



Hindustan Times

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Bullet grazes Trump's ear in sniper attack at election rally

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WASHINGTON: Donald Trump, the former American president and the frontrunner in the upcoming US presidential election, survived an assassination attempt at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday evening eastern time - an incident set to have a massive impact in the race for the White House.

The Secret Service killed the shooter, later identified as Thomas Matthew Crooks, a 20-year-old Pennsylvania local. While US law enforcement did not offer any details on the motivation behind the shooting till the time of going to print, Crooks was a registered Republican and had also made a donation to a progressive political group in January 2021. He used an AR-15-type semi-automatic rifle that his father had reportedly purchased six months ago and also had explosives in his car.

One other participant at the rally, Corey Comperatore, a fire-fighter, died, and two others were critically injured in the multiple shots that Crooks fired, before Secret Service snipers shot him back, killing him instantly atop a roof of a building in clear line of sight.

The incident, now being investigated as "attempted assassination", with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) taking the lead, left the country in shock. President Joe Biden condemned the attack as "sick" and said there was no space for political violence.

continued on →11



Former president Donald Trump defiantly raises his fist as he is surrounded by US Secret Service agents after being shot during a Republican campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania on Saturday. AP

WHO WAS THE SHOOTER?

20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks. He graduated from Bethel Park High School in 2022 and was among several students given an award for math and science

WHAT WAS HIS MOTIVE?

Not yet determined. Records show Crooks was registered as a Republican voter in Pennsylvania, but federal campaign finance reports also showed he made a small donation to a progressive political action committee when he was 17 on the day President Joe Biden was sworn in

WHAT WEAPON DID HE USE?

AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle. Explosive materials were also found in his car parked near the rally venue



HOW WILL THE INCIDENT IMPACT U.S. POLITICS AND THE 2024 RACE?

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WASHINGTON: The image of Donald Trump raising his fist in the air, giving a determined look to the crowd and calling on them to "fight, fight, fight", with blood dripping from his ear to his face, will define the 2024 American presidential elections. The image allows Trump to position himself as both the hero and the victim. He now has the clear political momentum to return to the White House for a rare, non-consecutive second term. →P2

MODI, WORLD LEADERS EXPRESS SHOCK OVER ASSASSINATION BID

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: From Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Chinese President Xi Jinping, from French President Emmanuel Macron to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, world leaders from across the ideological divide condemned the assassination attempt on former US President Donald Trump during a rally in Pennsylvania. →P8, 12

1 CRPF soldier killed, 3 hurt in Manipur battle

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IMPHAL: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan was killed and another injured, along with two Manipur Police commandos, in an ambush by suspected militants in the Jiribam district of strife-torn Manipur on Sunday, officers aware of the matter said.

According to Jiribam's additional superintendent of police, Thomas Thokchom, a joint team of CRPF and state police came under fire in the area adjoining the Mongbung and Sejang villages during a routine patrol. CRPF jawan Ajay Kumar Jha, a resident of Bihar, was wounded during the attack and rushed to the Jiribam district hospital, he added.

"He suffered bullet injuries to the head and was declared 'dead

on arrival' at the hospital," the officer said, adding that another CRPF jawan and two state police commandos were injured in the ambush. They were undergoing treatment at the district hospital, where their condition was stable.

In a post on X, CRPF commended 43-year-old Jha for his service and extended condolences to his family.

"On 14 July 2024, during an ambush by militants on a joint party of 20 Battalion CRPF and State Police at Jiribam, Manipur, brave Constable Driver Ajay Kumar Jha sacrificed his life in the line of duty. CRPF salutes our brave soldier's indomitable courage, valour and devotion to the motherland. We always stand with the family of our brave man," it said.

Located around 220km from

continued on →11



Narendra Modi

MODI'S FOLLOWER COUNT ON 'X' HITS 100 MILLION MARK

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NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's following on the social-media platform 'X' crossed the 100-million mark on Sunday, registering a growth of 30 million followers in last three years.

Modi is the most followed head of government on the social media platform globally, ahead of world leaders such as US president Joe Biden (38.1 million followers), and Turkey's president Recep Tayyip Erdogan (21.5 million followers).

"A hundred million on @X! Happy to be on this vibrant medium and cherish the discussion, debate, insights, people's

continued on →11

Parts of SW Delhi parched for 4th day as water woes linger

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NEW DELHI: Areas in southwest Delhi, including Dwarka, remained parched for the fourth consecutive day on Sunday after a breach in Munak canal hit supply to Dwarka water treatment plant.

Delhi Jal Board officials assured on Sunday that supply

will normalise by Monday morning. One DJB official said that the underground reservoirs and pipeline network in Dwarka was completely out of water.

The Munak canal, a critical channel that brings water from the Yamuna to Delhi, was breached on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, disrupting the water supply to four of the nine water treat-

ment plants (WTPs) in the Capital and flooding large parts of Bawana.

With both Haiderpur and Dwarka water plants operating below capacity, the overall supply was short by 110 Mgd on Sunday, compared to 1,000 Mgd during normal days, the DJB official said.

The canal embankment was repaired by Friday night. →P3

Jagannath temple's 'Ratna Bhandar' opened for audit

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BHUBANESWAR: The inner chamber of the treasury of the 12th-century Jagannath temple in Puri was reopened on Sunday for an audit of valuables after 46 years, officials aware of the matter said, underscoring a move that has been shrouded both in political jostling and superstition.

The Ratna Bhandar, situated next to the sanctum sanctorum that houses the primary idols and the assembly hall, has long been considered the custodian of the temple's riches. In the last audit of the Bhandar held in 1978, the Odisha government said the inventory contained



Devotees during the opening of 'Ratna Bhandar' in Puri. PTI

over 149.6kg of gold ornaments fitted with precious stones, 258.3kg of silver utensils, and other items. On Sunday, its door was opened in the presence of a 12-member team.

"...The team broke the three locks of the inner chamber as we could not open it using the keys that were given to us," Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Arabinda Padhee said. →P7

MAN ACCUSED IN ARMSTRONG MURDER CASE KILLED BY POLICE

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CHENNAI: The Chennai police on Sunday gunned down a key accused in the murder of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Tamil Nadu unit chief K Armstrong after he allegedly attacked a policeman and attempted to flee custody, police said. Police said the incident took place when K Thiruvengadam (33), the accused in the Armstrong murder case, was taken to his residence in Manali area on Sunday to seize the weapons used in the murder of the BSP leader. →P8

PUNE POLICE SEIZE AUDI USED BY IAS TRAINEE PUJA KHEDKAR

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PUNE: Police in Pune on Sunday confiscated the Audi that was used by Indian Administrative Service (IAS) trainee Puja Khedkar by illegally installing a red beacon light and VIP number plate along with a "Maharashtra government" sticker, amid an ongoing investigation into a series of complaints against her conduct, officials aware of the matter said. →P8

ARMY GUNS DOWN 3 TERRORISTS, FOILS INFILTRATION BID

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SRINAGAR: Three terrorists were killed near the Line of Control in Kupwara district of north Kashmir, the Army said on Sunday as it foiled an infiltration bid in the sensitive area. "Three terrorists have been eliminated in the ongoing anti-infiltration operation on the LoC," the Chinara Corps said. →P8

Man admitted to GTB hospital killed in ward

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NEW DELHI: A 32-year-old man, who was undergoing treatment at the Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital in east Delhi, was shot dead by inside the hospital ward, on Sunday evening, police said.

The accused fired multiple shots at the victim and fled from the hospital, officers said. The deceased was identified as Mohd Riyazuddin, a resident of Khajuri Khas in north-east Delhi. He was killed in front of his sister and a medical attendant inside ward number 24 of the hospital, the officers added. Police are yet to identify the accused and ascertain the motive behind the murder. →P3

{ NEW GUARD } GENERATIONAL SHIFT IN TENNIS

Alcaraz has the measure of Djokovic in another final at Wimbledon to seal 4th Grand Slam title



Alcaraz receives the trophy from Kate Middleton on Sunday. AP

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MUMBAI: Once is a wonder. Twice is a statement. By now we know Carlos Alcaraz is a wonder, but this was indeed a statement.

Of defending his crown by defeating the same great in the final. Of silencing a 24-time Grand Slam champion into submission. Of rapidly growing in stature by capturing four Slams at 21, something even the unparalleled Big Three of men's tennis hadn't.

Alcaraz beat Djokovic 6-2, 6-2, 7-6(4) on Sunday in a final where so omnipresent was his all-round class that it left the seven-time champion astonishingly clueless. "He was definitely very hot today," Djokovic chuckled on court.

The sizzling Spaniard has been hot over the last couple of months, adding a second grass-court major to his clay-court first in Paris. He is only the sixth man to do the French Open-Wimbledon double in the same season and the first since Djokovic in 2021. →P14

The banker to every Indian

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{ MY INDIA } PERSONAL LAWS

AIMPLB to challenge maintenance ruling

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Sunday decided to challenge the recent Supreme Court ruling mandating the payment of maintenance to Muslim divorcee women beyond iddat (period of waiting after divorce). The board will also contest implementation of the uniform civil code (UCC) in Uttarakhand. These decisions were taken during a meeting of the board on Sunday. "Our legal committee reviewed the order and decided to go ahead with the defence of Muslim personal laws," said AIMPLB member Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali. The UCC in Uttarakhand was also a direct violation of personal laws, the board said. "No government has the power to challenge Muslim personal laws," Mahali said.

