurred around 5 am near Jojikot village in Behta Mujhawar police station area. District magistrate Gaurang Rathi said it appears that the bus, which was coming from Motihari in Bihar, was speeding and hit the milk tanker from behind. Eighteen people died and 19 were injured in the accident. A probe has been launched into the matter, he said. **Full report on Page 3**

### Kathua terror attack: 24 detained, hunt continues

**Srinagar:** At least 24 people have been detained for questioning as the hunt for the terrorists behind the ambush in J&K's Kathua district, in which five army personnel were killed, entered its third day on Wednesday. The search operation is underway amid intermittent heavy rain in dense forests across four districts. **Full report on Page 3**

### Jacqueline fails to appear before ED

**New Delhi:** Actor Jacqueline Fernandez did not appear before the ED on Wednesday for a fresh round of questioning in a money laundering case involving alleged con-man Sukesh Chandrashekhar. Sources said the agency obtained some "fresh" inputs in the case and hence summoned the actress. **Full report on Page 11**

### COUNTERPOINT



Insurance price for this luxury car? Well, ₹1 lakh if you drive the car, ₹5 lakh if your son drives it!

### WEATHER

Max: 38°C  
Min: 28°C  
RH: 59%  
Rain: 20

Forecast: Cloudy

### ASTROGUIDE

**Krodhi:** Uttarayana  
**Tithi:** Ashada Shukla Panchami till 10.04 am  
**Star:** Purvaphalguni till 1.05 pm  
**Variyam:** 9.12 pm to 11 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 10.12 am to 11.04 am; 3.23 pm to 4.15 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 12 pm to 1.30 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 7.22 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.32 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 11.06 AM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 10.52 PM**

## Not a time for war: PM, Austria Chancellor for Ukraine peace 'India & Austria friendship will get stronger in times to come'

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI  
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

After formal talks in Vienna on Wednesday with Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer on the entire gamut of bilateral ties and important global issues, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India and Austria have "decided to provide strategic direction" to their relationship and that a "blueprint for cooperation over the coming decades has been prepared". The Austrian Chancellor praised India as an "important, influential and credit-worthy country and hailed it as the world's biggest democracy. Addressing a joint press statement along with Mr Nehammer after their talks, Mr Modi said that



Prime Minister Narendra Modi upon his arrival for a private dinner hosted by Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer in Vienna on Tuesday. — PTI

both nations will "work to combine our strengths in areas such as infrastructure development, innovation, renewable energy, hydrogen, water and waste management, artificial intelligence, and quantum technology," with "acceleration in the start-up (sector) bridge" connecting both nations. The Prime Minister also reiterated that "this is not a time for war" and that "problems cannot be

▶ **THE PM** that both 'India and Austria emphasise dialogue and diplomacy for the earliest possible restoration of peace and stability and are both ready to provide every possible cooperation to achieve this'

solved on the battlefield". He said that both "India and Austria emphasise dialogue and diplomacy for the earliest possible restoration of peace and stability and are both ready to provide every possible cooperation to achieve this".

In his remarks, Mr Modi said, "Our shared belief in values such as democracy and the rule of law forms the strong foundation of our relationship. Mutual trust and shared interests strengthen our ties. **Turn to Page 2**

### Worli hit & run accused sent to 7-day jail, Sena sacks his father

BHAGWAN PARAB  
MUMBAI, JULY 10

A Mumbai court on Wednesday remanded Mihir Shah, the prime accused in the BMW hit-and-run case, to police custody till July 16, while the ruling Shiv Sena sacked his father Rajesh Shah as party deputy leader. Mihir, the son of Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Rajesh Shah, was arrested on Tuesday after evading capture for over 72 hours. The 24-year-old was produced before a chief metropolitan magistrate who ordered his police custody. The police sought the maximum possible custody, arguing that Mihir attempted to destroy evidence and evade arrest. During the hearing, the police stated they need to identify those who assisted Mihir after the incident. Shah's lawyers countered by highlighting that the police already possess substantial material, including matching statements from the main accused and the family driver, along with video footage. Mihir had been on the run since July 7, when he allegedly crashed his BMW into a two-wheeler in Worli, Mumbai. The collision resulted in the death of 45-year-old Kaveri Nakhwa, who was riding pillion, while her husband Pradeep survived with injuries. In response to criticism, Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde dismissed Rajesh Shah from his position as the party's deputy leader. **More on Page 4**

### Kuki's 12-hr bandh against arrests paralyzes Manipur

MANOJ ANAND  
GUWAHATI, JULY 10

The normal life was paralysed in Kuki-dominated areas of Manipur, following a 12-hour shutdown called by the Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), an apex body of Kuki tribes, in protest against the arrest of five village volunteers from their community by the security forces in the last two days. Some women's groups of the Kuki-Zo community alleged that personnel of the security forces had beaten local women who were protesting the

detention. Security sources, however, claimed that three members of an insurgent group were arrested after a gunfight in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on Tuesday. Three military-grade assault rifles and ammos were seized from them. The Churachandpur-based Kuki Inpi Manipur, in a communication to its offices, said that an emergency meeting was held over the arrest of these "village volunteers" and the conduct of personnel during the operations. **More on Page 3**

## 'State consent must' No case against Centre: S-G Bengal's suit against Centre on CBI probe is 'maintainable': SC

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Supreme Court on Wednesday held as maintainable a suit filed by the West Bengal government, which alleged that the CBI is continuing its investigations into various cases in its jurisdiction despite the withdrawal of general consent by the state on November 16, 2018. "Police" and "public order" being state subjects under the Constitution, the state government accords "general consent" under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (DPSE) Act 1946 to allow the CBI to probe cases in its jurisdiction. Rejecting the preliminary objections raised by the Centre on the main-

▶ **SOLICITOR-GENERAL Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, had said that the Union government or its departments do not exercise any supervisory control over the CBI probes**

tainability of the suit, a bench of Justices B.R. Gava and Sandeep Mehta said, "The suit shall proceed in accordance with law on its own merits."

"We clarify that the aforesaid findings are for the purpose of deciding the preliminary objections raised by the defendant (Union of India). However, the same will have no bearing when the suit is decided on its own merits," the apex court said while fixing the matter for framing issues on August 13. On May 8, the top court had reserved its order on the maintainability of the suit. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for West Bengal, had argued that once the state had withdrawn its consent on November 16, 2018, the Centre could not allow the probe agency to enter the state for investigation consent and you can't do it suo motu." He had said consent from the state government must be obtained for the exercise of power by the CBI. Solicitor-general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, had said that the Union government or its departments do not exercise any supervisory control over the CBI probes. Mr Mehta had said there **Turn to Page 4**

## Invites President for debate, offers a chance to redeem himself Trump challenges Biden for golf match

**Washington, July 10:** Donald Trump, the Republican presumptive presidential nominee, has offered his rival and incumbent President Joe Biden the opportunity to "redeem himself in front of the entire world" via a debate this week while also challenging him to a round of golf. Mr Trump's challenges to Mr Biden, 81, came as he was feeling quite confident after his maiden debate performance against the

President late last month. "I'm officially offering Joe the chance to redeem himself in front of the entire world," Mr Trump, 78, said at a campaign rally in Florida. "Let's do another debate this week so that sleepy Joe Biden can prove to everyone all over the world that he has what it takes to be President," he said. "But this time it will be man-to-man, no moderators, no holds barred. Just

name the place, anytime, anywhere," Mr Trump added.

Mr Biden, the Democratic nominee, performed poorly at the June 27 presidential debate in Atlanta, after which even his own party colleagues are asking him to drop from the race. Mr Biden has rejected such calls. At the same rally, Mr Trump then challenged Mr Biden to an 18-hole golf match. "I'm also officially chal-

lenging Joe to an 18-hole golf match right here," he said.

"If he wins, I will give the charity of his choice, any charity that he wants, \$1 million. And I'll bet you he doesn't take the offer. What that match will do is prove that Joe is, in fact, all talk and no action," Mr Trump said. The Biden campaign has rejected both the challenges. —PTI **More on Page 6**

## Muslim women can claim alimony, it's right, says SC '1986 Act can't prevail over Section 125 of CrPC'

RAKESH K. SINGH  
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

In a landmark verdict reminiscent of the Shah Bano case, the Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that a Muslim woman can seek maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), holding that the "religion neutral" provision is applicable to all married women irrespective of their faith. Underlining that maintenance is not charity but the right of all married women, a bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih said the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986 (enacted to overturn the 1985 apex court ruling in the Shah Bano case allowing her maintenance lawsuit) will not

▶ **PASSING THE** path-breaking order, the top court dismissed the petition of Mohammed Abdul Samad, who had challenged a Telangana high court order refusing to interfere with the maintenance order of the family court

prevail over the secular law.

Passing the path-breaking order, the top court dismissed the petition of Mohammed Abdul Samad, who had challenged a Telangana high court order refusing to interfere with the maintenance order of the family court. While pronouncing the verdict, Justice Nagarathna said, "We are hereby dismissing the criminal appeal with the major conclusion that Section 125 will be applic-

able to all women... The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986 will not prevail over the secular and religion-neutral provisions of Section 125 of the CrPC."

The two judges gave separate but concurring verdicts. The erstwhile Section 125 of the CrPC, which deals with a wife's legal right to maintenance, covers Muslim women, the bench said.

The bench said, insofar as divorced Muslim women are concerned, Section 125 of the CrPC, which deals with maintenance of wife, children and parents, applies to all such Muslim women, married and divorced, under the Special Marriage Act. "If Muslim women are married and divorced **Turn to Page 4**

## Violence mars bypolls in U'khand, WB Midterm elections held in 7 states, 13 Assembly constituencies

AGE CORRESPONDENTS  
with agencies input  
NEW DELHI/DEHRADUN/  
KOLKATA/BHOPAL, JULY 10

Amid sporadic incidents of violence in Uttarakhand and West Bengal, moderate to brisk polling was recorded in 13 Assembly constituencies across seven states where bypolls were held on Wednesday. The electoral exercise, the first since the Lok Sabha polls, will decide the fate of many veterans and some debutants, including Himachal Pradesh chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's wife Kamlesh Thakur.



An elderly woman being assisted to reach a polling station to vote in Raiganj Assembly bypoll in North Dinajpur, West Bengal, on Wednesday. — PTI

Stray incidents of violence were reported during the Assembly bypolls in four constituencies of West Bengal amid an average voter's turnout of

62.71 per cent on Wednesday. In most cases, the allegations were against the ruling Trinamul Congress (TMC).

Raiganj in North Dinajpur recorded the highest voting, 67.12 per cent, among the four Assembly seats in West Bengal. It was followed by Ranaghat South in Nadia (65.37 per cent), Bagda in the North 24 Parganas (65.15 per cent) and Manikata (51.39 per cent). Except for Manikata, the three seats went to the BJP in 2021. At Bagda, the car in the convoy of BJP candidate **Turn to Page 4**



Family members and others pay their last respects to the mortal remains of Naik Vinod Singh, who was martyred in the recent terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir, in Dehradun on Wednesday. — PTI

## HC directs Haryana to open Shambhu border in a week

Farm leaders call meet July 16 to discuss further action

**Chandigarh, July 10:** The Punjab and Haryana high court on Wednesday ordered the Haryana government to remove within a week the barricading set up at the Shambhu border near Ambala where farmers have been camping since February 13 when their "Delhi Chalo" march was stopped. The Haryana government had set up barricades at the Ambala-New Delhi national highway in February when Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) had announced to move towards Delhi in support of various demands, including a legal guarantee to mini-

▶ **THE COURT** also said if any law and order situation arises, the Haryana govt can take preventive action according to law. Similar directions have been given to the Punjab government.

The directions were given by the division bench of justices G.S. Sandhawalia and Vikas Bahl. Meanwhile, the farmers have called a meeting on July 16 to discuss the matter. Speaking to media

after the hearing, Haryana additional advocate general Deepak Sabherwal said the court has directed the Haryana government to remove barricading within seven days.

The court also said if any law and order situation arises, then it can take preventive action according to law.

He further said similar directions have been given to the Punjab government for maintaining law and order, while stating that any barricading at the Punjab side should also be removed. The orders are to open the highway, he said. The SKM (Non-Political) **Turn to Page 4**

IN BRIEF

**3 held for killing Nigerian over drugs**

**New Delhi:** The Delhi police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested three people in connection with the murder of a Nigerian national in Nilothi Extension area a week ago, officials said. Sunday Ernest Morah, 40, who lived in Chandra Vihar area, was chased and shot dead inside a garment shop by two men on June 6. The other helped them in fleeing. DCP Jimmy Chiram said the three accused have been identified as Mohit, Rajesh and Abhishek, who were earlier arrested in separate cases of murder and the NDPS Act in Delhi. During investigations, it was found that Morah was facing a case of cheating in Uttar Pradesh. He used to live in West Delhi's Tilak Nagar but shifted to Chandra Vihar a few months ago. The DCP said the three accused disclosed on sustained interrogation that Morah used to sell drugs and had taken money from them for providing a contraband but he neither made the delivery to them nor returned their money. Mohit is a drug addict, the DCP said, adding Rajesh and Abhishek used to provide logistics support in procuring the drugs.

**Man beaten to death in outer Delhi, 1 held**

**New Delhi:** A 23-year-old man was thrashed to death by a woman's brother for allegedly misbehaving with her near outer Delhi's Jhuggi Dera Gazi Khan area, the police said on Wednesday. The accused, Prince, 18, was arrested when he was trying to flee the city, they said. On the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday, the police control room at the Mangol Puri police station received information from a hospital that a man had been beaten up and admitted to the health facility, deputy commissioner of police (Outer) Jimmy Chiram said. The incident took place at the Jhuggi Dera Gazi Khan area. The victim, Neeraj, was not in a condition to give a statement but his brother, Suraj, told the police that he was thrashed with a baseball bat by Prince, and added that later, the hospital informed police that Neeraj had died.