→P9

{ MY INDIA } CONGRESS TEAM

Gogoi reappointed deputy leader in LS

The Congress has reappointed Gaurav Gogoi as its deputy leader in the Lok Sabha while retaining Kodikunni Suresh, serving his eighth term in the Lower House, as its chief whip. They will be assisting Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi in floor coordination in the Lower House. The party has also renominated Manickam Tagore as a whip, it brought its Kishanganj MP Md Jawaid as another whip, according to an announcement by Congress general secretary (administration) KC Venugopal on Sunday. "Guided by LOP Shri @RahulGandhi ji, the Congress and INDIA parties will energetically champion the people's causes in the Lok Sabha," Venugopal said on X.

→P7

{ WORLD } SHOOTING IN GERMANY

Man kills his mother, son; found dead in German town

Two people were shot dead in southwestern Germany on Sunday, police said, adding that the suspected gunman was also found dead in what appeared to be a domestic incident. The attacker was reportedly a hunter, according to Bild newspaper and broadcaster SWR. Police in the Reutlingen region said they received several reports of gunshots in the town of Albstadt-Lautlingen shortly after 12:30 pm (10:30 GMT). Officers arrived at the scene to find three people dead "including the suspected perpetrator", Reutlingen police wrote on X. Two others were injured, they said, in what appeared to be a family tragedy. Regional broadcaster SWR, citing security sources, said the gunman was a 63-year-old man who killed his mother and son and injured his wife and daughter.

AP

{ MY DELHI } FUGITIVE GANGSTER

Police launch crack down on Bhau gang

The Delhi Police has launched a crack down on the syndicate led by fugitive gangster Himanshu Bhau, officers aware of the matter said, with the force arresting at least three members of the gang under provisions of the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), and killing four others in encounters over the past two months. Police suspect Bhau, originally from Ritoli in Haryana, is currently hiding in the US. He is said to keep in touch with his underlings through social media and instant messaging services such as WhatsApp. The crackdown against the gangster comes amid two shocking incidents including the murder of a man at an eatery in Rajouri Garden.

→P6

{ WORLD } NEPAL APPOINTS NEW PM

Oli new Nepal PM, swearing-in today

K.P. Sharma Oli, the leader of Nepal's largest communist party, was appointed Nepal's Prime Minister for a fourth term on Sunday to lead a new coalition government. Oli's swearing-in ceremony is scheduled to take place at 11 am on Monday at Shital Niwas, the main building of Rashtrapati Bhawan. President Ram Chandra Paudel appointed Oli, Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), as the new Prime Minister, according to a notice issued by the President's Office. Oli now needs to secure a vote of confidence from Parliament within 30 days of appointment according to the constitutional mandate. He will need a minimum of 138 votes in the 275-seat House of Representatives (HoR).

PTI

Questions galore as Secret Service gets basics wrongAgencies
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WASHINGTON: The US Secret Service is investigating how a gunman armed with an AR-style rifle was able to get close enough to shoot and injure former President Donald Trump at a rally Saturday in Pennsylvania, a monumental failure of one of the agency's core duties.

The gunman, who was killed by Secret Service personnel, fired multiple shots at the stage from an "elevated position outside of the rally venue", the agency said.

An Associated Press analysis of more than a dozen videos and photos taken at the Trump rally, as well as satellite imagery of the site, shows the shooter was able to get astonishingly close to the stage where the former president was speaking. A video posted to social media and geolocated by AP shows the body of a man wearing gray camouflage lying motionless on the roof of a manufacturing plant just north of the Butler Farm Show grounds, where Trump's rally was held.

The roof was less than 150 metres from where Trump was speaking, a distance from which a decent marksman could reasonably hit a human-sized target. For reference, 150 metres is a distance at which US Army recruits must hit a scaled human-sized silhouette to qualify with the M16 assault rifle in basic training. The AR-15, like the shooter at the Trump rally had, is the semi-automatic civilian version of the military M16.

FBI early Sunday identified the shooter as Thomas Matthew Crooks, 20, of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania.

Two witnesses at the rally, claimed to have seen the shooter, with one recalling how the gunman moved from roof to roof, apparently shooting for a perfect perch to shoot at the former US president.

According to an attendee named Ben Macer, he was up along the fence line and "saw the guy move from roof to roof", CBS News reported.

"When I turned around to go back to where I was, it was when the gunshots started, and then it was just chaos, and we all came running away, and that was that," he said.

Butler resident Ryan Knight, another witness along the fence line, also said he saw the suspected shooter atop the American Glass Research building, the report said. "I walked over about 20 minutes before the shooting happened to stand along the fence line where

Trump was. As I was doing that, I was right beside the AGR building, which had the shooter on it," Knight said.

The Secret Service didn't have anybody at a late-night news conference where FBI and Pennsylvania State Police officials briefed reporters on the shooting investigation. FBI special agent in charge Kevin Rojek said it was "surprising" that the gunman was able to fire at the stage before he was killed.

Members of the Secret Service's counter sniper team and counter assault team were at the rally, according to two law enforcement officials. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorised to discuss details of the investigation.

The heavily armed counter-assault team, whose Secret Service code name is "Hawkeye", is responsible for eliminating threats so that other agents can shield and take away the person they are protecting. The counter-sniper team, known by the code name "Hercules", uses long-range binoculars and is equipped with sniper rifles to deal with long-range threats.

US Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said his department and the Secret Service are working with law enforcement to investigate the shooting. Maintaining the security of presidential candidates and their campaign events is one of the department's "most vital priorities", he said.

"We condemn this violence in the strongest possible terms and commend the Secret Service for their swift action today," Mayorkas said. "We are engaged with President Biden, former President Trump and their campaigns, and are taking every possible measure to ensure their safety and security."

Calls for an investigation came from all sides.

James Comer, a Kentucky Republican who is the House Oversight Committee chairman, said he contacted the Service for a briefing and called on Director Kimberly Cheatle to appear for a hearing. Comer said his committee will send a formal invitation soon.

"Political violence in all forms is unamerican and unacceptable. There are many questions and Americans demand answers," Comer said in a statement.

FBI said it will lead the investigation into the shooting, working with the Secret Service and local and state law enforcement.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said the Justice Department "will bring every available resource to bear to this investigation".

{ ATTACK ON TRUMP }

Breakdown of assassination bid

Former US president Donald Trump was hit in the ear in an assassination attempt by a gunman at a campaign rally, in a chaotic and shocking incident set to supercharge political tensions ahead of the polarising US presidential election

How the attack unfolded

1 Dressed in a white shirt, dark blazer and bright red MAGA cap Trump takes to the stage at fairgrounds in Butler, Pennsylvania at around 6pm (3:30am IST)



2 Minutes later, his words are cut off by four shots in quick succession. Trump grabs his right ear as repeated shouts of "get down!" are heard, before a fifth and sixth shot.

The former president crouches down behind the lectern as Secret Service agents move in around him. Seventeen seconds after the first shots, a final pop is heard



3 Visible once again around one minute after the gunfire started, Trump is ushered off the stage as Secret Service personnel form a ring around the former President. He is taken to an SUV, which immediately pulls away.

One attendee at the rally is killed and two others were critically injured

Shooter

Secret Service snipers

Shooter shot down by snipers

Distance of 130 metres
Gunman shoots towards podium

Trump

Where was the gunman?

SOURCE: TMZ.COM

Armed with an AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle, the gunman Thomas Matthew Crooks positioned himself above the roof of a manufacturing plant 130 meters away from the stage. He was shot dead by the Secret Service personnel

In this moment, it is more important than ever that we stand United
-Donald Trump, former US President

Who protects ex- Presidents?

Since 1965, all former US Presidents have received Secret Service protection for life. This was briefly changed in 1997 to limit protection to 10 yrs after leaving office, but President Obama and Congress reinstated lifetime protection in 2012

Trump's security detail

Members of the Secret Service's counter sniper team and counter assault team were at the rally. The counter assault team, whose Secret Service code name is "Hawkeye", is responsible for eliminating threats. The counter sniper team, known by the code name "Hercules", uses long-range binoculars and is equipped with sniper rifles to deal with long-range threats

Major security lapse?

The US Secret Service is investigating how a gunman armed with an AR-style rifle was able to get close enough to shoot and injure Trump, a monumental failure of one of the agency's core duties

52% of the 18th Lok Sabha comprises first-time members cutting across ideologies, political parties and regions. HT traces some of their journeys

From shadows to spotlight, a leap to big league

Shruti Tomar

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BALAGHAT: For much of her life, 56-year-old Bharti Pardihi wondered if her story would be characterised by near-misses; by beginnings well-made that never found successful outcomes. She once enrolled in college but dropped out in a year. She first entered the political arena in 2002 in the panchayat elections, but lost by a solitary vote and was left shattered. It was a feeling she couldn't shake for many months. And yet, this June, Pardihi finally found some deliverance — when she ascended the steps of Parliament as a first-time member of Parliament from Balaghat. It was as one five women elected from Madhya Pradesh.

Born into an OBC family from Balaghat, Pardihi's father was a doctor, and in 1984, she found admission at the Rani Durgavati University in Jabalpur, where she pursued a bachelor's in home science. Within a year though, Pardihi was married into a family steeped in politics. Her husband Kheersagar Pardihi was a farmer leader, while his grandfather Bhola Ramji Pardihi had a long and storied political history — elected as Balaghat MP from

Jay Prakash Narayan's Praja Socialist Party in 1962.

She dropped out of college in 1985, and for 15 years remained in the shadows of the men in her family, before she began taking her first fledgling steps in politics by the turn of the century. Here, too, for a while it seemed that her political career would end before it really began. In 2002, she contested the zila panchayat elections backed by the BJP in Balaghat. She was considered the favourite, she says, but when the ballots were counted, she lost by one vote. "I was shocked and depressed, and both naive and emotional. I couldn't get over it for many months. But my family continued to support me, and more than electoral politics, I gave myself up for the BJP's organisational work," she said.

One Balaghat-based BJP leader said, "She got the attention of the seniors in the BJP in 2016 when she was part of the team that pushed for the digitalisation of work in Lanji block, the second such in the country, and ensured the online connectivity of 37 panchayats."

In 2022, she contested the corporator elections for the Balaghat again and won this time, but faced some disappointment when she was passed up for the post of chairperson. So, in 2024, when Pardihi was announced as



Senior BJP leaders are leaning on Pardihi as part of a long-term plan to promote an OBC woman leader from the state. HT PHOTO

the Balaghat nominee for the party, replacing the incumbent BJP MP Dhal Singh Bisen, she saw it as reward for years of work. "I never lost trust in my organisation. We have always been told that the party gives chances to those that work hard, and I was overjoyed when my name was announced. I felt proud that I was given the opportunity to take my families political legacy forward," Pardihi said.

But apart from her family's political life in Balaghat, there was another reason got senior BJP leaders honing in on Pardihi — a long-term plan to promote an OBC woman leader from Madhya Pradesh, particularly from Balaghat, which has the highest number of OBCs in the state. Through data submitted to

the Supreme Court during a hearing in 2022 to justify the grant of 27% reservation for OBCs, the state government had said that Balaghat, which borders both Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, has a 65% OBC population, the highest in Madhya Pradesh, far above the state average of 51%.

"In 2003, when the BJP came to power in the state, Uma Bharti, who was an OBC from the Lodhi community, became chief minister. Since then, the BJP hasn't had an OBC woman leader of significance in the state," a senior BJP leader, asking not to be named. "There have been other attempts before, but not always at the Lok Sabha level. In 2022, for instance, the BJP nominated Kavita Patidar as

Rajya Sabha leader, and has tried to promote her. If you look at posters put up during the assembly and Lok Sabha elections by the party, Patidar always finds a place."

Senior leaders also said that they had to counter two broad political narratives with urgency.

The first was to consolidate their OBC support in Madhya Pradesh, particularly since the Congress centred much of its campaign around caste mobilisation, accusing the BJP of attempts to tamper with the Constitution. The second was more local — in the 2022 assembly elections, popular OBC leader and chairman of the OBC commission Gauri Shankar Bisen lost from Balaghat, and there was damage-control to do. They zeroed in on Pardihi, from the influential Pawar community, and it bore fruit. She won by 174,000 votes, defeating her nearest rival Samrat Saraswat of the Congress.

The importance of the seat was clear, Pardihi said. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a rally in Balaghat in my support, and chief minister Mohan Yadav visited the constituency several times to campaign."

"Pardihi is a humble worker and the party gave her a chance to take the vision of Prime Minister Modi forward. I think she will emerge as a good leader not only in Balaghat or Madhya Pradesh, but nationally," BJP's Balaghat-

in-charge and cabinet minister

Prahlad Patel said.

Political analyst Rahim Khan, who is based in Balaghat, said that Pardihi was a sharp speaker, and there were signs that her election to the Lok Sabha was only the beginning. "The way the BJP is promoting her; it looks like there is a long-term plan. What is key will be her performance in the constituency because the BJP has not renominated a candidate in Balaghat other than Gauri Shankar Bisen, who was once a two-time MP, but not consecutively," Khan said.

The challenge ahead for Pardihi is clear — rally the OBCs in Balaghat and nurture her parliamentary seat, where the eight assembly segments lie on a knife's edge as four each are controlled by the Congress and the BJP. "Balaghat is not well-connected with the railways and locals have to travel 45km to Gondia in Maharashtra to catch a train. We have the Kanha Tiger Reserve and eighty percent of the area is forested, with very little sources of income. Unemployment is an issue in the absence of industries apart from mining. We also have to deal with a Maoist influence because of a new zone — the MMC (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh) they have created," she said. "I will focus on all these problems, and improving the lives of people in Balaghat is my priority."

{ JOE BIDEN } US PRESIDENT

There is no place in America for this kind of violence. It's sick. It's sick. It's one of the reasons why we have to unite this country. We cannot allow this to be happening. We cannot be like this

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Man walks into GTB hospital, shoots 32-yr-old patient, flees

Jignasa Sinha
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NEW DELHI: A 32-year-old man, who was undergoing treatment for abdominal infection at Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) hospital in northeast Delhi, was shot dead by man inside the hospital ward on Sunday afternoon, police officers aware of the matter said.

Investigators said that the accused is yet to be identified, adding that they suspect the murder to be a case of mistaken identity.

Police identified the deceased as Md Riyazuddin, a resident of Khajuri Khas who operated a dental clinic. He was admitted to ward number 24 of the hospital, and was with his sister and a medical attendant when he was shot dead, officers said.

The assailant fired multiple shots at the victim before fleeing the scene with two accomplices, officers said.

"We checked the records of the victim and found that he has no previous criminal involvements. The motive behind the firing is not clear yet," a senior officer said, requesting anonymity.

A murder case was registered at the GTB Enclave police station in connection with the case.

"The police control room received a call regarding the incident. A police team rushed to the spot and found that a patient, who was admitted to the hospital on June 23 for abdominal infection, was shot dead. The suspect, aged around 18, came inside the ward and opened fire on him," deputy commissioner



Victim's family clueless about attack
Riyazuddin's brother Faheem Khan, 28, said the family does not know the attacker or why he shot his brother.

"We found that there was another patient with a criminal history who was admitted to the ward for a month but was shifted to a private room yesterday. We think the accused came to kill him," he added.

Police said that they are verifying the allegations made by the family and checking records of the other patient, who was shot four times in the Welcome area last month and is currently recuperating in the hospital. DCP (northeast) Joy N Tirkey said

of police (Shahdara) Surendra Chaudhary said, adding that five bullet shells were found on the spot.

that in that case, three of the four assailants have been arrested, while the fourth is on the run.

A hospital staffer, who was inside the ward at the time of the incident, said the assailant entered the ward and told the attendants and relatives to step aside. "They fired at Riyazuddin and everyone either started running outside or hid in corners of the room," the staffer said, on condition of anonymity.

Additional DCP Vishnu Sharma said that they have checked CCTV footage from the hospital and the surrounding areas and have identified a few possible suspects. However, he added, multiple people visit the hospital every day, making it tough to zero in on the killer.

Politics over shooting
Hours after the shooting, Delhi health minister Saurabh Bhar-



The family members of Riyazuddin (above), who was shot dead at GTB Hospital on Sunday.
HT PHOTOS

adwaj alleged that the law-and-order situation in Delhi has deteriorated.

"LG sir, in the last two years since you came to power, the law-and-order situation in Delhi is going from bad to worse. Criminals have lost all fear of the law. People barge into hospitals in broad daylight and shoot people," he posted on X.

LG office did not respond to HT's request for comment.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Dr Anil Gupta said, "Today's killing is another example of the non-existence of security at Delhi government hospitals." Meanwhile, GTB hospital's Resident Doctors' Association said they will be on an indefinite strike from Monday over "security concerns". The Federation of Resident Doctors Association also demanded stricter security measures at hospitals.

25-YR-OLD MAN, 3 MINORS HELD FOR SHOOTING IN LAJPAT NAGAR

NEW DELHI: A 25-year-old man was arrested and three minor boys were apprehended for allegedly assaulting and firing at an 18-year-old man in Lajpat Nagar, south Delhi, on Saturday evening, police officers aware of the matter said on Sunday.

Police said the suspects attacked the victim to avenge an attack on them around eight months ago.

Deputy commissioner of police (southeast) Rajesh Deo said that police received a call about the incident at 6.47pm on Saturday, which happened at H block in Lajpat Nagar part I. A police team reached the spot and learnt that the victim, identified as Abhishek Sagar, was assaulted and shot at by suspect Abhishek Taneja, a repeat offender, and his associates.

"Taneja was arrested on Sunday morning from the Ashram area and on his instance, the three minors were also apprehended. During the interrogation, Taneja said he was an associate of alleged criminals, Rohit Chaudhary and Subegh Singh. Chaudhary and Singh fell apart due to a personal dispute and became rivals," said Deo.

"In 2023, Singh and his aides, including Sagar, attacked Chaudhary and Taneja," Deo said. The present attack was to avenge the previous one, he added. HT

Dwarka goes 4 days without water supply

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NEW DELHI: Four days after a sudden breach at the carrier-lined canal (CLC) branch of the Munak Canal, several areas in southwest Delhi, particularly Dwarka, continued to remain parched on Sunday.

Despite operations resuming at the Dwarka water treatment plant, which has a production capacity of 50 million gallons per day (mgd), the areas recorded low to zero water supply, following which residents complained of spike in bottled water prices, lack of availability of tankers, water contamination and low water supply.

Delhi Jal Board (DJB) officials said that the underground reservoirs and pipeline system were completely out of water and the supply in the remaining areas is likely to become normal by Monday morning.

"When the entire supply is dry, it takes time for the water supply to become normal in the whole region. The areas near the water treatment plant have started receiving normal supply and the remaining areas will progressively get better. It might take time for water to reach the tail-end areas," said an official who asked not to be named.

Complaints poured in from several parts of Dwarka, including Sector 1, Mahavir Enclave, Dwarka Sector 8, Sector 16, Sector 10, Madhu Vihar, Palam and Raj Nagar.

The Delhi water bulletin on Sunday showed that the water supply to the city over the preceding 24-hour cycle reached the second lowest level this year,



DJB officials said the supply will normalise by Monday.
HT ARCHIVE

with a shortfall of 110 mgd. Against normal supply level of 1,000 mgd, the water utility managed to provide only 890 mgd water with short production in Haiderpur and Dwarka water treatment plants. Supply level was 898 mgd on July 12 and 907 mgd on the preceding two days.