**21-year-old man stabbed to death**

**New Delhi:** A 21-year-old man was stabbed to death near his house here, the police said on Wednesday. The victim has been identified as Lakshya, a resident of the Raghbir Nagar area. "On the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, an information was received at the Khy-ala police station from the GGS Hospital regarding a person being taken there with stab injuries and was declared dead in the hospital," a senior police officer said. It was found that the incident took place around 10 pm in the JJ colony near the house of the victim, the police said. "Some suspects have been identified, who are absconding as of now," said the officer.

**RLYS, DMRC, CRIS JOIN HANDS FOR '1 INDIA - 1 TICKET'**

**New Delhi:** The Indian Railways, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and Centre For Railway Information Systems (CRIS) have collaborated to promote the 'One India - One Ticket' initiative, enhancing the travel experience for main line Railway and Metro passengers in the Delhi/NCR area, a statement said on Wednesday. The DMRC QR code-based tickets can now be booked on the IRCTC website and mobile application with a full version launch anticipated soon. According to the statement, Metro tickets can be booked up to 120 days in advance and are valid for four days. "The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC), DMRC and CRIS have joined hands, in the first of its kind initiative, to revolutionise seamless travel experience of the main line Rai-Iway and Metro passengers in Delhi NCR area, thereby promoting 'One India - One Ticket' initiative of the government of India," it said. The beta version of DMRC QR code-based ticket was launched on Wednesday, thereby enabling main line railway passengers to book DMRC QR code tickets on the IRCTC website.

**Kejriwal is kingpin, key conspirator in collusion with his mantris & leaders: ED 'CM direct beneficiary of liquor scam'**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

In its seventh supplementary charge sheet filed before a Delhi court in the excise policy scam, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has alleged that Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was the "kingpin" and "key conspirator" in hatching the now-scrapped excise policy in collusion with other Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders who demanded kickbacks from liquor businessmen in exchange for giving them favours.

The charge sheet, which was filed on Tuesday, named the Delhi chief minister and the AAP as an accused in the case. The court has taken cognisance of the charge sheet and issued a production warrant of the jailed Delhi chief minister for July 12, the sources in the agency said. Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal "directly



Delhi minister Atishi interacts with officials during her visit to Purana Pul, Yamuna Bazaar, to review the preparations for possible flood situation in New Delhi. — PTI

used" part of the alleged ₹100 crore generated from the "kickbacks" of the Delhi excise policy "scam" by staying in a luxury hotel in Goa, the ED alleged in the charge sheet and described the "group of ministers" constituted by his government in this context was a "sham."

So far, this is the seventh supplementary charge sheet filed by the agency

in the case. The agency in the latest charge sheet alleged that Mr Kejriwal was the kingpin and key conspirator of the alleged excise case in collusion with ministers of the Delhi government, AAP leaders, and other persons. "Arvind Kejriwal has directly used part of these proceeds of crime personally by making Chanpreet

Singh (another accused in the case) make payment for Arvind Kejriwal's stay and event at the Grand Hyatt, Goa," the agency alleged, adding that Mr Kejriwal also "mingled" these proceeds of crime with the funds of the Delhi government.

It has been alleged that the "South Group" of politicians and liquor businessmen gave ₹100 crore worth of kickbacks to gain a favourable position in the Delhi excise policy for 2021-22 and out of these funds, ₹45 crore was sent for the AAP campaign in Goa during the 2022 Assembly polls.

The agency said that Mr Kejriwal was "liable" to be punished for his role in the commission of the offence of money laundering under Section 4 of the PMLA and also "vicariously" as he is responsible for the conduct of the business/affairs of the AAP, deemed a company under Section 70 of the PMLA.

**ED's challenge to bail to Kejriwal in HC on July 15**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Delhi high court on Wednesday listed for July 15 the Enforcement Directorate's plea challenging bail granted to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in the money laundering case stemming from the alleged excise scam. The high court had earlier stayed the trial court's June 20 order by which Mr Kejriwal was granted bail in the case.

Justice Neena Bansal Krishna was informed by the counsel for the ED that they were served with Mr Kejriwal's reply to their petition only late Tuesday night and the agency requires some time to file a rejoinder.

**AAP, BJP in a fresh spat over 'hike' in electricity charges**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The electricity bills of domestic consumers in Delhi have gone up by 6-8 per cent due to the revision of the power purchase adjustment charge (PPAC) by discoms even as those getting subsidies will not be affected, officials said on Wednesday.

The BJP hit out at the AAP government over the hike, alleging that it had colluded with the discoms while Delhi power minister and AAP leader Atishi accused the Opposition party of misleading the people by spreading "rumours" that electricity prices have been increased due to the PPAC.

The discoms in the city have revised the PPAC in the range of 6.75 per cent to 8.75 per cent. The power purchase cost is dependent upon the prices of coal and other fuels used by generation companies and these prices recently witnessed a significant increase, officials said.

The officials said the PPAC revision was implemented from February this year. On Wednesday, the BJP held a press conference on the issue and attacked the ruling AAP in Delhi, saying it would affect power consumers in the city.

There was no response from the discoms—BSES's BYPL and BRPL, TPDDL, and NDMC—on the PPAC revision.

The PPAC is levied as a percentage of the base tariff that includes the fixed cost and energy charges (units consumed) by the consumers.

Ms Atishi claimed that

**DELHI BJP leaders alleged that the AAP government "backed" discoms making consumers pay hefty amounts in the name of PPAC**

the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) order states that the current PPAC will remain the same and no more changes will be made.

She, however, justified PPAC revision, saying the discoms have "a provision in the Electricity Act, 2003, that allows them to increase PPAC by up to 10 per cent from that prescribed by the DERC in case of the high cost of power purchase."

Delhi BJP leaders alleged that the AAP government "backed" discoms were making consumers pay hefty amounts in the name of PPAC.

"The Delhi government and discoms have colluded to increase PPAC by 8.75 per cent resulting in higher electricity bills for the consumers," alleged Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva.

"If the government had purchased power in advance from the power grid before April then prices would not have risen, but the Kejriwal government was busy with politics when it was time to make a summer power supply plan," Mr Sachdeva said.

Ms Atishi hit back at the BJP claiming that the electricity charges in the states ruled by it were high and there were also power cuts of up to eight hours even in cities like Noida and Greater Noida in U.P. and Gurgaon in Haryana.



Former AAP MLA Raj Kumar Anand, with his wife Veena Anand join the BJP in presence of Arun Singh, BJP national general secretary and state president Virendra Sachdeva in New Delhi on Wednesday. AAP MLA Kartar Singh Tanwar also joined the BJP. — G.N. JHA

**SC forwards 3 names for HC judges to govt**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud has recommended to the Centre the names of three additional judges of the Delhi high court for appointment as permanent judges.

The collegium, comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B.R. Gavai, recommended that seven additional judges of the Bombay high court be appointed as permanent judges.

It also recommended that Justices Sanjay Anand Rao Deshmukh and Vrushi Vijay Joshi be appointed as additional judges of the Bombay high court. It noted that on March 12, 2024, the collegium of the Delhi high court had unanimously recommended the names of these three additional judges for appointment as permanent judges of that high court.

**Cops scanning our bank a/cs: NGO to SC**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Supreme Court on Wednesday took note of the allegations of harassment levelled by a city resident, who has filed a contempt plea against the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) over "illegal" tree felling in the Ridge forest, and sought a response from the Delhi police on the issue.

A bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Augustine George Masih issued notice to the Delhi police after senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the petitioner, informed the court that city police officers have been making enquiries regarding the other petitioner — New Delhi Nature Society as — well.

Mr Sankaranarayanan claimed the police has also approached their bank and sought detailed information about their accounts. The bench took note of senior counsel's submission and issued notice in the matter. Bindu Kapurea has alleged in her contempt plea that trees were cut despite a March 4 court order denying permission to the DDA for it and that the fact about the felling of trees was suppressed from the court.

The apex court has initiated suo motu contempt proceedings against the vice-chairman of the DDA over alleged cutting of 1,100 trees in the Ridge forest for a road widening project.

On June 26, the top court had on Ms Kapurea's contempt plea rapped the Delhi government and development authority for illegal tree felling in the ridge area, saying there had been "a fantastic lapse" on the part of the city administration, under which the tree authority functions.

**TREE-FELLING IN RIDGE AREA**

The top court had also castigated the DDA for not providing information regarding the visit of L-G V.K. Saxena to the site where trees were felled.

Observing that people are reeling under the heat in the national capital as tree cover is lost, the top court directed the Delhi government and the civic agencies to convene a meeting and discuss comprehensive measures to enhance green cover in the city.

The top court had ordered: "Considering the illegal and high-ended acts of the felling of trees, we issue notice to Govt of Delhi, Forest and Environment Department, Tree Authority, MCD and DDA. The Secretary of the Forest Department will convene a meeting of all these officers in presence of the expert committee appointed for discussing the comprehensive measures for enhancing the green cover of national capital Delhi."

**Upset over birth of girls, man kills newborn twins**

Burial bodies in makeshift crematorium

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Desperation for a son led a 32-year-old man resorting to the abhorrent killing of his three-day-old twin daughters and later burying them near his house in Outer Delhi's Sultanpuri area.

The accused, Neeraj Solanki, a graduate of Delhi University, was arrested from Rohtak in Haryana.

The bodies of the infants were found on the premises of a makeshift crematorium near Pooth Kalan village by locals, DCP (Crime) Amit Goel said.

Solanki had killed his daughters on June 3, he said. The bodies were exhumed on June 5, after getting permission from a court, and kept at the mortuary of the SGM Hospital in Mangolpuri for a post mortem, DCP Goel said.

Solanki allegedly killed his three-day-old daughters as he wanted a son, the DCP said and added that they were born at a private hospital in Haryana.

The police officer said Solanki brought the infants to Delhi by lying to his wife that they had died from an illness. The babies, who were alive on reaching Delhi, were killed and buried at the crematorium, DCP Goel said.

Initially, Solanki's father was detained as the accused was at large. His father told the police that Solanki was upset over the birth of his daughter.

**THE ACCUSED,** Neeraj Solanki, a graduate of Delhi University, was arrested from Rohtak in Haryana. The infant's mother told the police that she got married to Solanki in 2022 but her relationship with her in-laws went sour as they would harass her regularly for dowry.

Solanki's sister and brother are absconding. His mother is paralysed. She may also be interrogated in connection with the case, another police officer said.

It is suspected that Solanki and his family did not feed the infants for the whole night due to which they died.

The autopsy on the infants could not ascertain the exact cause of death but their viscera have been preserved for further investigations, the officer said.

The infant's mother, who is a native of Rohtak, in her earlier complaint, told the police that she got married to Solanki in 2022 but her relationship with her in-laws went sour as they would harass her regularly for dowry, the police said.

She also told the local police that Solanki's family wanted her to undergo a sex determination test which she refused. The infants' bodies were handed over to their mother after the post mortem.

Solanki has been booked for murder, the DCP said.

**SC judge recuses from hearing in same-sex marriage**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Senior-most Supreme Court judge Sanjiv Khanna on Wednesday recused himself from considering pleas seeking review of the apex court's judgment last year declining legal recognition to same-sex marriage. According to the sources, Justice Khanna has cited personal reasons for his recusal.

The recusal of Justice Khanna would necessitate reconstitution of a fresh five-judge constitution bench by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, Hima Kohli, B.V. Nagarathna and P.S. Narasimha, for considering the review pleas.

**Man stabbed to death, brother hurt in Ghazipur**

**New Delhi, July 10:** A 30-year-old man was stabbed to death while his younger brother was critically injured after they were attacked by their neighbours for objecting to noise and commotion during their family fight in Ghazipur area, the police on Wednesday said.

The incident happened when the accused, Saransh (22) was on Tuesday night fighting with his family, who live on the second floor in a residential building in Ghazipur. Vicky Soni (30), who lived with his family on the first floor in the same building, objected to the loud noise that occurred due to the fight, said the police. — PTI

**WESTERN RAILWAY - VADODARA DIVISION**  
CORRIGENDUM  
Corrigendum No : 1 Tender No : CPM-  
GSENGG-BRC-02-24-25 (Open  
Tender) Closing Date / Time : 07/08/  
2024 15:00 Name Of Work : Vadodara  
Division - Construction of Road Over Bridge  
(ROB) including approaches in lieu of LC  
No. 294 at km 471/16-18 on Vadodara-  
Gerapur section Items Modified Field  
Name : Tender Closing Date Time :  
Existing Value 23/07/2024 15:00, Modified  
Value : 07/08/2024 15:00 Bidding Start  
Date : Existing Value : 09/07/2024,  
Modified Value : 24/07/2024 115  
Like us on: Facebook.com/WesternRly



एक  
पेड़  
का  
के  
नाम

महावृक्षारोपण अभियान

11 जुलाई 2024

# चलव बनाबो हरियर छत्तीसगढ़

प्रदेश में रोपे जाएँगे करीब 4 करोड़ पौधे

आइये जननी और जन्मभूमि के  
रिश्ते को नई पहचान दें,  
पौधा लगाकर उसे संरक्षित करें।

- श्री विष्णु देव साय  
मुख्यमंत्री, छत्तीसगढ़



मुख्यमंत्री विष्णु देव साय से  
जुड़ने के लिए QR CODE स्कैन करें।

हमने बनाया है, हम ही संवारेंगे

## SHORT TAKES

### 2 students die in Ballia madrasa

**Ballia, UP:** Two students of a local madrasa died under mysterious circumstances in Khajuria police station area of the district on Wednesday, police said. "The health of two minor boys, Mohammed Raqeeb (11) and Mohammad Amaan (10), deteriorated in the morning. They were rushed to the hospital where doctors declared them dead," station house officer (SHO) Anita Singh of Khajuria police station said. The two boys were natives of Katihar district in Bihar. The police have informed the family members about the incident and sent the bodies for post mortem examination. "A total of 74 boys study in the madrasa. According to the staff there, the two like other students ate dinner and slept on Tuesday night. They also attended the early morning namaz but later complained of stomach ache," said the officer. — PTI

### Open Shambhu border, says HC

Continued from Page 1 and KMM are spearheading the "Delhi Chalo" march by farmers to press the government to accept their demands which include that the Centre should give a legal guarantee of MSP for crops. The farmers have been staying put at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana since February 13 when their march was stopped by the security forces.