The season's lowest supply level was recorded at 888 mgd on June 21, when the city was facing acute raw water shortage during a spell of intense heat-wave. The Dwarka water treatment plant treated no water against the 50 mgd capacity, and the Haiderpur plant supplied 185 mgd water against the capacity of 241 mgd, the report said. The water utility received 1,944 complaints related to water supply and sewage, out of which 684 complaints were related to water supply and 157 regarding water tankers, official said.

Water minister Atishi on Saturday posted on X, "Repair of the embankment of Munak canal

was completed last night. Haryana has released water from Kakroi head at 10:30 am. This water will reach Delhi by 1:30-2:00 pm. Dwarka water treatment plant will start functioning from 4 pm. Water supply will resume in Dwarka from tonight."

Deepak Kumar, a resident of Arjun Park in Najafgarh, said that the water supply did not resume even till 4pm on Sunday. "There has been no supply in three days. We contacted DJB helpline and we were assured that the supply will resume from today Sunday, but even now there has been no water supply to our area," he added.

Jatin Singh, a resident of West Sagarpur, said that over the last four days they have got assurances, but no water. "No one is taking our problems seriously. How can such a large area be deprived of water for four days. There has been no solution to our problems," he said.

NDMC to launch ₹19.3cr road-sweeping project

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NEW DELHI: The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has invited bids for a ₹19.3 crore project for the mechanical sweeping and cleaning of 119 main roads in New Delhi, senior officials said.

The project, spanning three years, aims to cover a total road length of 415km with six mechanical sweepers operating during the day and four at night, an official said requesting anonymity. The bidding process for operators is expected to conclude by July 26, they added.

Under this project, all roads will be cleaned once daily, with Connaught Place receiving addi-

tional cleaning twice a day. A civic official said that the mechanical road sweepers will have a wet cleaning mechanism without the formation of dust. "The 119 roads covered under this project include major avenue roads included are Janpath, Ashoka Road, Raisina Road, Minto Road, and the C-hexagon around India Gate. Roads in diplomatic areas and more than 20 roundabouts are also covered," the official added.

NDMC oversees a road length of over 1,298km and 372km of footpaths within its 42.7sqkm jurisdiction in central Delhi, which includes Lutyens Delhi, Connaught Place, Supreme Court, Pandara Road, Kidwai Nagar, Sarojini Nagar, Cha-

nakya Puri, Netaji Nagar, Moti Bagh. The area hosts a resident population of 0.25 million and a floating population of 1.6-2.0 million daily, boasting a 48% green cover compared to Delhi's 21%.

Under a separate project, NDMC also plans to introduce 'airport-like' mechanised cleaning and housekeeping in several markets and commercial hubs.

The council has already cleared the proposal for mechanised housekeeping works at Palika Bazar near Connaught Place, Yashwant Place Market, Chanakya Bhawan, Local Shopping Center at East Kidwai Nagar complex, and SBS (Shahed Bhagat Singh) place, among others.

Summertime blues



The maximum temperature on Sunday was 37.1°C. While the 'wet-bulb' and minimum temperatures in the city respectively were 28.9°C and 27.6°C, high humidity levels meant that the 'real feel' temperature was 47°C.
VIPIN KUMAR/HT PHOTO

{ 'IDEAL TEMPERATURE' } INADEQUATE WASTE MANAGEMENT ALSO PLAYING A ROLE

Humidity, lack of rain leading to glut of flies in Delhi this season

Jasveer Gandhiok and Jayashree Nandi
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NEW DELHI: Last week, a key Union government body was set to launch a report at Sansad Marg in Lutyens Delhi, with several senior bureaucrats set to be present. Hours before the report was to be launched, the body concerned realised that the venue was swamped with flies, prompting the department to deploy an army of cleaners to the building concerned.

Upon reaching the venue, the cleaners first attempted to swat the flies away. When that didn't help, they tried wiping surfaces. Flies settled down following wiping of surfaces with a chemical cleanser.

This is not an isolated case — an unusually high number of flies are being reported from different parts of the city.

While the monsoons are indeed the season for flies to breed, this year, they are breeding in extremely large volumes, with experts pointing to a com-



Houseflies on a strainer at a juice vendor on Sunday.
ARVIND YADAV/HT

combination of four factors — high humidity, several days going with light or no rain, delayed desilting of drains, and inadequate waste management.

Faiyaz Khudsar, scientist in-charge of DDA's Biodiversity Parks Programme, said warmer months are conducive for breeding of house flies, and the July-August period is generally their peak time to breed. "The air is moist and there is regular rainfall and water accumulation. When combined with rotting or

leftover food on the streets, this makes it an ideal ground for these flies to breed. This rotting and wet food also makes it easier for flies to feed through proboscis. This is what is possibly leading to a surge in their numbers at this time," he said.

Depending on the weather, the housefly cycle may take as little as a week, or up to four weeks. The egg-laying stage consists of multiple eggs being laid down by the fly in a group, with over 500 laid down in a single

cycle. Housefly maggots or larvae, upon hatching, prefer to feed on decaying food, which experts said is abundant during the monsoon. This is followed by a pupal stage, before the housefly emerges. Each housefly can live up to four weeks.

Entomologist Mohammad Faisal said heavy showers can wash fly maggots away. "But that is not happening. Humidity is high, and there is light, scattered rain at times. This, combined with desilting muck lying unattended, and delayed garbage disposal gives them ideal conditions to breed in large numbers," he said.

Other experts said housefly numbers also shoot up in February. "What flies need is an ideal temperature of 27-35 degrees Celsius, which is what we are seeing right now. This ideal temperature range speeds up their breeding cycle from egg to maggots, pupa, and finally flies and allows them to breed quickly," said Sumit Dookia, assistant professor at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and part of Delhi's Biodiversity Council.

The United Residents Joint Action (Urja) — an apex body of over 2,500 resident welfare associations in Delhi — said improper management of waste has emerged as the biggest problem to high housefly numbers.

"We receive the highest number of fly-related complaints in neighbourhoods where the local market has restaurants that leave some leftover food in backlanes or in the open. This decaying food becomes a breeding ground for flies. At the same time, we have seen high fly numbers in areas where household waste is left outdoors, but is not regularly picked up," said Urja president Atul Goyal.

One of the major concerns and indirect damage by these flies is by potential transmission of pathogens (viruses, bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and nematodes). Pathogenic organisms are picked up by flies from garbage, sewage and other sources of filth, and then transferred on their mouthparts, through vomitus, faeces and external body parts to human and animal food,

according to Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at University of Florida, the US.

Pathogens commonly transmitted by house flies are salmonella, shigella, campylobacter, Escherichia, enterococcus, chlamydia, among others. These flies are linked to outbreaks of diarrhoea, shigellosis, food poisoning, typhoid fever, dysentery, tuberculosis etc.

Dr Pulin Gupta, professor, medicine at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital, said that over the last 15 days, there has been a surge in acute gastroenteritis, apart from viral infections.

"In the last 15 days we are seeing an upsurge not only in viral infection but also in acute gastroenteritis. These are not looking like typhoid which of course happens when sewage water mixed with drinking water. This is the breeding season for mosquitoes and flies. The numbers are more this year. The flies sit of faeces and then carry the infection to food/cut fruits etc. there is definitely an uptick now," said Dr Gupta.

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ED officials say probe into CM's role in excise policy 'complete'

Neeraj Chauhan
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NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has "completed" the probe against Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) with respect to the alleged irregularities in the framing and implementation of the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy 2021-22, senior ED officials familiar with the development said on Sunday.

The focus, the officials said, will now be to ascertain which properties can be attached equivalent to the proceeds of crime worth ₹1,00 crore identified by the financial crimes probe agency, along with an early trial. So far, ED has attached assets worth only ₹244 crore in the case. To be sure, the federal agency has not said that the investigation into the policy is complete — its investigation into the case has so far spanned 22 months, leading to 18 arrests, eight charge sheets against 40 accused, and over four dozen

With regards to Kejriwal and AAP... our investigation is complete. The court has taken cognisance of all eight charge sheets.

ED OFFICIAL

raids. "With regards to Arvind Kejriwal and AAP, accused number 37 and 38, our investigation is complete. The court has taken cognisance of all eight charge sheets filed by our team and most accused persons have been refused bail. We are now in the process of tracing the balance proceeds of crime and attaching them," said an officer, who did not wish to be named. In the last one-and-a-half years, the federal agency has

extensively availed the services of solicitor general Tushar Mehta, additional solicitor general SV Raju and multiple special public prosecutors against a battery of lawyers such as Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Dayan Krishnan, and Mohit Mathur, who appeared for Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh, to defend its charges.

'Will push for faster trial'

"We will now push for a faster trial considering there are 40 accused, hundreds of witnesses and documentary evidence in thousands and thousands of pages," said a second officer, who also requested anonymity.

The agency has called Kejriwal the "kingpin" of the excise policy-related irregularities and has primarily used statements of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP from Ongole, Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy, his son Raghav Magunta and businessman P Sarath Reddy to indict the CM.

Kejriwal and AAP have denied all the charges, and called them

"political vendetta" by the Union government. The CM was arrested on March 21. The Supreme Court on Friday granted him interim bail in the ED case, but he continues to be in jail in the parallel Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe in the matter.

ED has claimed in its charge sheet filed on May 17 against Kejriwal and AAP that the CM, his then deputy Manish Sisodia and former media in-charge of the party, Vijay Nair, had asked for "additional" money "over and above" ₹100 crore kickbacks for their election funding in Goa and Punjab.

The agency also alleged that Vinod Chauhan, Kejriwal's "close aide", handled the transfer of ₹25.5 crore for AAP from Delhi to Goa and managed postings of officers in the Delhi Jal Board through the CM.

'Centre wants to crush us'

The AAP, meanwhile, said that the development "exposed" the motive of the Union government.

"They want to crush the AAP and Arvind Kejriwal. The central government's investigating agencies have been probing the so-called liquor scam for two years, harassing 500 people by making them witnesses, and conducting more than 250 raids at multiple locations. Despite all this, they have not found a shred of evidence of corruption against AAP and Kejriwal," AAP said in a statement. AAP claimed the Centre intended to attach the bank accounts of AAP so that they can paralyse the operations of the party. "The people of the country are keenly watching these atrocities and they will respond in the elections," the party added.

The Delhi BJP said that with his pleas for temporary relief, Kejriwal is obstructing the completion of trial. "We challenge Kejriwal who claims innocence to allow daily time bound trials. Once summary trial happens the conviction of Kejriwal and other leaders will happen in few weeks," said Praveen Shankar Kapur, Delhi BJP spokesperson.

Govt explores tech to check tree-felling

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi forest and wildlife department is set to incorporate technology to track the felling of trees in the city, people aware of the matter said.

The development comes even as the Supreme Court has been hearing a contempt plea over the illegal chopping of over 1,100 trees in a notified forest of the southern Ridge by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). While hearing the plea, the apex court asked the forest department and Delhi's Tree Authority (DTA) to keep a constant vigil on felling of trees in the future.

Officials in the forest department said that, in light of the top court's order, they are planning to utilise LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) — a remote sensing method that uses lasers to measure distances and create 3D maps of objects — to chart Delhi's green areas and track tree-felling over a period of time. The same technology is currently being utilised to map out Delhi's geo-morphological Ridge.

"In theory, it is possible to map out all green cover, as LiDAR technology shows all features in an area, complete with its shape and elevation change. If a tree gets cut, it can tell us in which area trees were felled," a senior forest official said, on condition of anonymity.

The official said that a management plan for the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary is already being formulated by Wildlife Institute of India (WII). "Another option is to geo-tag all trees, but this will again require significant time and money," the official said.

A second forest official said that the plan is to look at a

Methods being explored

The forest department currently has no mechanism to track felling of trees in Delhi on a real-time basis

UNDER CONSIDERATION
LIGHT DETECTION AND RANGING (LIDAR) TECHNOLOGY
Uses lasers to measure distances and create 3D maps of objects

GEO-TAGGING OF TREES
Each tree is geo-tagged with its latitude and longitude mapped out

SATELLITE ALARMS
An alert or alarm-based system using satellite data

In addition, the manpower of the Eco Task Force is to be increased from 200 to 400-450



method that will alert the authorities immediately when a tree is felled.

"A real-time mechanism exists with the Forest Survey of India (FSI), where they get an alert if a tree is felled or if there is a fire in a fixed area. This is done using satellite technology.

For a real-time model, something similar may have to be explored," the second official said, also requesting anonymity. The department is currently looking at the cost of different technologies before finalising on one, the officials said.

In 2000-01, the Delhi government deployed the territorial army eco task force (ETF) to restore and rehabilitate over 2,100 acres of the southern Ridge.

For this, 132 Infantry Battalion (TA) ECO Rajput was deployed.

The department also has plans to increase the number of ETF personnel currently

deployed in the southern Ridge from 200 staffers to around 400-450, the official said.

"These additional ETF members will be deployed in other forest areas of Delhi too, as well as along the Yamuna floodplains," the second forest official said.

Environmental activist Bhaavne Kandhari said the forest department needs to be more vigilant on the ground and be more transparent, though the move to incorporate technology is welcome.

"Despite multiple court orders in the past, the forest department still does not display any data on the number of tree felling permissions given for any forest division in Delhi. Similarly, there is no data on tree pruning," she said.

"Until there is transparency and a robust mechanism where people can complain, such technology will not help," Kandhari added.

SAXENA ORDERED TREE-FELLING IN RIDGE TO POLLUTE DELHI, CLAIMS AAP

NEW DELHI: Aam Aadmi Party chief spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar on Sunday alleged that lieutenant governor VK Saxena permitted the felling of 1,100 trees in the eco-sensitive Sabari Ridge area in Chhattarpur even as the AAP-led Delhi government was working towards increasing the green cover of the city.

"LG has put an end to the efforts of the government to make Delhi air pollution-free by getting 1,100 trees felled without the permission of the Supreme Court... the LG is ordering tree felling in contempt of the Supreme Court," Kakkar said at a press conference.

HT reached out to the LG office, which did not respond to queries seeking comments. HT

CM health worsening: AAP, BJP says 'repetition of lies'

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: Aam Aadmi Party leader and Delhi minister Atishi on Sunday alleged that the health condition of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was "deteriorating in jail" with weight loss and episodes of very low blood sugar levels, at a press conference at the party headquarters.

Atishi alleged that Kejriwal was being kept in Tihar jail under "a conspiracy hatched by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which should be held responsible if anything happened to the AAP chief.

Meanwhile, the Delhi BJP said the minister was resorting to "desperate lies" to seek Ke-

riwal's bail.

"Kejriwal is diabetic and his blood sugar level has gone below 50 more than five times. If he gets a stroke, or brain damage, who will be responsible? From March 21, his weight has gone down by 8.5kg. The day ED arrested him, his weight was 70kg and after his medical checkup in Tihar jail, his weight was 61.5kg. Such rapid and unexplained weight loss is a sign of precarious diseases," she alleged.

HT reached out to Tihar jail authorities but they did not respond to queries seeking comments.

The minister added that BJP should be held responsible for the CM's health. "BJP got him

arrested by the CBI in a fake manner to prevent him from coming out of jail... Kejriwal is in jail today because of a false and fabricated case filed by the BJP," she added.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said that Kejriwal campaigned every day without going to the hospital even once while being out on interim bail during the general elections.

"Arvind Kejriwal and his associates know very well that amidst increasing corruption allegations, the AAP is losing its political relevance. If Kejriwal remains in jail for too long, his party might fall apart. In such a scenario, desperate AAP leaders are repeating the same lies daily for Kejriwal's bail," said Sachdeva.

J&K POLICE RESCUE ABDUCTED GIRL FROM N DELHI

JAMMU: An eight-year-old girl allegedly abducted from Reasi, Jammu & Kashmir, was rescued from Delhi, police said on Sunday, adding that the accused, Shankar Lal, 26, was arrested from Kashmiri Gate.

Reasi SSP Mohita Sharma said the girl was reported missing from Katra market on July 11. Following the trail of CCTV footage, the location of the girl was established in Delhi and she was rescued. PTI

The battle for course correction in India's corporation-run schools

Manoj Sharma
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NEW DELHI: Ashok Agarwal, a lawyer based in the Capital, stepped into a Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) school for the first time in 1997.

"That year, Delhi's private schools had hiked their fees by up to 400%, sparking massive protests by outraged parents who turned to me for legal recourse. I visited a MCD school in Shahdara out of curiosity, wondering why, despite numerous public schools in the Capital, parents preferred expensive, private ones," recalled Agarwal.

What he saw shocked him. "The MCD school was a small setup under a tin-shade roof, with children sitting on the dirty, soggy floor."

Now 71, Agarwal has since waged a legal battle in an attempt to overhaul Delhi's public school system. His activism has been crucial in the abolishment of private schools interviewing young children and their parents before granting admission, ensuring equal rights for differently abled children, and securing court mandates to appoint special educators across Delhi government, MCD, and private unaided schools.

"I have been visiting public schools for the past 27 years, and it pains me to say that despite this prolonged battle to ensure quality education for poor children in Delhi, not much has changed—except that many of these schools have upgraded to brick structures," laments Agarwal.

However, Delhi's civic body is not the only corporation that fails to deliver its mandate to provide primary education — municipal corporation schools across the country have consistently made headlines for all the wrong reasons.

A history of education under civic bodies

Municipal corporations established the first schools in cities such as Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai (then Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras) in the late 19th century or early 20th century to provide primary education to urban children. It was believed that civic bodies could integrate educational planning with other aspects of urban development, such as infrastructure, health, and sanitation, leading to better student outcomes.

"Corporations were considered ideally suited to provide education due to their direct connection with the community, which meant they could offer a more responsive and tailored educational system," said Deep Chand Mathur, former PRO of MCD. Today, MCD runs 1,534 pri-



(Clockwise from top) Students at the KMC-operated Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy Memorial School in Kolkata, one of the 226 corporation-run schools in the city; The World Seafare School, at Worli in Mumbai, one of the 1,147 primary and secondary schools under the BMC; The entrance to the MCD primary school at the B-1 block JJ Colony in Bawana.

RAJ KRAI, SAMIR JANA, ARCHIVE/HT PHOTOS



mary schools in the city, serving over 700,000 students — the highest of any municipal corporation in India. In contrast, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has about 320,000 students enrolled in its 1,147 primary and secondary schools, while the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has 95,000 students in its 281 schools, and the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) has 16,000 students enrolled in its 224 schools.

In April, the Delhi high court, addressing a PIL filed by Agarwal, rebuked MCD — which runs primary-level classes up to grade 5 — for its failure to supply uniforms, notebooks, and stationery to approximately 200,000 students lacking bank accounts. The court remarked that this "did not represent a happy situation" and would lead to children losing interest in their education.

Schools run by GCC are in no better condition. Many believe an inadequate education budget is the root problem — education gets less than ₹100 crore annually. This has resulted in most GCC schools lacking basic amenities such as safe drinking water, clean toilets, and adequate furniture.