Shubhkaran, a native of Bathinda, was killed and many police personnel were injured in clashes at Khanauri border point on the Punjab-Haryana border on February 21.

The incident took place when some protesting farmers were trying to head towards the barricades and were stopped by the security personnel from crossing the state border and marching to Delhi.

Mr Sabharwal said, "We (Haryana) had said the barricading had been put up since February 10, which was to maintain law and order. The farmers are sitting on Punjab's side. Their number at present is about 400-500."

Talking to reporters outside the HC, Mr Sabharwal said designated places have been earmarked both by Haryana and Punjab and everyone has a right to hold peaceful protest at a designated place, but the highways cannot be blocked.

Meanwhile, reacting to the court order, farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said they have called a meeting of both the forums — SKM (Non Political) and KMM — on July 16 to discuss the future course of action. "We had earlier made it clear that we had not blocked the road. The barricades had been done by the Centre and Haryana government," he maintained.

Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal said, "We have been saying that the Haryana government had blocked the highway." — PTI

## TD goons ransack Vizag DC office

ARUNA VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 10

They came, they screamed, set things on fire, and destroyed precious equipment. All in a jiffy.

Goons of the ruling Telugu Desam attacked the office of *Deccan Chronicle* at Visakhapatnam late in the afternoon on Wednesday in gross violation of all norms of democracy and rule of law. Starkly, this was despite a promise by the TD-led alliance in the recent elections that it would "restore law and order" in Andhra Pradesh.

TD activists stormed the *Deccan Chronicle* office premises, with members of the Telugu Nadu Students Federation and the TD women's wing being in the vanguard.

They destroyed the security post, stormed the office, ransacked the furniture, and even burnt the name board of the newspaper in what looked like a premeditated assault on the daily.

The TD activists-turned-arsonists questioned why *Deccan Chronicle* published a report saying the alliance government was shifting its stand on privatisation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. The report, 'Alliance takes U-turn on VSP privatisation', in, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu editions, was based on a statement from a minister in their own government, and it had also appeared in the other national and financial dailies.

Around 30 TD activists, including women, broke down the main office gate at Kailasagiri Ropeway on the Visakhapatnam-Bheemili Beach Road and entered the *Deccan Chronicle* office premises, carrying with them a bottle of petrol — indicating that the TD goons had greater understanding and working knowledge of the Molotov Cocktail rather than Article 19 (a) of the Constitution.

They burnt down the name board of the daily, which symbolised the pride of Telugu people and is a strong and respected media presence across the southern states for decades. The arsonists later tried to enter the printing section and the editorial department.

When the TD gang was attacking the *Deccan Chronicle* office by destroying its property, women journalists came

upfront and asked them to instead come down and discuss their concerns.

The aggressive gang, obviously with premeditated instructions from above and an intent to cause maximum damage, were highly vituperative in their response, used abusive language and menacingly rushed towards the staff.

One woman TD activist asked another to vandalise the printing unit by throwing a flamed petrol bottle.

The TD's handpicked goons demonstrated a working knowledge of the Molotov cocktail. Through their acts, they rubbished Article 19 (a) of the Indian Constitution, on freedom of speech and expression, which the TD had claimed it would protect and promote.

Another bridge falls in Bihar, 13 in 3 weeks

**Saharsa (Bihar), July 10:** Bihar witnessed another bridge collapse on Wednesday, making it the 13th such incident in the state in a span of three weeks.

The bridge collapsed at Mahishi village in Saharsa district earlier in the day, he said. "It might be a small bridge or causeway. Officials have left for the spot. We are trying to gather information about the incident," additional collector, Jyoti Kumar, said.

The state has suspended at least 15 engineers in connection with the series of incidents of bridge collapse reported from various districts, including Siwan, Saran, Madhubani, Araria, Champaran and Kishanganj. — PTI



People gather near the carcass of an elephant after it was hit by a train at Jagiroad in Morigaon district on Wednesday. — PTI

## Uproar in Maha Assembly over Maratha, OBC quota

Ruling parties created rift between Marathas-OBCs: Opp.

SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, JULY 10

The Eknath Shinde government of Maharashtra is trying to corner Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar over the OBC and Maratha reservation.

The Maharashtra CM had called an all-party meeting to discuss the issue and asked the opposition parties to clear their stand on the issue in writing. However, the opposition parties did not attend the meeting.

The reservation issue was one of the biggest factors behind the debacle of BJP-led Mahayuti in the Lok Sabha elections. Maratha activist Manoj Jarange has demanded reservation in the OBC category, which has been opposed by the OBC outfits as well as all political parties.

However, the Maratha community is believed to have voted for Maha Vikas Aghadi and against the BJP-led alliance over the

### ₹94Kcr worth demands cleared in Maha legislature amidst chaos

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, JULY 10

NCP (Sharad Pawar) on Wednesday alleged that the Maharashtra government demands worth ₹94,000 crore approved without any discussion in the state legislature. State party president Jayant Patil alleged that the ruling parties deliberately created ruckus in the House in order to clear the demands without discussion.

The Maharashtra government did this because

meeting on the issue of the OBC-Maratha reservation controversy.

The opposition parties did not attend it. In addition to this, the opposition alleged that the ruling parties have created a rift between the Marathas and OBCs.

It was sure that the opposition would reject these supplementary demands, he added.

"The ruling party created chaos in the House and adjourned the House to approve supplementary demands of ₹94,000 crore without a word of discussion. A new burden has been slapped on Maharashtra. State used this escape route because it was sure that the opposition parties will reject these supplementary demands," said Patil on his social media X post.

associates after a heated argument, locals claimed.

Soon after they left, a mob allegedly led by Ahmed beat up the man and vandalised his house, they said.

"Mr Sepai was injured in the incident and was taken to a health centre. Two persons have been arrested. Efforts are on to trace other accused named in an FIR," the officer said.

Asked about the incident, Ahmed claimed that he had left the Kangaroo session before violence erupted.

— PTI

## 'Muslim women can claim alimony'

Continued from Page 1

under Muslim law, then Section 125 of the CrPC as well as the provisions of the 1986 Act (the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act) are applicable. The option lies with the Muslim divorced women to seek remedy under either of the two laws or both laws. This is because the 1986 Act is not in derogation of Section 125 of the CrPC but in addition to the said provision," the bench said.

In his plea, Mr Samad contended that a divorced Muslim woman is not entitled to maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC and has to invoke the provisions of the 1986 Act, which is a special Act.

The 1986 Act was enacted by the Rajiv Gandhi government to nullify the top court ruling in the Shah Bano case. In his appeal, Mr Samad argued that the provisions of Sections 3 and 4 of the 1986 Act, "which start with a non-obstante clause, will prevail over the provisions of Section 125 of the CrPC, which has no non-obstante clause, and as such, the application for grant of maintenance by Muslim divorced women under Section 125 CrPC will not be maintainable before family court when the special Act gives jurisdiction to the first class magistrate to decide the issue of Maher and payment of other subsistence allowance under Sections 3 and 4 of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986."

On February 19, the top court had reserved its verdict after hearing senior advocate Wasim

Qadri, who represented the petitioner. The bench had appointed advocate Gaurav Agarwal as amicus curiae in the matter to assist the court. Mr Qadri had argued that the 1986 Act is more beneficial to Muslim women as compared to Section 125 of the CrPC.

On December 13, 2023, the high court did not set aside the order of the family court for payment of interim maintenance by Mr Samad to his estranged wife but reduced the amount from ₹20,000 to ₹10,000 per month, to be paid from the date of the petition. The woman had moved the family court under Section 125 of the CrPC, stating that Mr Samad had given her triple talaq.

Mr Samad contended before the high court that the couple got divorced in accordance with personal laws in 2017 and there was a divorce certificate to that effect, but it was not considered by the family court, which ordered payment of interim maintenance. Aggrieved by the high court's order, Mr Samad approached the top court.

According to Section 125 of the CrPC, "(1) If any person having sufficient means neglects or refuses to maintain (a) his wife, unable to maintain herself or (b) his legitimate or illegitimate minor child, whether married or not, unable to maintain himself or (c) his legitimate or illegitimate child (not being a married daughter) who has attained majority, where such child is, by reason of any physical or mental abnormality or injury unable to maintain himself or (d)

his father or mother, unable to maintain himself or herself, a magistrate of the first class may, upon proof of such neglect or refusal, order such person to make a monthly allowance for the maintenance of his wife or such child, father or mother, at such monthly rate as such magistrate thinks fit and to pay the same to such person as the magistrate may from time to time direct."

In its September 2001 judgment in the case Danial Latifi & Another vs Union of India, the top court had upheld the constitutional validity of the 1986 Act and said that its provisions do not offend Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution of India.

In the Shah Bano case, the top court delivered a judgment favouring maintenance to an aggrieved divorced Muslim woman under secular law. The then Congress government enacted the 1986 law, with its most controversial aspect being the right to maintenance for the period of iddat after the divorce and shifting the onus of maintaining her to her relatives or the Waqf Board. The law was viewed as discriminatory as it denied the right to basic maintenance rights under the secular law to Muslim women. Shah Bano Begum, from Indore, was divorced by her husband in 1978 and she filed a criminal suit in the top court in which she won the right to alimony from her husband. However, some Muslim politicians mounted a campaign for the verdict's nullification, leading to the enactment of the 1986 Act.

## Violence mars bypolls in U'khand, WB

Continued from Page 1

Binoy Kumar Biswas was attacked. The rear windscreens were smashed. Mr Biswas blamed the TMC for carrying out the attack out of fear of losing the seat. At Manikata in North Kolkata, BJP candidate Kalyan Choubey was seen chasing some fake voters.

The state BJP also lodged a complaint with the chief electoral officer of West Bengal and demanded 89 booths in Manikata. CPI(M) candidate Rajib Majumdar, who is also in the fray, alleged the "outsiders" role in voting.

At Ranaghat South, a local BJP leader Goutam Biswas was roughed up by some miscreants. He was admitted to Ranaghat Hospital. The houses of some BJP agents were also attacked late on Tuesday night.

Polling in the Manglaur Assembly by-election in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, was marred by violence as the two groups clashed at the Libberhedhi booth of the constituency on Wednesday amid Congress allegations that ruling party men fired several rounds in the air to terrorise voters.

Three persons were injured, one of whom was hospitalised, as the two groups clashed at polling booths 53-54 Libberhedhi in Roorkee Haridwar. As per information shared by the eyewitnesses at the booth, two groups of people clashed as voters lined up to cast their votes.

The Election Commission, however, denied the Congress charges. Despite the Uttarakhand chief electoral officer's denial, the Congress party leaders alleged nearly 100 rounds were fired in the air, injuring three supporters of

the party.

Learning about the incident, Congress party candidate Mohammed Nizamuddin rushed to the spot and took the injured supporters to the hospital. "I have been told by the eyewitnesses and media persons that 100 rounds were fired in the air to terrorise the Congress workers and voters lined up here to cast their votes. It happened because the police and security forces did not take any action against the accused. Three people are seriously injured and one of them is critical," alleged Mr Nizamuddin.

Former chief minister and senior Congress leader Harish Rawat alleged, "The firing incident is a blot on Uttarakhand's political and administrative system. The BJP knows that they are not winning through people's verdicts, so they resorted to hijacking public feelings and votes. The BJP hijacked democracy and the administrative system in Uttarakhand."

Also, Mr Rawat claimed that he was detained by the local police for more than two hours as he reached out to the voters to come out of their houses for voting.

The Manglaur bypolls were necessitated by the death of sitting BSP MLA Sarwat Karim Ansari in October last year, while the Badrinath seat fell vacant after sitting Congress MLA Rajendra Bhandari resigned and switched to the BJP in March this year.

Till 5 pm, 67.28 per cent of voters exercised their franchise in Manglaur. Badrinath reported 47.68 per cent polling.

The by-election in Madhya Pradesh's Amarwar Assembly constituency recorded an impres-

sive polling of over 74 per cent. The by-election was necessitated following the resignation of sitting Congress MLA Kamlesh Shah from the Assembly after he quit the party and joined the BJP ahead of the April-May Lok Sabha polls this year.

In Himachal Pradesh, the Nalagarh Assembly constituency recorded the highest polling percentage of 75.22 per cent till 5 pm, followed by Hamirpur at 65.78 per cent and Dehra at 63.89 per cent. The seats fell vacant after the three independent legislators - Hoshiyar Singh (Dehra), Ashish Sharma (Hamirpur) and K.L. Thakur (Nalagarh), who had voted in favour of the BJP in the Rajya Sabha polls held on February 27 - resigned from the House on March 22.

In Punjab, the bypolls for the Jalandhar West Assembly segment saw a voter turnout of 51.30 per cent till 5 pm. At many polling stations, plants were given to voters who exercised their franchise. The ruling AAP has fielded Mohinder Bhagat, the son of former minister and former BJP MLA Bhagat Chhuni Lal. Mr Bhagat had joined the AAP after quitting the BJP last year.

In Bihar, a voter turnout of 51.14 per cent was recorded till 5 pm in the bypolls for the Rupauli Assembly seat. Elections were necessitated following the resignation of sitting MLA Bima Bharti, who won the seat for the JD(U) several times in the past but quit the party to contest the Lok Sabha elections on an RJD ticket.