GCC deputy commissioner (education) Sharanya Ari did not respond to HT's questionnaire about the state of affairs at corporation-run schools. Last year, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) decided to close down 18 of its 242 primary schools due to declining student enrolments and dilap-

dated school buildings.

In February, the civic body presented a budget of ₹5,166.52 crore, allocating only ₹52.12 crore to education. Both mayor Firhad Hakim and deputy mayor Atin Ghosh did not respond to HT's calls and messages for a comment.

The need for progress

Despite being a major education provider, MCD has grappled with years of governmental apathy and neglect. But its officials insist a course correction is underway. "We have identified schools in need of upgrades and constructing new ones while renovating existing ones citywide. These new schools will feature smart boards, play equipment, spacious playgrounds, and modern teaching methods," said an MCD official.

In recent years, corporations in cities such as Mumbai and Ahmedabad have successfully rebranded and revamped their schools. For example, BMC — India's richest corporation — in 2020 rebranded its schools as Mumbai Public Schools (MPSs), introducing a new logo and colour scheme for buildings.

"We have been constantly improving our schools. Renaming was aimed at changing the perception of municipal schools and attracting more students," said a BMC official.

"The success of municipal schools is when the local community proudly feels 'it is our school'. Corporations like Mumbai have undertaken important initiatives to improve their schools. Mum-

bai, for instance, has collaborated with NGOs to provide essential pre-primary education, crucial for laying a strong foundation for primary education. The corporation has also invested in new infrastructure," said Farida Lamba, co-founder of Pratham, an NGO dedicated to improving education quality for underprivileged children.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation School Board has also been working to strengthen its schools, converting existing schools into "smart schools".

"Our smart schools feature smart boards, 3D educational charts, development programmes, and vocational training. We have also distributed laptops to students in many of these schools. We are currently operating 80 smart schools," said Ahmedabad municipal commissioner M Themnasran.

Milind Mhaske, CEO of Praja Foundation, which advocates participatory city governance, said there is a need to reform the administrative structure that governs municipal education.

"The decision regarding a school should be taken at the neighbourhood level. There is a need to adopt new management practices by giving more autonomy to school leaders... Besides, comprehensive, regular evaluation of children to measure learning outcomes and proper, periodic evaluation of teachers... are essential to maintain educational standards in municipal schools," he said.

कार्यालय, कलेक्टर (जिला निर्माण समिति), जिला उत्तर बस्तर - कांकेर
:- अल्प कालिन निविदा :-
एन.आई.टी. क्रमांक/30 एवं 31/जि.नि.स./2024-25 कांकेर, दिनांक 10.07.2024

एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु सक्षम श्रेणी के ठेकेदारों के लिए निम्नानुसार मेनुअल निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

- निविदा प्रपत्र हेतु आवेदन प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि (रजिस्टर्ड डाक/ सीड पोस्ट के माध्यम से) - 30/07/2024 (सायं 05:00 बजे तक)
- आवेदन परीक्षण पर्याप्त मनी रसीद कटाने की अंतिम तिथि - 01/08/2024 (सायं 05:00 बजे तक)
- निविदा प्रपत्र वितरण की तिथि - 05/08/2024 (प्रातः 11:00 बजे से)
- निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि - 12/08/2024 (सायं 05:00 बजे तक)
- निविदा खोले जाने की तिथि - 14/08/2024 (दोपहर 12:30 बजे से)

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1	30	पांडराव से कोसरोण्डा 3.00 कि.मी. सीमेंट कांक्रिट सड़क निर्माण कार्य।	353.39 Lakhs	1,77,000/-	1st Call
2	31	तुमापाल से कोसरोण्डा तक लंबाई 4.60 कि.मी. मार्ग निर्माण कार्य (पुल-पुलिया सहित)	787.12 Lakhs	3,94,000/-	1st Call

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G-242501050/6

WESTERN RAILWAY - RATLAM DIVISION
W/623/5/1/NIT Date 11.07.2024
E-TENDERING NOTICE

The Divisional Railway Manager (WA) RATLAM for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through e-tender on website www.ireps.gov.in in the details as under:-

Sr. No.	E-tender No. & Name of Work	Approx. Value ₹	EMD in ₹	Completion Period
1	RTM-2024-25-68 Ratlam Division- Lubrication of curves by contractor's own track mounted automatic Gauge Face Lubricators with supply of grease including its maintenance for period of five years.	303783984.00	1669000.00	60 Months

Special Technical Criteria: Only RDSO Approved/Developmental Vendors for Track based gauge Lubricators, can participate in this tender. Copy of approval certificate with validity date is to be submitted along with the tender.
Approx. Quantity: As per tender schedule

Date of uploading on website : 02.07.2024. Date of opening of Tender : 26.07.2024. Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria and terms and conditions are available at Website www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager (WA)
Ratlam Division, Western Railway
5/1/139
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LOST & FOUND
LOST SOME original papers of property Bearing No. E-10, E-Block Ashok Vihar Phase-1, North West Delhi-110052. Finder please Inform to Shri Jagjit Singh on Above mentioned Property Address # 8974060920

I, DHANESH Kumar Lala S/O Late Shri Lakshmi Chand Lala R/O 101 D Pocket-A Mayur Vihar Phase-2 Delhi-91 have lost Original Property Documents i.e Agreement to Sell, General Power of Attorney and other documents such as Allotment letter, Possession Slip/Allotment, Handing Over Possession Certificate, Allocation cum Demand Letter, NOC of Electricity and Water Connections of the above flat. Finder contact 9650595958

I, URMILA Devi W/o Shyam Lal hereby inform that the Property No.147-D, Shri Suncity, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, UP-201014, the Original allotment letter No.000045 issued by Shri Estate Pvt. Ltd has been lost and I have lodged an FIR for Lost with UP Police FIR No. 20240000584583 date: 12.07.2024. Finder contact: 8510059955

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

EXCISE & TAXATION DEPARTMENT, HARYANA
Vanjiya Bhawan, Plot no. I-3, Sector 5, Panchkula — 134151, Haryana

Development, Implementation and Maintenance of Haryana Tax Administration System — HTAS 2.0

Excise and Taxation Department, Haryana, has embarked on a mission for upgrading the existing system for tax administration, so as to bring about qualitative improvements in the interaction of the Government with the trade and industry. The envisaged solution should be capable of meeting all the current needs of tax administration and also be suitably flexible to accommodate future requirements of the department.

In accordance with the evolving priorities of Haryana Excise and Taxation department, the bidder shall be required to:

- Takeover and maintain the current deployed system from the existing vendor till new solution is implemented.
- Parallelly develop and deploy new system as per requirements in the RFP.
- Operate and maintain the new system post its go-live during the defined contact period.

Sealed proposals are invited from eligible bidders as per the following deadlines:

Last Date for submission of bid proposals	3.00 PM on 05-August-2024
Opening of Pre-Qualification & Technical Proposals	3.30 PM on 05-August-2024
Venue	3 rd Floor, Vanjiya Bhawan, Plot no. I-3, Sector 5, Panchkula.

A non-refundable Tender fee of INR 25,000 (Rupees Twenty-Five Thousand only) in addition to the prescribed tendering portal service fee is to be submitted through online mode at NIC Portal <https://etenders.hry.nic.in> for participating in the bidding process. Scanned copy of Online Payment Receipt should be uploaded while submitting the bid.

NOTE: Bidders are advised to pay this fee at least 2 days before the tender closing date/time on NIC tendering portal <https://etenders.hry.nic.in> to avoid last minute hassle.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) document provides eligibility criteria, scope of work, responsibilities of bidder and such other detailed technical and other requirements related to this project. Interested bidders may obtain a copy of the RFP document from the website of the department at <https://www.haryanatax.gov.in>, or from NIC Portal <https://etenders.hry.nic.in>. Any changes/ revisions to the bid schedule and/or RFP will be published only in these websites.