Following her loss in the parliamentary election, she contested the bypolls as an RJD candidate.

Kolkata, July 10: The police apprehended another close associate of local TMC leader Jayant Singh in connection with an incident where a group assaulted a girl inside a club in north 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, making it the third arrest in the case.

The latest arrest took place on late Tuesday night, Barrackpore police commissioner CP Alok Rajoria said. He added that eight persons have been identified from the footage of the incident, and stringent action will

## Worli crash: Sena sacks dad, accused in 7 days' custody

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, JULY 10

Mihir Shah, the main accused in the Mumbai hit-and-run case, in which a woman died after being hit by a BMW, has been sent to a seven-day police custody till July 16.

Mihir, who is the son of Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Rajesh Shah, was arrested on Tuesday after being on the run for over 72 hours.

A 24-year-old Mihir was produced before chief metropolitan magistrate (Sewri court) S.P. Bhosale, who sent him to police custody.

The police had sought "maximum possible custody" of Mihir, arguing he tried to destroy evidence after the accident and evade arrest by altering his appearance.

During the hearing, the Mumbai police told the court that they have to find out how many people helped the accused after the incident and who helped him to hide for nearly three days.

Shah's lawyers countered the prosecution by pointing out the cops

## SC refuses to set aside pre-arrest bail to Prajwal Revanna's mother

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to set aside the anticipatory bail granted to Bhavani Revanna, the mother of suspended JD(S) leader and rape accused Prajwal Revanna, in a kidnapping case involving one of the victims of her son's alleged sexual assault.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan issued notice to

MIHIR SHAH, who is the son of Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Rajesh Shah, was arrested on Tuesday after being on the run for over 72 hours

already have substantial material, including the matching statements of the main accused and the family driver and video footage.

Mihir had been evading arrest since July 7. The collision resulted in the death of 45-year-old Kaveri Nakhwa, who was riding pillion, while her husband Pradeep survived with injuries.

In response to mounting criticism, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, leader of the Shiv Sena, dismissed Rajesh Shah from his position as the party's deputy leader.

A notice from Shiv Sena secretary Sanjay More stated that Rajesh Shah has been relieved from his post but remains a party member. The police has indicated that Rajesh Shah actively facilitated his son's escape following the crash and is currently out on bail.

Ms Revanna on the appeal filed by the Karnataka government challenging the high court order.

"The accused is a woman who is aged 55 years. There are serious allegations against her son of indulging in atrocious things. He ran away and eventually, he was caught...In a case of this kind of allegations, what will be the role of the mother in abetting the crime committed by her son?" the bench said.

## CISF set to take over security of Parliament

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The over 3,300 personnel strength CISF contingent meant to provide an armed security cover to the Parliament complex in Delhi is set to be inducted formally with the posting of 29 before upcoming Monsoon Session from July 22.

The force's contingent of 3,317 men and women personnel will be headed by a deputy inspector general ranked officers (DIG), one senior commandant, 2 commandants, seven deputy commandants and 18 assistant commandants, the official sources said.

Among the 29, two will be from the fire wing as the force has also deployed its fire-combat unit here, the sources said.

The Central force has been independently securing the Parliament after it took over these duties from CRPF and Delhi police in May.

The Central Industrial Security Force was brought in to guard the sensitive and important facility following an incident of breach on December 13 last year when two persons had jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during zero hour, released yellow smoke from canisters and shouted slogans before being overpowered by the MPs.

Around the same time that day, two others sprayed coloured smoke from canisters while shouting slogans outside the Parliament premises.

The date of this breach also coincided with a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack on December 13.

## WB bizman beaten, house vandalised

Howrah (WB), July 10: A businessman in West Bengal's Howrah district was allegedly assaulted and his house vandalised after a kangaroo court session was convened by a local panchayat pradhan and TMC leader to resolve his marital dispute.

Two persons were arrested for their alleged involvement in the incident that occurred on Tuesday, police said.

The businessman, identified as Sahabuddin Sepai, had agreed to participate in the Kangaroo court session to resolve the dispute.

During the session, Kandua gram panchayat pradhan and local TMC leader Khalil Ahmed confronted the businessman and abruptly left with his

A MOB allegedly led by TMC leader Khalil Ahmed beat up the man and vandalised the businessman's house

associates after a heated argument, locals claimed.

Soon after they left, a mob allegedly led by Ahmed beat up the man and vandalised his house, they said.

"Mr Sepai was injured in the incident and was taken to a health centre. Two persons have been arrested. Efforts are on to trace other accused named in an FIR," the officer said.

Asked about the incident, Ahmed claimed that he had left the Kangaroo session before violence erupted.

— PTI

## Another close associate of TMC leader held in girl assault case

Kolkata, July 10: The police apprehended another close associate of local TMC leader Jayant Singh in connection with an incident where a group assaulted a girl inside a club in north 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, making it the third arrest in the case.

The latest arrest took place on late Tuesday night, Barrackpore police commissioner CP Alok Rajoria said. He added that eight persons have been identified from the footage of the incident, and stringent action will

be taken against all involved.

Mr Singh, who was arrested in 2023 in another case and was out on bail with a bond promising no further illegal activities, is now facing additional charges for violating it. The incident came to light on Tuesday morning after a video clip, which has gone viral, showed some people holding the girl's legs and hands while others beat her with sticks. Police initiated action based on this video, and arrested two persons.

— PTI

## 'Bengal's suit maintainable'

Continued from Page 1

was no cause of action against the Centre in this matter. "The DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training) never registers a case," he had said, adding, "The DoPT can't direct registration of an FIR. Nor can any other department of the Central government supervise the investigation." The Centre had told the SC that the CBI was not under the "control" of the Union and that the government cannot supervise either the registration of an offence by the agency or its investigation.

The Centre had raised preliminary objections about the maintainability of the lawsuit filed by the West Bengal government, contending that there was no cause of action against the Union of India.

The West Bengal government has filed an original suit in the SC against the Centre under Article 131 of the Constitution, alleging that the CBI has been filing FIRs and proceeding with investigations despite the state having withdrawn the general consent to the Central agency to probe cases within its territorial jurisdiction. Article 131 deals with the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction in a dispute between the Centre and one or more states.

SHORT TAKES

Floods claim 4 more animals' lives in KNP

**Guwahati:** Four more wild animals died in the worst flood in Assam's famed Kaziranga National Park (KNP) in recent years, taking the death toll to 163 due to drowning and during treatment, an official said on Wednesday. Altogether 135 animals have also been rescued in the deluge, the KNP official said. The animal mortality has increased from 159 till Tuesday in the devastating second wave floods that have affected the entire state. The dead animals include nine rhinos, 146 hog deer, two sambar, a rhesus macaque and an otter. A total of 22 animals have died during treatment. They are 17 hog deer, three swamp deer, one rhesus macaque and an otter pup. The forest personnel rescued 122 hog deer, three swamp deer, two each of rhino, sambar, elephant and scops owl and one each of Indian hare, Rhesus Macaque, otter, and a jungle cat. — PTI

C'garh will get new welfare dept soon

**Raipur:** In a move to provide good governance in Chhattisgarh, Vishnu Deo Sai government has decided to form a separate "good governance and convergence" department. A decision to this effect was taken at the meeting of the state Cabinet held here late on Tuesday evening under the chairmanship of CM Vishnu Deo Sai. The new department will not only ensure effective implementation of the Chhattisgarh government's welfare policy but also ensure good governance by addressing public issues, a spokesman of Chhattisgarh government said. The matters relating to e-Review, e-public service guarantee, and digital secretariat will be taken away from the general administration department and be kept under the new department.

Maha: 75-yr-old man set on fire by brother

**Nashik:** A 75-year-old man was allegedly burnt alive by his brother and two nephews over property dispute in Maharashtra's Nashik district, police said on Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Kacheshwar Mahadu Nagare, resident of Nandur Shivar near Thardi Sarole village in Niphad tehsil. He had a dispute with his younger brother over their ancestral land and well in the village, said a police official. The brother and his two sons on Tuesday afternoon allegedly caught hold of Nagare when he was working in the fields near his house, poured diesel and set him on fire before fleeing from the spot, the official said. Hearing Nagare screaming, the members of his family came out of the house and rushed him to the district hospital. The victim succumbed in hospital. — PTI

SC AGREES TO LIST 'SENA' PLEA BY UBT LEADER

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to consider listing a plea of the Uddhav Thackeray faction challenging Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar's order declaring the Shiv Sena bloc led by chief minister Eknath Shinde as the "real political party" after its split in June 2022. The Speaker had also dismissed the disqualification petitions of the Thackeray faction against Maharashtra chief minister and his supporting MLAs. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Sena (UBT) leader Sunil Prabhu, told a bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra that the plea needed to be listed for hearing as even the term of the Assembly is nearing its end. "I will see," the CJ said and asked the senior lawyer to circulate an e-mail to this effect. On January 22, the apex court had issued notices to the chief minister and other lawmakers of his group on the plea of Mr Prabhu, a leader of the Uddhav Thackeray faction.



Uddhav Thackeray

24 held for helping Kathua attackers

No trace of attackers; militants target police post in Udhampur

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, JULY 10

Considering that the militants, who ambushed an Army combat infantry truck in a remote area of Jammu and Kashmir's frontier Kathua district early this week might have received logistics support from the locals, the security forces have detained over two dozen persons for questioning.

There has been no trace of the group of terrorists involved in the deadly attack that killed five soldiers and wounded five others in Kathua's Badnote area on July 8, even as the massive joint "cordon-and-search-Operation" (Caso), launched by the Army alongside the J&K police, the CRPF and other Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in the wooded hills of Kathua to hunt them down, continued on the third day on



Bereaved family members mourn the death of Naib Subedar Anand Singh, who was martyred in J&K's Kathua district, in Rudraprayag on Wednesday. — PTI

Wednesday. A report from Udhampur said that the sentry at a police post in the district's Sang area opened fire towards a tree line after discerning suspicious movement. Udhampur's SSP Joginder Singh said that with the arrival of reinforcements the police have launched a search operation in the area.

The Army too has been informed. The Indian Army's special forces and highly trained and fully equipped members of the J&K police counterinsurgency Special Operations Group (SOG) and other security forces had early Tuesday moved in a dense forest area of Kathua to chase terrorists involved in the

previous day's ambush. In the operation, the ground forces are being supported by their loyal canine companions from the dog squad, the Army combat helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicle surveillance, the officials said.

The slain Army jawans were Naib Subedar Anand Singh, Havildar Kamal Singh, Naik Vinod Singh, Rifleman Anuj Negi and Rifleman Adarsh Negi—all from Uttarakhand. The Army sources said that the Bravehearts belonged to the 22 Garhwal Regiment and were being led by Junior Commissioned Officer (Naib Subedar) Anand Singh.

Meanwhile, a team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday again visited the Badnote area, 152-km away from the district headquarters, where the Army vehicles came under the attack.

J&K attacks proves militancy alive: Omar

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, JULY 10

Former chief minister and National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the spurt in violence and deadly attacks on security forces proved it beyond any doubt that militancy has not ended in Jammu and Kashmir contrary to the government's claim that the abrogation of Article 370 brought peace and stability to the erstwhile state.

"Those people (BJP) were claiming that the entire militancy is because of Article 370, and, after its abrogation, peace would prevail here. They have been proved wrong. We continuously said that Article 370 had nothing to do with militancy and even if it is

removed there won't be any effect on militancy. This has been proved now," Mr. Abdullah told reporters here.

The former CM said when the NC was in power the BJP would blame the government for every incident of violence. "Today, when attacks do take place including in the Jammu region which was comparatively peaceful then, who do you think is responsible?" Mr. Abdullah said. Blaming the BJP for renewed violence, Mr. Abdullah said that the Raj Bhawan in Srinagar should focus on bringing the situation to normalcy.

Taking a dig at the BJP, he said the saffron party exaggerated the Balakot strikes. He said, "I have not heard any demand for a cross-border attack following the recent attack.

MP mantri's female PRO kills self over marital feud

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JULY 10

A female public relations officer (PRO) serving in the office of Madhya Pradesh panchayat and rural development minister Pralhad Patel died by suicide due to suspected marital discord, police said on Wednesday.

Pooja Thapak, mother of a child, committed suicide in the bed room of her house here in night, police said.

The officer who was serving as assistant director, public relations department, in Madhya Pradesh government, allegedly had a bitter quarrel with her husband Nikhil Dubey, who is currently posted as assistant director in the technology department of the state government and then called her mother on phone to inform her that she was going to commit suicide, according to the police. Her mother immediately alerted the deceased's husband about it prompting him to rush to the bedroom, police said. He broke into the room and found her hanging. He then rushed her to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhopal, where she was declared dead, police said.

The couple used to quarrel and were given counselling earlier.

ED raids Cong neta premises in Karnataka

**Bengaluru, July 10:** The ED on Wednesday carried out searches in four states, including on the premises of former Karnataka minister and Congress leader B. Nagendra and MLA B. Daddal, as part of a money laundering probe linked to alleged irregularities in the Karnataka Maharsi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Limited, sources said.

The ED covered around 20 locations in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra as part of its investigation. — PTI



Contestants during a bull race competition at a paddy field in South 24 Parganas district on Wednesday. — PTI

18 killed, 19 hurt as bus hits tanker on Lucknow eway

Both drivers die; Cranes used to pull mangled vehicles

**Unnao (UP), July 10:** Eighteen people were killed and 19 injured when a double-decker sleeper bus headed for Delhi hit a milk tanker on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway here on Wednesday, officials said.

The accident occurred around 5 am near Jojikot village in Behta Mughawar police station area.

District magistrate Gaurang Rathi said it appears that the bus, which was coming from Motihari in Bihar, was speeding and hit the milk tanker from behind.

Eighteen people died and 19 were injured in the accident. A probe has been launched into the matter, he said.

Mr Rathi said 20 passengers who sustained minor injuries were sent to Delhi in another bus, which was carrying 60 people.

Additional Director General of Police, Lucknow, S B Shiradkar told PTI that 14 men, three women and a child were killed in the accident.

Bangar Mau Circle Officer (CO) Arvind



Mangled remains of a bus lies on a road after an accident in Unnao district on Wednesday. — PTI

Kumar said due to the collision, both the bus and milk tanker overturned. Drivers of the two vehicles were among the dead.

He said the injured were rushed to a hospital and their condition was stated to be stable.

Glass shards and people's belongings lay scattered on the highway next to the overturned bus and milk tanker. Cranes were used to put the two vehicles back on their wheels and they were later towed away. The impact of the collision left the front portion of the bus badly man-

gled with one side ripped open. "We were sleeping. I don't know what happened," Mohd Shamim, a passenger who sustained head injuries in the accident, told reporters at the hospital.

Another passenger, Dilshad, lost six of the eight family members he was travelling with. "We were sleeping at the time of the accident and woke up to find ourselves trapped inside the bus. Those who reached the spot were busy recording videos instead of helping," he said. — PTI

Russia hints early release of Indians stuck in its Army

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, JULY 10

A day after Russia agreed to discharge Indians trapped in the Russian Army after Prime Minister Narendra Modi strongly raised the matter in Moscow during talks with President Vladimir Putin, Russian deputy chief of mission (DCM) Roman Babushkin said in New Delhi that Russia "never wanted" Indians cheated by recruitment agents to be part of the Russian Army and that both nations are on the "same page" on the issue.

At a media briefing in the capital, the Russian DCM said some of the Indians have gone there for commercial purposes and intentionally to earn money as part of contractual obligations, while others have been cheated by recruitment agents.

He pointed out that in any case it was illegal in Russia to enter into contractual obligations to serve in the Russian Army while on a tourist or business visa, adding that Russia would do its utmost for early resolution of the issue and that both nations were in close touch with each other on the matter.

Mr Babushkin pointed

out that the total number of such Indians (serving with the Russian Army), whether 50, 60 or even 100, were too small to make a difference on the battlefield (against Ukraine).

Asked about whether the families of Indians who had died fighting for the Russian Army would get compensation and citizenship, Mr Babushkin did not go into details but said relevant contractual obligations would be fulfilled by Russia.

Talking about the successful just-concluded visit of PM Modi to Russia on Monday and Tuesday and the economic outcomes, Mr Babushkin pointed to the "go-ahead" given by both countries to "establish a national trade currencies system" so that trade between the two nations does not become a target of weaponisation by the West.

"Russia will be the largest contributor to India's fuel and fertilizer security," he said.

— PTI

Jaishankar to host Bimstec counterparts in Delhi today

New Delhi, July 10: External affairs minister S. Jaishankar will host his counterparts from the Bimstec member countries at a two-day retreat beginning Thursday in the national capital.

The retreat will present an opportunity for the foreign ministers to discuss avenues to deepen cooperation across various sectors including in the fields of security, connectivity and trade, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (Bimstec) brings together seven countries of South and Southeast Asia for multi-faceted cooperation.

India has been making concerted efforts to make Bimstec a vibrant forum for regional cooperation as initiatives under Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) were not moving forward for a variety of reasons. Besides India, the Bimstec comprises Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.

The first edition of the Bimstec foreign ministers' retreat was held in Bangkok on 17 July, 2023. — PTI

'Members of insurgent group held, 3 military-grade rifles seized' Kukis protest arrests, normal life hit

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, JULY 10

The normal life was paralysed in Kuki-dominated areas of Manipur, following a 12-hour shutdown called by the Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), an apex body of Kuki tribes, in protest against the arrest of five village volunteers from their community by the security forces in the last two days.

Some women's groups of the Kuki-Zo community alleged that personnel of the security forces had beaten local women who were protesting the detention. Security sources, however, claimed that three members of an insurgent group were



Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh talks to media persons in Imphal on Wednesday. — PTI

arrested after a gunfight in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on Tuesday. Three military-grade assault

rifles and over 1,300 bullets were seized from them, security sources said, adding that they

launched the operation based on information given by the National Investigation Agency.

The Churachandpur-based Kuki Inpi Manipur, in a communication to its offices in all districts, said that an emergency meeting was held over the arrest of these "village volunteers" and the conduct of personnel during the operations on Tuesday, following which the decision was taken to call for a total shutdown for 12 hours on Wednesday.

It is significant that hundreds of Kuki-Zo people on Tuesday evening marched to the superintendent of police office, calling for the release of the three individuals.

Mortal remains handed to families with full military honour for final adieu Army recovers bodies of fallen heroes in daring ops

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, JULY 10

In a display of courage and camaraderie, the mountaineers of the High Altitude Warfare School (Haws) of Indian Army in a mission — Operation RTG — successfully recovered the mortal remains of three soldiers who were lost last year in October during an expedition to Mount Kun in Ladakh.

"Dug for nine days straight, 10-12 hours every day at 18,700 feet," said Brigadier S.S. Shekhawat, the deputy commandant of Haws. "Tons of snow and ice were removed. The gruelling effort — both physically and mentally — tested the resilience of the



Mortal remains of soldier being taken out by Army from glacier crevasse in Ladakh.

entire team," Brigadier Shekhawat said.

"It has been the toughest mission of my life, physically, mentally, and emotionally," he said. In July 2023, a 38-member mountaineering expedition from Haws set out to conquer Mount Kun in Ladakh. The expedition commenced on 1st October, 2023, and the team hoped to conquer

Mount Kun by October 13, 2023. While fixing ropes on a snow wall, the team was struck by a sudden avalanche on 8th October, 2023 at a height of over 18,300 ft between Camp 2 and Camp 3 on the Fariabad Glacier.

Four members were caught in the deadly slide. The expedition team made all endeavours to rescue the team members, who fell in the crevasse and got buried under large volume of snow. Despite efforts, the team could only recover the mortal remains of Lance Naik Stanzin Targais.

The bodies of Havildar Rohit, Havildar Thakur Bahadur Ale, and Naik Gautam Rajbanshi remained trapped deep

within a crevasse, buried under layers of snow.

Refusing to leave their brothers behind, Haws launched a meticulously planned rescue mission, codenamed "Operation RTG" — named after the missing soldiers Rohit, Thakur, and Gautam — on June 18, 2024. The rescue expedition consisted of 88 expert mountaineers who against all odds, rescued the mortal remains of their fallen comrades, leaving no one behind.

The mortal remains have been transported to respective families with full military honours, bringing closure to the loved ones, who had patiently waited to bid the bravehearts adieu.

Border police seizes 108 kg gold near LAC

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI/LEH JULY 10

In a major haul, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has seized 108 kg gold bars, each weighing one-kilogram, in eastern Ladakh area near Indo-China border. Three people have been arrested by ITBP.

Besides huge quantity of smuggled gold, the seizure also included two mobile phones, a binocular, two knives and several Chinese food items like cakes and milk, a ITBP official on Wednesday said.

The smugglers have been identified as

Tsering Chamba (40) and Stanzin Dorgyal — both residents of Ladakh's Nyoma area. One more person was arrested in connection with the recovery, and all the three persons arrested are being interrogated, jointly by the ITBP and police, the official said.

The seizure was made on July 9 during a "long range patrolling" operation launched in the southern sub-sector, covering areas such as Chismule, Narbula top and Zalkle.

The force was deployed to check infiltration and smuggling attempts along the border.

## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	79,924.77	-0.53
Nifty 50	24,324.45	-0.45
S&P 500*	5,592.05	0.27
Dollar (₹)	83.53	-0.03
Pound Sterling (₹)	106.99	-0.04
Euro (₹)	90.38	-0.01
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	72,810.412	0.57
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	84.94	0.33
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.976	-0.013
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.276	-0.024

\*As of 8:30 PM IST

## Flipkart, Billedesk to expand digital payment offerings

Flipkart on Wednesday said it has partnered with payment solutions company Billedesk to expand its digital payment offerings with five new categories. The expansion includes recharge and bill payment categories on the Flipkart app. "We have diversified our selection of services in line with Flipkart's vision to simplify the digital payments," said Gaurav Arora, vice president, Payments and SuperCoins, Flipkart.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle is prohibited.

## RBI flags banks resorting to loan evergreening

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, JULY 10

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday raised concerns about banks having lakhs of accounts that are being used for frauds and evergreening of loans.

Speaking at the conference of statutory auditors and chief financial officers (CFOs) of commercial banks and all India financial institutions, RBI deputy governor Swaminathan J said, "One area that has come into sharper focus in the last couple of years is the control and management of internal accounts. We found certain banks having lakhs of such accounts with apparently no valid reason. Some of these accounts were also used as a conduit for certain fraudulent transactions and ever-greening of loan accounts."

"Internal accounts are high risk in nature on account of its potential for misuse. I therefore request the CFOs to have them rationalised completely, bring them down to minimum and control through periodical reconciliation and a proper reporting to the audit committee of the Board," added Swaminathan who is in charge of financial supervision and inspection departments.

He urged CFOs to invest in technology and data analytics which would help them to provide more accurate and real-time financial insights.

CFOs must protect the integrity of the financial



● **THE BANKING** sector is at a decadal high in terms of all financial parameters and is well poised to support the growth of Indian economy.

reporting by guarding against any misadventure or intelligent interpretation of regulations or accounting standards, he said.

On the same lines, bank's statutory auditors should promptly report incipient vulnerabilities to both the bank management and the RBI, he said.

Last week governor Shaktikanta Das, during his interaction with bank chiefs, had raised the issue of mule accounts (illegal accounts) and asked them to curb digital frauds.

Swaminathan said that the banking sector is at a decadal high in terms of all financial parameters and is well poised to support the growth of Indian economy but there should be indispensable partnership between the auditors, CFOs and financial sector regulators in safeguarding the integrity and stability of our financial institutions.

## SC DIRECTS PATANJALI TO FILE AFFIDAVIT ON CERTAIN ADS

FC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS  
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed Patanjali Ayurved, founded by yoga guru Ramdev, to file an affidavit stating whether advertisements of its 14 products, whose manufacturing licences were initially suspended but later restored, have been withdrawn.

The Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority had on April 15 issued an order suspending the manufacturing licences of 14 products of Patanjali Ayurved and Divya Pharmacy.

In a fresh development, the state licensing authority has filed an affidavit in the apex court stating that the suspension order has been cancelled following a report by a high-level committee which examined the grievances of Patanjali Ayurved in the wake of the row.

However, during the hearing, a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Sandeep Mehta took note of the May 16 affidavit of Patanjali in which the firm stated that the sale of these 14 products was stopped in light of the April 15 suspension order. The affidavit further stated that the ayurved products company has also taken steps to remove the related advertisements from its official verified social media accounts or handles.

## Electronic parts are big opportunity for MSMEs

Value addition should double to 35-40% in next 5 yrs: IT secretary

New Delhi, July 10: Electronics component manufacturing in India offers MSMEs a "huge opportunity to succeed", IT secretary S Krishnan said on Wednesday asserting that Meity is looking at ways to spur the electronics components ecosystem in the country.

Krishnan also exhorted MSMEs to seize growth opportunities, adopt technology and digital tools to expand, and graduate to becoming a larger enterprise over time.

The IT secretary said India's aspirations to transform itself into an electronics manufacturing destination are extremely important from an employment, resilience, and exports viewpoint.

"There is a huge requirement for components and that component requirement is where I think



● **MEITY IS** looking at ways to promote greater manufacturing of electronics components in the country and is keen to encourage and enable companies of all sizes and scales in this space.

MSMEs have a huge role to play and need to come into play, in a significant way," he said.

Not only does component manufacturing offer such companies a huge opportunity to succeed, but there is "also a national need to ensure that they succeed," he said at CII MSME growth summit.

The ministry of electronics and information technology (Meity) is looking at ways to promote greater manufacturing of electronics components in

the country and is keen to encourage and enable companies of all sizes and scales in this space.

He cited the success started by India in mobile manufacturing saying the country now produces 33 crore mobile units and has a strong exports play, a significant feat compared to levels a decade ago when 21 cr mobile phone units were being imported in the country with manufacturing at a mere 5 cr units.

Krishnan, however, pointed out that while mobile

phones manufactured and assembled now cater to almost all domestic consumption in the country, the value addition is only about 18-20 per cent.

"Today we have an advantage in terms of labour cost. The assembly of electronics units is heavily employment-oriented which is good but for it to continue to be based in India, we need to be more competitive," he said.

For electronics manufacturing to dig "deep roots in India" would require a significant proportion of components to also be manufactured here.

"Our goal is that value addition should double to 35-40 per cent in the next five years so we are able to take forward the component manufacturing ecosystem and there the role of MSMEs will be significant," he said. —PTI

## Hefty gains in stocks woo retail investors

Mumbai, July 10: Retail investors are expected to keep piling into initial public offerings (IPOs) in India this year, as hefty gains for new stocks outpace the broader market and listings abroad.

Shares that began trading in India this year have delivered an average gain of about 57 per cent since their debut, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. That compares with 32 per cent for Asia Pacific and is more than double the global

average, the data show.

At least 15 more companies are working on offerings that could materialise in coming months that could potentially raise a combined \$11 billion.

Buying by retail investors has been key for the success of such sales in India, one of the hottest spots globally for IPOs in 2024 as surging valuations and good economic prospects lure issuers.

"At the moment it seems like a juggernaut that's not going to stop anytime

● **BUYING BY** retail investors has been key for the success of such sales in India, one of the hottest spots globally for IPOs in 2024 as surging valuations and good economic prospects lure issuers.

soon," said Vineet Arora, who manages the Singapore-based NAV Capital Emerging Star Fund. "I talk to a lot of younger generation investors. Most of them don't

want to buy a house or apartment, an asset that one would invest soon after starting work. Now that money is finding its way into stock markets."