Excise & Taxation Commissioner
Haryana

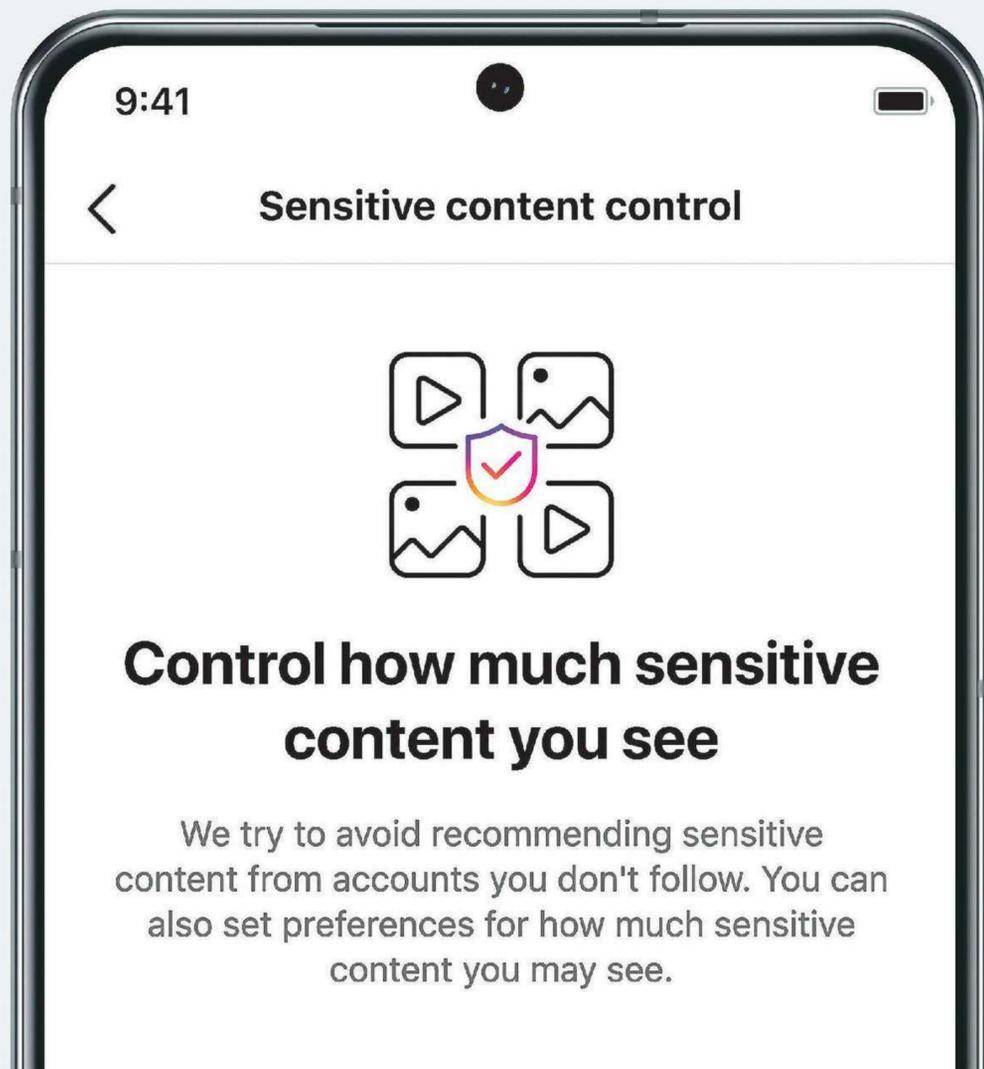
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Police crack down on fugitive Bhau's gang

Hemani Bhandari
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police is in the process of dismantling the syndicate led by fugitive gangster Himanshu Bhau, officers aware of the matter said, with the force arresting at least three members of the gang under provisions of the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), and killing four others in encounters.



Gangster Himanshu Bhau

Police suspect Bhau, originally from Ritoli in Haryana, is currently hiding in the US. He is said to keep in touch with his aides through social media and instant messaging services such as WhatsApp.

The crackdown against the gangster comes amid two high-profile incidents that shocked the city.

The first took place on May 6, when armed assailants fired at least 20 shots into a car showroom in Tilak Nagar, leaving seven people injured. The assailants then threw down a purported note at the scene of the crime, bearing Bhau's name. Similar notes were recovered from several other car showrooms in the city.

The second incident took place on June 18, when Aman Joon, 26, was shot dead in a Burger King outlet in Rajouri Garden. Bhau took responsibility for the incident in a purported social media post, calling it an act of revenge, though Joon's family has insisted he was not involved in any criminal activity.

Police have now hit back. On May 16, Ajay alias Goli — considered a close aide of Bhau, who was involved in the shooting at the car showroom — was killed by the Delhi Police special cell in Ritoli, Haryana. In addition, three gangsters — Ashish Kalu alias Kalu, Vicky Rindhana, and Sunny Gujjar — were shot dead during a gunfight with police in Sonapat, Haryana on Friday.

A senior police officer who has been investigating and following the activities of the Bhau gang, on condition of anonymity, told HT that the force has invoked MCOCA against three key members — Mohit Gahlawat, Ketan Kundu, and Manjeet Baldania alias Cheeta.

Gahlawat and Kundu were involved in the firing at the car showroom, while Baldania is wanted in 10 cases, including five murders allegedly committed at the behest of Bhau.

"MCOCA has been invoked against three already, and documentation for two is underway. At least 10 more gangsters will be arrested under MCOCA in the next few months," the officer said.

"More than 10 members of the gang have been arrested in the last few months, and to ensure that they are lodged in jail for longer periods, MCOCA will be invoked against most of them."

Keeping identities under wraps

Investigators said that when they interrogated members of Bhau's gang, they revealed that they are not aware of the identity of others in the outfit — they meet each other only before committing a crime.

"This is how they operate. Only the handlers abroad are aware of the identities of the men working in India. For instance, Lalu and Rindhana were involved in a murder in Murthal, but they are suspected to have met only a day or two before. They also met each other only a day before Joon's murder," a second officer said.

"No two people know each other, and they also keep false names so they can never betray each other if caught by the authorities," the second officer said.

It is through this technique that Anu Dhankar, a key suspect in Joon's murder, is still at large — she was last spotted in Jammu on June 20, and the gangsters in custody know little about her, police said.

"There is a huge possibility that even Lalu and Rindhana didn't know about her role in Joon's murder till the day of the incident," the second officer said.

HUMAYUN'S TOMB MUSEUM LIKELY TO OPEN DURING WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE MEET

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A museum at Humayun's Tomb — said to be the country's first sunken museum — is likely to be inaugurated during the upcoming meeting of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in the national capital, people aware of the matter said.

The museum will showcase the heritage of the Nizamuddin area over the last seven centuries, the people said.

Delhi will host the 46th session of meeting from July 21-31 at Bharat Mandapam at Pragati Maidan. In conjunction with the WHC meeting, the sixth edition of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum will be organised here from July 18-25, according to Unesco.

The people cited above said for at least for three days during the WHC meeting, site managers from cultural, natural and mixed world heritage properties from across the globe will gather at the site of Humayun's Tomb to take part in the forum.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) is building the sunken museum on behalf of the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) as part of the urban renewal initiative. Inspired from the medieval baolis (water tanks) of northern India, the underground site museum, with a built-up area of 9,000 sqm, will marry modern 21st century architecture with Mughal-era craftsmanship in its design, the people said.

Delhiwale

EXPERIENCE YOUR CITY LIKE NEVER BEFORE



The two sides of Connaught Place

Two similar yet different spaces in the heart of the Capital

{ PUBLIC INTEREST } Connaught Place is the Capital's heart. Central Park is Connaught Place's heart. The colonial-era shopping district contains two more similarly serene traffic-free outdoors, but they are steeped in a profoundly different character. One has a dargah. The other has a mandir.

The sufi shrine, across the busy road from Outer Circle's G Block, comprises of a marble courtyard, lined with a series of stone graves. The dargah commemorates Shah Abdul Salam Faridi Fakhri Chishti. The mystic's tombstone is sculpted in Arabic, a white tile attached separately on the top translates the inscription to English. The courtyard is amply shaded by the joint foliage of a neem and a khirni. This morning, the tree branches are crowded with twittering birds (their chatter is mixing harmoniously with the traffic sounds of Connaught Place).

Mohammed Mohiuddin, the dargah's young spiritual head, appears in white kurta pajama. Introducing himself as the patron saint's 40th descendant, he slowly walks towards the row of aforementioned graves. "These are of my ancestors.... and this grave is of my grandfather, and this grave is of my father-in-law." He stands beside the last grave — see left photo.

With its five dense peepal trees and many monkeys, the sprawling plaza outside Hanuman Mandir, close to Regal Cinema, is as serene as the dargah's courtyard. Although it is crammed with small freelance businesses. This late morning, Pawan Kumar at Maurya Tea Stall is pounding the ginger sprigs to prepare a fresh stock of adrak chai; his tiny mortar-and-pestle is making a surprisingly loud thak-thak about the stall's vicinity. Nearby, the cloth banner of Yadvaji Chai Wale is trembling in the light breeze. Steps away, Kakoo Kachori Wale snack shop is doing brisk trade. While the next-door Future Point Computer Horoscope is yet to roll up its shutters for the day, palmist Uttamji is poring over a customer's palm at his booth — see right photo.

The plaza also has scores of henna stalls, a couple of tattoo booths, and a barber's extremely modest establishment comprising solely of a suitcase filled with the most essential shaving things.

A boy now buys a bunch of yellow and blue flowers from Kapoor Florist. Within moments a monkey snatches the flowers from him, and starts to eat those with two other of his fellows.

For more stories by Mayank Austen Soofi, scan the QR code

PUC CENTRES MAY STRIKE OVER LOW INCREASE OF RATES

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Petrol Dealers' Association (DPDA) has called for a strike starting Monday, which may result in the closure of several pollution under control (PUC) test centres at fuel pumps in Delhi.

The announcement came after the Delhi government proposed to raise the rates of issuing PUC certificates, which DPDA deemed "inadequate".

Nischal Singhania, DPDA president, said the last revision was 13 years ago. "Since then, staff salaries and operation costs have increased substantially."

The new rates for two and three-wheelers running on petrol, CNG, or LPG will be increased from ₹60 to ₹80. For four-wheelers and above in the same fuel category, the rates will be raised from ₹80 to ₹110. In diesel vehicles, the rates will increase from ₹100 to ₹140. HT

BSES employee electrocuted while repairing electric pole

HT Correspondents
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A 50-year-old BSES staffer died of electrocution on Sunday morning while he was repairing an electric pole in Dwarka, police officers aware of the matter said.

Deputy commissioner of police (Dwarka) Ankit Singh identified the deceased as Ram Naval, a resident of Vikas Nagar.

Police said the incident in question occurred at around 9.30am at Mohan Garden S Block, when Naval was repairing an electric pole. After he was electrocuted, he fell around 15 feet to the ground, following he was rushed to ESI hospital, where he died during treatment.

Officers investigating the

case said Naval's post mortem revealed that he died of an electric shock. Police said the body has been sent to the mortuary.

A first information report (FIR) under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 287 (negligent conduct wrt fire or combustible matter) and 106(I) (causing death by negligence) was lodged against unknown people, and investigators said they have written to BSES to probe how the electrocution took place.