Retail investors bid for about \$10.6 billion worth of shares sold in 36 IPOs on Indian bourses this year, according to data from Prime Database Group.

Seven IPOs that began trading recently attracted individual demand that surpassed the amount available by more than 50 times. —Bloomberg

## WORLD

### SHORT TAKES

## DHAKA SUSPENDS JOB QUOTAS OVER STUDENTS' STIR

Dhaka, July 10: Bangladesh's top court on Wednesday temporarily suspended quotas for coveted government jobs.

The decision was taken after thousands of students staged nationwide protests against what they call a discriminatory system, lawyers said.

The quota system reserves more than half of well-paid and massively over-subscribed civil service posts, totalling hundreds of thousands of government jobs, for specific groups. These include children of liberation heroes. Students launched protests earlier this month, demanding a merit-based system, with demonstrations on Wednesday blocking highways and railway lines. "We will not return to classrooms until our demand is met," protest leader Rasel Ahmed of Chittagong University told AFP.

The quota system was abolished in 2018 after weeks of protests, but reinstated in June by Dhaka's High Court, sparking fury from students. The Supreme Court on Wednesday suspended that order.

## Gaza strike kills 29 who were about to watch football match

Draft notices will be sent to ultra-orthodox Jews in weeks, says Gallant

Cairo, Gaza, Jerusalem, July 10: An Israeli missile slammed into a tent encampment in southern Gaza on Tuesday just as displaced people had gathered to watch a football match at a school, eyewitnesses said on Wednesday.

At least 29 people, mostly women and children, were killed in the strike, according to Palestinian officials, which took place as spectators crowded Abassan east's school grounds in Khan Younis and hawkers sold smoothies, biscuits.

"They were watching a football match. There were injuries and martyrs. I witnessed this...people thrown around and body parts scattered, blood," a young woman, Ghazzal Nasser, told Reuters.

"Everything was normal. People were playing, others were buying and selling (food and drinks). There was no sound of planes or anything," she said.

The Israeli military said it was reviewing reports that civilians were harmed. It said the incident oc-



Israeli soldiers take position during a raid in the Nur Shams camp for Palestinian refugees in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday. — AFP

curred when it struck with "precise munition" a Hamas fighter who took part in the Oct. 7 raid on Israel that triggered the war. The military did not immediately respond to a

request for comment on whether it knew a football match was going on when the strike was ordered. At the nearby Nasser Hospital, Palestinians bid farewell to loved ones before

funerals and burials. "The schools were overcrowded and the street was full. Suddenly a missile hit and destroyed the whole place," said Asmaa Qudeih, who lost many relatives

in the attack.

"Bodies flew in the wind, body parts flew, I don't know how to describe it," she said.

Israeli forces continued to press their offensive in north and central Gaza on Wednesday, and deepened their incursion into two Gaza City districts.

Soldiers carried out house-to-house searches in some areas and tanks shelled several homes, according to residents.

The militant group Hamas said the renewed Israeli campaign threatened to derail efforts to secure a truce in the nine-month-old war, with talks to resume in Doha on Wednesday.

Leaflets were dropped on Gaza City, this time with a map marking "safe routes" for the evacuation of the whole city. The leaflets urge civilians to head south along two routes to the central Gaza Strip.

The city, home to more than a quarter of Gaza's population before the war, was destroyed by an Israeli assault. —Reuters

## Biden: Make no mistake, Russia to fail in this war

Washington, London, Oslo, July 10: US President Joe Biden on Tuesday announced a historic donation of air-defence equipment for Ukraine and said Russia is failing in this war.

Welcoming leaders of Nato member countries for the historic summit on the occasion of its 75th anniversary, Biden said the US, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania and Italy will provide Ukraine with the equipment for five additional strategic air-defence systems.

Britain's PM Keir Starmer indicated on Wednesday that Ukraine can use long-range missiles supplied by the UK to strike military targets in Russia during their war. Norway will donate six F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine to help it in defence efforts against Russian air attacks, the Norwegian government said in a statement.

In the coming months, the US and its partners intend to provide Ukraine with dozens of additional tactical air-defence systems, he said, adding that the US will make sure that when "we export critical air-defence interceptors, Ukraine goes to the front of the line."

"They will get this assistance before anyone else gets it. All told, Ukraine

## UKRAINE 'BUFFER ZONE' NEEDS TIME, ASSERTS KREMLIN

Moscow, July 10: Russia said on Wednesday that its military was still working to create a "buffer zone" in Ukraine's Kharkiv region but this would take time.

The Russian Parliament's lower house gave final approval on Wednesday to a bill that would raise income taxes for the rich, in a move to help fill government coffers during the fighting in Ukraine. —Agencies

will receive hundreds of additional interceptors over the next year, helping protect Ukrainian cities against Russian missile and Ukrainian troops facing air attacks on their front lines," Biden said.

"Make no mistake, Russia is failing in this war. More than two years into (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's war of choice, his losses are staggering. More than 3,50,000 Russian troops dead or wounded, nearly one million Russians, many of them young people, have left Russia because they no longer see a future in Russia." —Agencies

## Lanka Prez term's ambiguity to end

Colombo, July 10: The Sri Lankan Cabinet has approved a move to amend the Constitution giving clarity to terms of both the President and Parliament, restricting it to five years only, the government announced.

The dispute about the President's term arose as the independent election commission was preparing to announce the poll date for the next presidential election.

The terms for both posts are already five years as per the 19th Amendment since 2015. But, the problem was over Article 83, which said the term could be extended to six from five with a referendum. A petitioner approached the

Supreme Court asking it to define if the terms were five or six years.

Earlier this week, the SC rejected the plea which sought a ruling on the seeming ambiguity between 30(2) and 83 in the Constitution, which means, it will be five years only. The amendment to be introduced now seeks to resolve the issue arising from Article 83 (b) that reads, extend the term of office of the president or the duration of Parliament as the case may be to over five years from the six.

Election commission chief R.M.A.L. Ratnayake said that the date for the presidential polls could be announced by the end of the month. —PTI

## Trump dares Biden to golf match

Washington, July 10: Donald Trump, the Republican presumptive presidential nominee, has offered his rival and incumbent President Joe Biden the opportunity to "redeem himself in front of the entire world" via a debate this week while also challenging him to a round of golf.

Trump's challenges to Biden, 81, came as he was feeling quite confident after his maiden debate performance against the president late last month. "I'm officially offering Joe the chance to redeem himself in front of the entire world," Trump, 78, said at a campaign rally held in Florida.

"Let's do another debate this week so that sleepy

## BIDEN CALLS ON UNION LEADERS AS DEMS' CALLS TO EXIT RACE CONTINUE

Washington, July 10: US President Joe Biden returns to the campaign trail on Wednesday, rallying the key constituency of labor leaders, as some fellow Democrats continue to persuade him not to run in the presidential race.

Joe Biden can prove to everyone all over the world that he has what it takes to be president," he said. "But this time it will be man-to-man, no moderators, no holds barred. Just name the place, anytime, anywhere," he said.

For the past 13 days, the 81-year-old Biden has been working to stem defections from Democratic lawmakers, donors and other allies worried he might lose to Republican Donald Trump after his halting June 27 debate show. —Reuters

Biden, the Democratic nominee, performed poorly at the June 27 presidential debate in Atlanta, after which even his own party colleagues are asking him to drop from the race. Biden has rejected such calls. At the same rally,

Trump then challenged Biden to an 18-hole golf match. "I'm also officially challenging Joe to an 18-hole golf match right here," he said. "If he wins, I will give the charity of his choice, any charity that he wants, \$1 million. And I'll bet you he doesn't take the offer...What that match will do is prove that Joe is, in fact, all talk and no action," Trump said.

Meanwhile, the Biden Campaign has rejected both the challenges. "Joe Biden doesn't have time for Donald Trump's weird antics — he's busy leading America and defending the free world. Donald Trump is a liar, a convict, and a fraud only out for himself." —PTI

## IMRAN PRE-ARREST BAIL PLEAS NIXED

Lahore, July 10: A Pakistani anti-terrorism court (ATC) has dismissed pre-arrest bail petitions of former prime minister Imran Khan in three cases of May 9 riots which erupted following his arrest in a graft case.

He was booked on the charges of abetment in attacks on Lahore Corps Commander House known as Jinnah House, Askari Tower, and Shadman police station on May 9, 2023. His supporters attacked government buildings and Army installations follow-

ing his arrest in an alleged corruption case in May last year.

ATC Lahore Judge Khalid Arshad refused pre-arrest bail to Khan and dismissed his petitions in the three cases, after the prosecution equated the May 9 violence to the United States Capitol Hill attacks by supporters of former US president Donald Trump in 2021. The prosecution said the police required custody of the former premier to complete the investigation. —PTI

THE ASIAN AGE

11 JULY 2024

In Moscow, India drives home a point globally

It may not have been the most propitious time for the trademark warm hug Narendra Modi reserves for contemporary world leaders. The optics of his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin may not have been universally popular given Russia is accused of bombing the largest paediatric hospital in Kyiv, but it did serve to send a clear message to the rest of the world. India will leave no stone unturned in pursuit of its interests as well as in furtherance of a mutually beneficial relationship with Moscow, regardless of the Western view of this bonhomie.

Amidst the tumultuous geopolitics of the time when wars are being fought in Europe and West Asia, India is in a unique position. Its importance as a counterbalancing power to China's increasingly belligerent ways leading to global polarisation is undiminished as reflected in strong strategic ties with the US. At the same time, it reiterates its special friendship with Moscow, right from the days of the Cold War, and which has only strengthened with India being the second biggest importer of Russian crude, some of which gets refined before being sent to Europe.

There were clues to this strong renewal of ties with a convivial personal meeting in Mr Putin's residence as well as talks at the Kremlin to be seen

even in the welcome as Russia sent a higher ranked official to welcome Mr Modi at the airport. And the pointers were particularly strong in the outcome of the official talks which were more about trade than India's defence requirements. To bump bilateral trade up to \$100 billion by 2030 is envisaged while India also sought to seal energy security in its ability to keep buying Ural crude.

The personal bonding also led to Prime Minister Modi eliciting a Putin guarantee that Indians, lured to join the Russian Army but forced to fight in Ukraine, will be sent back home. When the repatriation is done, it will again signify that India's interests have prevailed, which just goes to show that India's diplomacy is in a win-win zone abroad, notwithstanding the changed political situation at home with a coalition NDA government in place and the PM's ruling party not in the same strong position as in the last 10 years.

Such is India's place in the world today that Mr Modi could also convey the West's discomfiture with the war in Ukraine even if the message to Mr Putin was couched in generalities and pieties, but with the point well made that the death of children is a tragedy the world can do without. The criminality of war is never more stressed than in the bombing of hospitals. What more could India have, even with its special position with Moscow, than to have the ear of Mr Putin concerning dialogue being the better way to settle the Ukraine issue.

The glitches in a skewed balance of payments may also be better addressed going forward if Russian investments come into defence production in India. It is significant that the countries have agreed to develop a bilateral settlement system using national currencies and introduction of digital financial instruments in mutual settlements. This may ease problems for both sides as Russia must skirt the global settlement system because of US sanctions and India needs to promote its rupee for trading as the UAE dirham is mostly used for oil purchases. So good were the vibes seen in the Modi-Putin meetings that the 2024 summit could well be a harbinger of bigger and better things to come in spheres of mutual benefit.

The glitches in a skewed balance of payments may also be better addressed going forward if Russian investments come into defence production in India. It is significant that the countries have agreed to develop a bilateral settlement system using national currencies and introduction of digital financial instruments in mutual settlements. This may ease problems for both sides as Russia must skirt the global settlement system because of US sanctions and India needs to promote its rupee for trading as the UAE dirham is mostly used for oil purchases. So good were the vibes seen in the Modi-Putin meetings that the 2024 summit could well be a harbinger of bigger and better things to come in spheres of mutual benefit.

SC: Can't invade privacy for bail

Back-to-back judgments by the Supreme Court asserting that bail cannot be denied to one accused of a crime pre-emptively under regular circumstances and that bail conditions should not infringe upon a person's liberty cannot end up offering justice only to the individuals concerned but need to be made part of jurisprudence.

The latest in the series of these is the apex court's order that set aside a bail condition that the defendant should allow police access to technological tools so that they can continuously monitor his movements. The court insisted that there cannot be a condition defeating the very objective of the bail. Curiously, it was introduced by a high court.

This apex court order follows an earlier one in which it was said that the prosecution should not oppose bail if it cannot guarantee a speedy trial irrespective of the nature of the charges against the accused.

The Supreme Court has consistently taken a stand that goes in line with Article 21 of the Constitution which mandates that no person shall be deprived of their life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. Unfortunately, the executive has found ways to deny this right to the citizen by, among other tricks, making the process itself the punishment, but also by making the citizen pay for the inefficacies of the system, often with their life. The judiciary, especially at the lower level, plays ball, and the result is that lakhs spend years in jail with no charge proven against them.

This must change. The legislatures and the judiciary must wake up to Article 21 and make necessary amends in the law so that only those who are convicted of a crime or whose bail would prove to be an impediment to a fair trial are kept inside jails. If the system has loopholes, it must plug them itself rather than impose their costs on the people.

THE ASIAN AGE

**KAUSHIK MITTER**  
Editor

**K. SUBHAKAR**  
Printer & Publisher

THE ASIAN AGE office is located at:  
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for:  
Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.

London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.

RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



Changes afoot as NSA Doval team expands with key posts

The National Security Council Secretariat has undergone several notable changes recently, while also maintaining some continuity. Previously secretary (west) in the external affairs ministry, Pavan Kapoor has been appointed deputy national security adviser (NSA). This move is part of a series of appointments that include Rajinder Khanna, who has been promoted from deputy NSA to the newly established role of additional NSA. Mr Khanna, a former chief of India's external intelligence agency, Research & Analysis Wing (R&AW), is stepping into a pivotal role that didn't exist before.

Another key appointment is T.V. Ravichandran, an IPS officer currently serving as special director in the Intelligence Bureau. He replaces Mr Khanna as deputy NSA. Mr Ravichandran's initial tenure is set to last until his retirement on August 31, 2024, after which he may continue on a contractual basis. This reshuffle follows the recent appointment of Vikram Misri as the next foreign secretary, effective from July 15.

These changes mean that under NSA Ajit Doval, who is now in his third term, there will be one additional NSA and three deputy NSAs. The appointments committee of the Cabinet has played a crucial role in arranging these appointments, ensuring a blend of fresh perspectives and experienced leadership within the NSCS. The strategic nature of these appointments might hint at potential future shifts within the NSA office itself. Delhi is currently abuzz

with rumours of a major reshuffle of key secretaries and other significant positions, possibly in September. While these moves appear subtle, they could signal broader changes within India's national security framework.

**WB GUV TUSSELS WITH CHIEF SECY, COPS**  
West Bengal governor C.V. Ananda Bose has stirred up quite the controversy by writing to Union home minister Amit Shah, urging strict action against West Bengal's chief secretary Mr B.P. Gopalika and two senior police officers, Kolkata police commissioner Vineet Kumar Goyal and deputy police commissioner (central) Indira Mukherjee. These letters, sent last month, accuse them of serious misconduct, claiming they have blatantly violated All India Services conduct rules and acted as "willing accomplices in misdeeds of the ruling dispensation".

Sources have informed DKB that the Union home ministry has initiated disciplinary action against Mr Goyal and Mr Mukherjee for allegedly maligning the office of the state governor by "promoting and spreading canard".

Mr Ananda Bose's detailed notes have created quite a stir in the babu corridors of North Block. Reportedly, in his letters, Mr Ananda Bose's outlined how the officers, particularly Mr Gopalika, have openly disregarded the Constitution and conduct rules. He warned that failure to take action could further deteriorate the integrity of the services and harm national interests. The governor

accused Mr Gopalika of aiding and abetting corruption and highlighted issues like job recruitment scandals and alleged lawlessness in the state.

Mr Ananda Bose also added allegations against Mr Goyal and Mr Mukherjee, linking them to an investigation into sexual misconduct allegations against him. These accusations seem to be part of a broader effort by Mr Ananda Bose to clear his name, as he has previously dismissed the sexual harassment claims as a "sinister plot".

Interestingly, Mr Ananda Bose's letters come amidst speculation about his potential removal from his post in Bengal. Factors such as dissent among state BJP leaders and the common practice of reshuffling Raj Bhavan after a new regime takes office in Delhi fuel these rumours. Despite this, sources indicate that the bureaucratic follow-up on Mr Ananda Bose's letters has already begun, making his tenure's continuity less critical.

Mr Ananda Bose's time as governor, which began on November 22, 2022, has been anything but smooth. Initially welcomed warmly by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, their relationship quickly soured due to his perceived alignment with the BJP. Mr Ananda Bose has faced numerous clashes with the Trinamul Congress, which has accused him of being a Central government puppet, especially after the sexual harassment allegations surfaced.

The drama continues to unfold, as it is expected that Ms Banerjee will retaliate strongly. Watch this space for updates.

GUJ HC TRASHES CADRE TRANSFER PLEA

The Gujarat high court has just thrown out the petition of Hitesh Kumar Makwana (IAS: 1995: TN), who was seeking a transfer from Tamil Nadu to his home state of Gujarat. The court pointed out that such a change at the tail end of his career would cause a domino effect on other appointments within the cadre.

Mr Makwana has been battling this issue legally since 1996, almost right after his cadre was assigned. He argued that based on the 2:1 ratio for cadre allotment favouring outsiders and insiders, he should have been placed in Gujarat as an insider. After being denied by the Centre, he took his case to the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) and then escalated it to the high court. However, the Centre stood firm, stating that Mr Makwana had no inherent right to be placed in his home state's cadre. They emphasised that cadre allocation is an administrative matter and can only be subject to judicial review in clear cases of discrimination.

So, after years of legal wrangling, the court's decision brings this long-standing fight to a close. It's a reminder that cadre allocations, while seemingly bureaucratic, have broader implications and are not easily overturned.

Love them, hate them ignore them at national peril, is the babu guarantee and Dilip's belief. Share significant babu escapades dilipcherian@hotmail.com.

Subhani



A play of shadows amid Modi's reset in Moscow



K.C. Singh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Russia, his first state visit after beginning his third term, was for the 22nd Annual Summit between the two nations. He went to Italy on June 13 only as a special invitee to the G-7 summit. On the other hand, President Vladimir Putin went on his first visit abroad, after the Ukraine war's commencement in February 2022, to China. He followed up with visits to the Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Vietnam.

This captures the Indian dilemma of being stuck between a China-Russia strategic axis on the one hand and its strong opponents consisting of the United States and its allies on the other. The unresolved war situation in Ukraine complicates matters. India has traditionally depended on Russia for defence equipment and spare parts. This has diminished in recent times as India shifted to US weaponry and platforms. In his public remarks, Prime Minister Modi alliteratively underscored the Russian role in providing food, fuel and fertilisers. President Vladimir Putin in turn accompanied Mr Modi for a visit to the Atom Pavilion at the VDNKh exhibition, showcasing the latest developments in science and technology, especially cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

India has benefited greatly from purchasing discounted Russian oil over the last two years. Prime Minister Modi noted its benefits for the Indian consumers and economy. He added that this had also indirectly aided global stability, implying that had the Indian demand not been met by Russian oil, purchases by India globally could have spiked oil prices. The 81-paragraph joint statement covers the entire gamut of issues discussed during the visit or in play bilaterally. But Mr Modi's visit on July 8-9 appeared strangely timed, as it immediately preceded the 75th anniversary summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in Washington DC on July 9-11. A subject that preoccupies that group is the Ukraine war, the second phase of which Russia started in February 2022.

Consequently, it elicited two immediate comments. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy found the Modi-Putin hug as a "huge disappointment" and a "devastating blow to peace efforts". The US state department spokesman said that they made clear "our concerns" and expected Mr Modi to raise in his discussions with President Putin the primacy of the UN Charter and the sanctity of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The joint statement dated July 9 addresses these two points subtly. It refers to the conflict "around Ukraine", clearly dodging any reference to Russia's attack and deep intrusion into Ukraine's four eastern provinces plus Crimea. The principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity were sacrificed to satisfy Russia. The statement also seeks an end to conflict "through dialogue and diplomacy", while respecting international law and the UN Charter. This conforms to the American stand. In T.S. Eliot's words: "Between the idea/ And the reality/ Between the motion/ And the act/ Falls the Shadow."

The play of shadows runs through the joint statement. It spans all areas of existing, future and even aspirational domains. Take trade with Russia. It is correctly described as having doubled last year, well ahead of target year 2025. But of the \$65 billion two-way trade, India's exports are a measly \$4 billion. The bulk of that

**The other Quad members need to understand that a Russia under sanctions goes deeper into the Chinese embrace. Prime Minister Modi's hug then was to pull it back.**

overall figure is increased Indian import of Russian petroleum products.

To set this imbalance right would take more than proposed committees and mechanisms to explore solutions. China has already embedded itself in the Russian market, and considering the range of its manufactured goods, India faces an uphill climb. For instance, Chinese electric vehicles now dominate automobile imports by Russia, neutralising US sanctions. The new target for Indo-Russian trade is \$100 billion by 2030.

The rest of the paras are devoted to covering the "Enduring and Expanding Partnership" between India and Russia. Deepening of the "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership" is also desired while realising a challenging geopolitical context.

An interesting proposal is for a Free Trade Agreement covering goods and services between India and Russia sponsored EuroAsian Economic Union (EEU). That group woos former the Soviet republics to join a Russia-led economic partnership. Out of the five Central Asian republics, only Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are members. Uzbekistan is an observer. But the move balances or limits China's Belt and Road projects in what Russia considers as its domain. However, its limits are demonstrated by Kazakhstan not backing Russian attack on Ukraine.

Energy partnership gets extensive coverage, referred to as a "pillar" of the bilateral engagement. New, long-term agreements are envisaged, covering both fossil fuels like petroleum and coal as well as civil nuclear cooperation. The completion of the Kudankulam

units and the selection of another site are mentioned.

Cooperation in the peaceful uses of space and capacity-building as well as Indian successes are mentioned. Military cooperation is also designated as another "pillar". However, the focus is on joint research and development under the Indian rubric of "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" or Make-in-India. Also covered are the fields of education, science and technology as well as joint research. Russia has lagged in defence research, as shown by its dependence on Iran for drones and on North Korea for ammunition and artillery.

For India, the West and especially the United States will remain the new and more desirable sources of defence equipment technology. But there is no harm in exploring what Russia has to offer in a competitive world.

Plurilateral groupings like Brics and the SCO are mentioned as platforms for advancing the issues affecting the Global South. But India faces the difficulty that as these groups are expanded, they lose focus on their core agendas. They also are beginning to be perceived as a mechanism for countering US-led or Western groupings. This is the problem India eventually had with the Non-Aligned Movement of which it was one of the founders as its discourse got hijacked.

The Australian newspaper in an editorial voiced "cause for concern" as India is a member of the Quad, with Australia, Japan and the United States. Sometimes a "Modi hug" can get misread as something more than a handshake. The ministry of external affairs has work cut out to explain to India's partners in Europe and the United States to not question the reliability of India for sharing technology or playing a "China balancer" role. In fact, they need to understand that a Russia under sanctions goes deeper into the Chinese embrace. Prime Minister Modi's hug was to pull it back.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambksingh.

LETTERS

LAST MAN DEAD

It sounds weird, but there lived a solitary old man in a village called Meenakshipuram in the Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu for years until he died a couple of weeks ago. Kandasamy (83) was the last one left in the village, which had a thin population of 1,300 residents. After experiencing severe water shortages due to corporations siphoning it off, Meenakshipuram saw its population dwindle over the last some years. Kandasamy's life was tied to the dusty fields. He was born here, raised a family within its borders, and was determined to stay in the village until he breathed his last. As Meenakshipuram fades from memory, the village stands as a poignant reminder of the challenges faced by many others in the region. Its desertion underlines the reality of climate change.

R. Sivakumar  
Chennai

GOVT HAS A ROLE

THOSE LOOKING into the tragedy at Hathras at the congregation of a self-styled godman that cost hundreds of ecstatic followers their lives ought to focus on its larger connotation, of blind faith bordering on superstition. The sod over which the Baba strode was openly touted to be the panacea to the devotee's many pains. Narendra Dabholkar paid with his life in his crusade against superstition as he was seen as a threat to the coterie that leverages the inner angst of simple folk. In fact, Maharashtra has since passed an ordinance against superstition. And yet the Baba of Hathras and his tribe continue to be protected by the same entrenched interests.

R. Narayanan  
Navi Mumbai

MONSOON HAVOC

IT IS THE same story year after year, no matter which party is in government. Monsoons cause great destruction and many lives are lost. Parties use this as an excuse to attack other parties. The bitter truth is that all are equally guilty. But why do the people accept this without complaining? Any perceived insult to the gods or the religion they follow would have them out on the streets demanding justice. Unless and until the people wake up and question the government on this sorry state of affairs, governments will be content to let matters slide.

Anthony Henriques  
Mumbai

SHORT TAKES

Surya retains 2nd spot in batter list

**Dubai:** Star batter Suryakumar Yadav stayed put on second position in the latest ICC Men's T20I batting rankings, which also features Rituraj Gaikwad, who made significant progress following his exploits in the ongoing away series against Zimbabwe. Suryakumar is placed second with 821 rating points behind Australia's Travis Head, who has 844 rating points. Phil Salt of England is paced third with 797 points, ahead of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam (755), Mohammad Rizwan (746) and Jos Buttler (716). Gaikwad has gained 13 places to climb to the seventh spot in the rankings on the back of a stellar 77 not out off 47 balls in a comprehensive 100-run win for India in the second T20I against Zimbabwe. With most of India's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024-winning squad rested for the Zimbabwe tour, the five-game series has allowed India's back-up players to showcase their talent, and with the retirement of stalwarts Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja, the upcoming players can make a good case for a regular place in the side. — PTI

Rachin gets NZC central contract

**Auckland:** Young New Zealand all-rounder of Indian origin Rachin Ravindra's success in the past one year, including the ODI World Cup where he scored tons of runs, has earned him his first central contract. The 24-year-old figures in the list of 20 cricketers offered contracts on Wednesday for the 2024-25 season following a breakthrough season where he finished as the fourth leading run-scorer with 578 runs. The ODI success had brought the spotlight on him during the IPL auction where he made his maiden appearance in the lucrative league for Chennai Super Kings this year after being bought for ₹1.8 crore. The top-order batter's rise was rewarded in January when he was named the ICC Emerging Player of the Year for 2023. In March, he became the youngest recipient of the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal. Ravindra, who has his roots in Bengaluru where his grandparents live, said receiving his first central contract was special. — PTI

Pak sacks Razzaq, Riaz as selectors

**Lahore:** The Pakistan Cricket Board has sacked former Test players Wahab Riaz and Abdul Razzaq from its selection committee in the wake of the team's disastrous T20 World Cup campaign last month. Wahab and Razzaq were a part of a committee, which had no chairman and included the national team captain, head coach and a data analyst. "The Pakistan Cricket Board today confirmed that it has notified Abdul Razzaq and Wahab Riaz that their services will no longer be required in the national selection committee setup," read a statement from the PCB. Razzaq was a member of both the men's and women's selection committee, while Wahab was a member of the men's panel. "The PCB will provide further updates on the selection committee's composition in due course," the statement from PCB read. Wahab, who has been a selector since last November also went to the T20 World Cup as senior team manager. — PTI

Para shooters book Oly quotas

**New Delhi:** Indian para shooters Rubina Francis and Swaroop Unhalkar on Wednesday secured quota for Paris Paralympics under bipartite rule, taking the total number of shooters at the Games to 10. The Paralympic Committee of India had applied for two bipartite (wildcard) spots for Rubina (women's 10m air pistol SH1), who has a world ranking of No. 2, and Unhalkar (men's 10m air rifle SH1). Rubina, a bronze medalist in the Hangzhou Asian Games last year in the Women's 10m Air Pistol SH1, and Unhalkar have been consistent performers in international events, prompting PCI to apply for bipartite spot. Subhash Rana, the national para shooting coach, had said they applied for the wildcard after the pair missed out on quota places by a whisker. "Rubina missed winning the quota by a fraction of a point, so we have applied for wildcard for her and Swaroop," Rana had said in May. — PTI

# GILLORIOUS!

## Shubman stars with bat as India take series lead over Zim

**Harare, July 10:** Shubman Gill and Rituraj Gaikwad produced high-quality knocks before the bowlers did their part as India outplayed Zimbabwe by 23 runs in the third T20 here on Wednesday. Gill (66 off 49), Yashasvi Jaiswal (36 off 27) and Gaikwad (49 off 28) propelled India to 182 for four against Zimbabwe after the visitors opted to bat on a fresh pitch. Zimbabwe were never really in the run chase despite an entertaining effort from number four Dion Myers (65 not out 49), ending at 159 for six in their stipulated 20 overs.

Washington Sundar, who is likely to play a bigger role in India's T20 set-up after the retirement of Ravindra Jadeja, struck thrice while Avesh Khan took a couple of wickets.

The fourth T20 of the five-match series will be staged here on Saturday, July 13. After a loss in the series opener, India have restored normal service with back-to-back victories.

After Avesh Khan bounced out opener Wessly Madhevere in the second over, the wickets kept falling for the home team. However, Zimbabwe did well to steady the ship after losing their first five wickets for 39 runs. The 77-run stand off 57 balls between Myers and Clive Madande (37 off 26) put much needed life into the game.

Earlier, Gill-led India made some interesting selection calls. They duly inducted World Cup winners Jaiswal, Sanju Samson (12 not out off 7) and Shivam Dube into the playing eleven, leaving out the likes of Riyan Parag in the middle order.

Sanju came to bat at number five with four specialist openers Jaiswal, Gill, Abhishek Sharma (10 off 9) and Gaikwad occupying the top four positions respectively.

Jaiswal, who did not get a game in India's triumphant campaign in the T20 World Cup, was happy to be back in the middle and went for his shots from the get go.

The southpaw collected couple of fours and a six over deep-midwicket in the opening over bowled by off-spinner Brian Bennett to set the tone.

Gill began with a gorging on drive off left-arm pacer Richard Ngarava before pulling him for a six over fine-leg. Zimbabwe were poor in the field to say the least. — PTI



India captain Shubman Gill plays a shot against Zimbabwe during their third T20 match at the Harare Sports Club in Harare on Wednesday. India won by 23 runs. — AP

## New coach Gambhir is yet to finalise pay deal

**New Delhi, July 10:** The financial nitty-gritties of Gautam Gambhir's appointment as India's head coach are yet to be worked out but that's the "last of his concerns" right now as he is focussed on getting a support staff of choice to prepare for the enormous challenges that await him during the three-year stint.

On Tuesday, BCCI secretary Jay Shah officially announced Gambhir's appointment, which was on cards for a long time. However, it is learnt that his salary is yet to be finalised although it is expected to be in the same bracket as that of his predecessors Rahul Dravid and Ravi Shastri. "For Gautam, it was

important that he took charge and salary and other stuff can be worked out as it's not going anywhere. It is similar to the case of Ravi Shastri in 2014 when he was first made Director of Cricket over head coach Duncan Fletcher," a BCCI source said.

"The day Ravi joined, he didn't even have a contract and things worked out. In case of Gautam also, some finer details are being worked out. The salary will be in the same range of Rahul Dravid," he added.

It is understood that Gambhir will be given his own team to work with, who will also closely coordinate with the NCA (National Cricket Academy) coaches, who

look after the pathways teams (India A and U-19) as well as the targeted players.

"I look forward to working closely with the BCCI, Head of Cricket — Mr V. V. S. Laxman, the support staff, and, most importantly, the players, as we work towards achieving success in the upcoming tournaments," Gambhir had said.

Laxman is currently in Zimbabwe with the young Twenty20 team, but it is expected that once he is back, the NCA head, along with the new head coach and chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar, the two captains Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya will have a discussion on the road ahead. — PTI

### SCOREBOARD

**India:** Yashasvi Jaiswal c Bennett b Raza 36, Shubman Gill c Raza b Muzarabani 66, Abhishek Sharma c Marumani b Raza 10, Rituraj Gaikwad c Madhevere b Muzarabani 49, Sanju Samson (not out) 12, Rinku Singh (not out) 1. Extras (b-4, lb-1, nb-1, w-2) 8. Total (For 4 wickets, 20 overs) 182.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-67, 2-81, 3-153, 4-177.

**Bowling:** Brian Bennett 1-0-15-0, Richard Ngarava 4-0-39-0, Tendai Chatara 3-0-30-0, Blessing Muzarabani 4-0-25-2, Sikandar Raza 4-0-24-2, Wellington Masakadza 3-0-25-0, Wessly Madhevere 1-0-19-0.

**Zimbabwe:** Wessly Madhevere c Abhishek b Avesh 1, Tadiwanashe Marumani c Dube b Ahmed 13, Brian Bennett c Bishnoi b Avesh 4, Dion Myers (not out) 65, Sikandar Raza c Rinku b Sundar 15, Jonathan Campbell c sub (Parag) b Sundar 11, Clive Madande c Rinku b Sundar 37, Wellington Masakadza (not out) 18. Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-2) 5. Total (for 6 wickets, in 20 overs) 159.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-9, 2-19, 3-19, 4-47, 5-39, 6-116.

**Bowling:** Khaleel Ahmed 4-0-15-1, Avesh Khan 4-0-39-2, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-37-0, Washington Sundar 4-0-15-3, Abhishek Sharma 2-0-23-0, Shivam Dube 2-0-27-0.

## DRAVID REFUSES TO TAKE BONUS AFTER WC WIN

**New Delhi, July 10:** Former India head coach Rahul Dravid has refused to take the additional bonus amount of ₹2.5 crore offered to him by the BCCI following the recent T20 World Cup triumph in the Americas.

Dravid was offered the bonus amount following the national team's success but he was happy to settle for the due amount — ₹2.5 crore — similar to other coaching staff.

The BCCI wanted to repay Dravid for guiding India to the trophy in Barbados by hiking his reward to ₹5 crore, which is at par with the players.

It was more of a goodwill gesture than any official call as Dravid's tenure as India coach had originally ended after last year's 50-over World Cup at home.

However, skipper Rohit Sharma and the governing body were successful in convincing Dravid to stay till the T20 World Cup as they then had felt that time was too short for a new coach to take up the high-pressure job. — PTI

### WIMBLEDON | TENNIS

## Djoker gets free pass to Last Four

**London, July 10:** Novak Djokovic progressed to a record-equaling 13th Wimbledon semifinal without hitting a ball on Wednesday after Alex de Minaur pulled out injured as former champion Elena Rybakina eased through.

Australian ninth seed De Minaur, 25, announced shortly after midday at the All England Club that he was "devastated to pull out due to a hip injury".

It means Djokovic has now equalled Roger Federer's men's record of 13 semi-final appearances at Wimbledon as he closes on the Swiss great's mark of eight singles titles.

The 37-year-old Serbian is also through to a record-extending 49th men's Grand Slam semifinal.

De Minaur, who beat Djokovic at the United Cup in January, said: "It's no secret that this would have been the biggest match of my career but it's a unique injury."

"I woke up this morning wanting to feel some sort of miracle, but there was a high risk of making the injury worse if I stepped on court."

"One stretch, one slide could take this from a three to six weeks' injury to four months out."

Djokovic will play US 13th seed Taylor Fritz or Italian 25th seed Lorenzo Musetti for a place in Sunday's showpiece match.

The world number two — who had knee surgery last month — does not have a title to his name this year and is still seeking a first victory against a fellow top-10 player. But a historic 25th Grand Slam triumph is

### THE RESULTS

■ **Men's quarterfinals:** Novak Djokovic (SRB x2) bt Alex De Minaur (AUS x9) - walkover.

■ **Women's quarterfinals:** Elena Rybakina (KAZ x4) bt Elina Svitolina (UKR x21) 6-3, 6-2; Barbora Krejickova (CZE x31) bt Jelena Ostapenko (LAT x13) 6-4, 7-6 (7/4).

coming into sharp focus for Djokovic, who demolished Holger Rune in straight sets in the fourth round.

### RUTHLESS RYBAKINA

In early action on Wednesday, 2022 champion Rybakina barely broke sweat in swatting aside last year's semi-finalist Elina Svitolina 6-3, 6-2 in 61 minutes.

She will face Barbora Krejickova for a place in Saturday's final after the Czech 31st seed came out on top against Jelena Ostapenko in a battle of former French Open champions.

Rybakina is now 19-2 in main-draw matches at Wimbledon — only retired champions Ann Jones and Steffi Graf have better winning percentages at the tournament.

Russian-born Rybakina broke the Ukrainian 21st seed four times in the match on Centre Court.

The fourth seed was broken in the first game in front of the watching Queen Camilla but hit back straight away and barely put a foot wrong after that. The 25-year-old, who crunched 28 winners to Svitolina's eight, said she had "amazing memories" from 2022 but does not like the favourite tag. — AFP



Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic celebrates after defeating Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia in their quarterfinal match at the Wimbledon tennis championships in London on Wednesday. — AP

### COPA | AMERICA

## Argentina see off Canada, in final

**East Rutherford (United States), July 10:** Lionel Messi was on target as world champions Argentina turned on the style to beat Canada 2-0 on Tuesday and reach the Copa America final where they will look for a third straight major title.

The defending Copa champions will face the winners of Wednesday's semifinal between Uruguay and Colombia in what will be a highly anticipated final in Miami on Sunday.

The 15-times Copa champions produced their best display of the tournament in front of a capacity crowd at the 82,500 MetLife Stadium and as in their 2022 World Cup triumph they look to be peaking at the perfect moment.

"The truth is that it's crazy what this group has done, what the Argentina national team has been doing," Messi told TyC Sports after his first goal

of the tournament. "It's not easy for us to be in a final again, for us to compete again to be champions. I'm living it like I lived it in the last Copa America, in the last World Cup... These are the last battles and I'm enjoying them to the maximum," said the 37-year-old.

Canada, who surprised many by reaching the last four in their first Copa America appearance, can take great credit for their run in the tournament but Messi and company were simply a step too far.

"I think the tournament caught up with us a little bit," said Canada's coach Marsch, who said he noticed that his players looked tired midway through the first half.

"Eventually the physicality and fatigue can catch up with you and that was a big part of what happened with us tonight," he added. — AFP

## Yamal makes history as Spain sink France

**Munich (Germany), July 10:** Lamine Yamal, 16, became the tournament's youngest ever goalscorer as Spain came back to beat France 2-1 in Munich on Tuesday and reach the Euro 2024 final.

Trailing after Randal Kolo Muani headed in a Kylian Mbappe cross in the ninth minute, Spain turned the match around in a four-minute period, scoring twice against a side who had only conceded once in five previous games in this tournament.

Yamal, who turns 17 a day before Sunday's final against either the Netherlands or England, equalised with a superb strike from outside the box, curling a long-range effort into the top corner and past the fingertips of an airborne Mike Maignan.

Spain took the lead on 25 minutes, Dani Olmo expertly gathering a loose ball and firing a low shot into the net with the aid of a deflection off Jules Kounde.

"I got the ball, didn't think about it for too long and just shot," Yamal said of his brilliant strike. "I'm



Spain's Lamine Yamal (centre) scores against France during their semifinal match at the Euro 2024 tournament in Munich, Germany, on Tuesday. Spain won 2-1. — AP

just enjoying myself and I'm proud to be in the final."

Three-time champions Spain became the first team to win six games at a Euros and are one game away from a record-breaking fourth crown. This weekend in Berlin will be Spain's first

appearance in a major tournament final since a much-vaunted side thrashed Italy 4-0 in the Euro 2012 showpiece.

Masters of midfield game management, Spain shut up shop after taking the lead, frequently holding possession rather than attacking on the counter,

controlling the match and claiming the win.

"They're a very good team, we knew that, they proved it tonight even if we were able to open the scoring," France coach Didier Deschamps.

"They created difficulties for us as they controlled the game better

than us, even if we kept going until the end."

Finalists in three of the past four major tournaments, questions will be asked of how France failed to click up front despite boasting enviable attacking riches.

Mbappe again struggled to make a serious impact despite playing without the mask he had been wearing since breaking his nose in France's opening game against Austria.

The Real Madrid-bound striker's only goal in nine career appearances at the Euros remains the penalty he netted in the 1-1 group-stage draw with Poland last month.

France had scored just three goals in Germany heading into the match, none of which were scored by a French player from open play and Deschamps reacted, benching forward Antoine Griezmann for Ousmane Dembele.

Yamal created the first chance of the match four minutes in, lofting a curling cross to an unmarked Fabian Ruiz, who headed over from point-blank range. — AFP