A BSES spokesperson said, "Our condolences are with the family of the deceased. We are in touch with the family of the deceased and cooperating with the authorities in the investigation."

Separately, a 34-year-old woman died of electrocution on

Saturday after coming in contact with a live wire in a water-logged street in Yamuna Vihar.

Police said the deceased, Poonam (went by one name), was on her way to a hospital for a medical check-up when the incident took place.

Her husband Ravindra Kumar said, "We both were with our son at a hospital, who was undergoing treatment for epilepsy. She left the hospital around 7am for her own test for a stomach-related ailment, when the incident occurred."

Kumar urged the government to take water logging seriously. "There is a massive water logging problem in so many areas of Delhi. There was a live wire in the water. Yesterday, my wife died, but it could have been anyone," he said.

2 KILLED AS VAN HITS BIKE IN GZB

GHAZIABAD: Two people were killed and one injured was when the motorcycle they were riding was hit by a pickup van in Vasundhara on Sunday, police said. The victims were going towards the Kanawani police outpost when a pickup vehicle coming from the opposite side hit the bike, police said. PTI

BJP announces protest over power hike, AAP hits back

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party on Sunday said the party will hold demonstrations across 14 districts in Delhi on Monday against the alleged "imposition of the Power Purchase Agreement Charges (PPAC) excessive electricity bills."

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva accused the Delhi government of "failing to pre-purchase electricity for peak summer and winter demands, burdening residents with these additional costs. He called for a judicial inquiry into the matter."

The Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government responded to the allegations, saying PPAC is the surcharge component in power bills provided by the

AAP'S PRIYANKA KAKKAR SAID BJP WAS MISLEADING THE PUBLIC AND DELHI STILL HAD SOME OF THE LOWEST RATES

electricity regulatory commissions to meet the additional costs due to variations in the power purchase costs incurred by the discoms.

"To protest against these charges, BJP workers will hold demonstrations at power distribution company offices... PPAC has increased every summer and winter but it has never been withdrawn after the quarter ends," Sachdeva said.

yanka Kakkar reiterated the AAP's allegations that the BJP was misleading the people. "Delhi gets free electricity for 24 hours and up to 200 units. Even above 200 units, Delhi gets the cheapest electricity in the country. BJP should explain why there are power cuts of many hours in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh ruled by them despite getting expensive electricity?" said Kakkar.

Earlier, power minister Atishi said that the BJP was spreading "false rumours", adding that the discoms have a provision in the Electricity Act 2003 to increase PPAC by up to 10% from the rate prescribed by the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission in case of a high cost of power purchase and the provision is in place from 2003.

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ABVP SAYS NSUI VANDALISED DUSU OFFICE, POLICE COMPLAINT FILED

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Sunday alleged that some members of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), including DUSU (Delhi University Students Union) vice president Abhi Dahiya, ransacked the students' union office in the North Campus.

Police said they have received a complaint and will register a first information report in the matter.

"A complaint has been received at Maurice Nagar Police Station. Police will investigate the matter and act accordingly," said deputy commissioner of police (North) MK Meena.

According to a statement by ABVP, Dahiya, a member of the Congress's student wing NSUI, and others ransacked the offices of DUSU president Tushar Dedha, DUSU secretary Aparajita, DUSU joint secretary Sachin Baisla, and the visitor room early Sunday morning.

NSUI denied the allegations and accused ABVP of vandalising the union vice president's office.

Man acquitted of rape after 9 years

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Nine years after a man was charged with rape, a Delhi court has acquitted him, saying the testimonies of the alleged victim were "not clear, cogent, credible or trustworthy, nor were her allegations corroborated by other material evidence".

Additional sessions judge Priyanka Bhagat was hearing a case against Mahender, against whom the police station had lodged an FIR under penal provisions of rape and criminal intimidation.

According to the prosecutrix, in 2014, Mahender took her to Nainital where he spiked her food, raped her after she fell unconscious and filmed the act.

"The testimonies of prosecution witness I2 or victim are not clear, cogent, credible and trustworthy and the same are not corroborated by other material evidence," the court said in its verdict on July 9. "This court is of the considered opinion that the prosecution has failed to prove the case against the accused beyond reasonable doubt. Hence, accused Mahender is hereby acquitted".

New liquor vend to come up at IGI's T3

NEW DELHI: The excise department has issued a liquor licence to the Delhi Consumer's Cooperative Wholesale Store Ltd. (DCCWS) for opening a retail liquor store at Terminal 3 Arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, excise department officials said on Sunday.

DCCWS operates 140 retail

liquor stores across the city. "Currently there are only duty free liquor stores at the Arrival and Departure areas of Terminal 3. This is the first liquor store at the airport ever opened by any Delhi government corporation in the current excise regime," said an official. The store will operate 24x7, officials said.

HT Unforgettable

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After 46 yrs, process for audit of Jagannath temple treasury starts

Debabrata Mohanty
letters@hindustantimes.com

BHUBANESWAR: The inner chamber of the treasury of the 12th-century Jagannath temple in Puri was reopened on Sunday for an audit of valuables after 46 years, officials aware of the matter said.

The Ratna Bhandar, situated next to the sanctum sanctorum that houses the primary idols and assembly hall, has long been considered the custodian of the temple's riches. In the last audit of Bhandar held in 1978, the Odisha government said the inventory contained over 149.6kg of gold ornaments fitted with precious stones, 258.3kg of silver utensils, and other items. On Sunday, its door was opened in the presence of a 12-member team comprising the head of the high-level committee appointed by the state government, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) officials, and temple trust representatives.

"We carried out all the work as per SOPs. We first opened the outer chamber of the Ratna Bhandar and shifted all ornaments and valuables kept there to the temporary strong room inside the temple. We have sealed the strong room," Shree



Special boxes and tools brought to Jagannath temple ahead of the Ratna Bhandar opening. ANI

Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Arabinda Padhee said.

"The team then broke the three locks of the inner chamber as we could not open it using the keys that were given to us. The team members decided against opening the wooden chests inside the inner chamber due to paucity of time. The ornaments and jewels in the inner chamber will be shifted to a temporary strong room inside the temple premises on another day as the temple administration will be



busy with the Bahuda Yatra (return car festival) and other rituals from Monday," Padhee added.

During the 1978 audit, it took officials 70 days to prepare the inventory of the valuables, people aware of the matter said.

The head of the audit supervisory committee formed by the state, justice (retired) Biswanath Rath, said the team "saw five wooden chests, four wooden almirahs, and one steel almirah" in the inner chamber. "Many other items might also be there,

as we are yet to check behind the almirahs," he said.

The Ratna Bhandar consists of two sections — an outer chamber, which is opened for various rituals from time to time, and an inner chamber, which was last opened in 1985 to take out jewelry to make new ornaments for Lord Balabhadra and for silver cladding of the gate in the sanctum sanctorum, people aware of the matter said. However, no audit was done at the time.

"Today, on your wish, the Ratna Bhandar was opened after

46 years for a greater purpose," the office of chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi said in a post on X in Odia.

In March 2018, following a public interest litigation, the Orissa high court asked ASI to inspect the structural condition of the Ratna Bhandar and submit a status report. On April 4 that year, a 16-member team then attempted to enter the Bhandar, but the keys given to them by the Puri district collector did not match the padlock.

The opening of the treasury became a major issue during the recent assembly elections, with the BJP highlighting the "disappearance" of the treasury key in 2018. From PM Modi to Amit Shah, all Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders raised the slogan of "Odia Asmita" (Odia pride) to oust the BJD government. The BJP, in its manifesto, promised an audit and inventorisation of the treasury if voted to power.

The temple's treasury has also been engulfed in superstition, with tales of mythical snakes guarding the riches becoming a part of the folklore. This prompted the officials to keep members of the Snake Helpline and doctors on standby. However, no snakes were found when the chamber was opened.

Unblocking Uttarakhand roads



An excavator clears off debris and boulders that led to a road blockage on NH-7 following a landslide in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand on Sunday. ANI

Cong names leaders for its core team in LS

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Congress has reappointed Gaurav Gogoi as its deputy leader in the Lok Sabha while retaining Kodikunnil Suresh, serving his eighth term in the Lower House, as its chief whip. They will be assisting Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi in floor coordination and other issues in the Lower House.

The party has also re-nominated Manickam Tagore as a whip, it brought its Kishanganj MP Md Jawaid as another whip, according to an announcement by Congress general secretary (administration) KC Venugopal on Sunday.

"Hon'ble CPP Chairperson Smt Sonia Gandhi ji has written to the Hon'ble Lok Sabha Speaker informing him about the appointment of the Deputy Leader, Chief Whip, and two Whips for the Congress Party in the Lok Sabha. Deputy Leader — Shri @GauravGogoi Asm. Chief Whip — Shri @kodikunnilMP,

THE CHOICE OF LEADERS UNDERLINES THE CONGRESS'S PREFERENCE FOR CONTINUITY AND A BID TO MAINTAIN A REGIONAL BALANCE

Whips — 1. Shri @manickamtagore and 2. @DrMdJawaid1," Venugopal announced on X, tagging their social media IDs. "Guided by LOP Shri @RahulGandhi ji, the Congress and INDIA parties will energetically champion the people's causes in the Lok Sabha," Venugopal added.

The choice of leaders in the party's core team in the Lower House underlines a preference for continuity, but the Congress also tried to maintain a regional balance — Suresh and Tagore are from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, respectively, Jawaid is from

Bihar, and Gogoi is from Assam. In the 17th Lok Sabha, Raveet Singh Bittu was the second whip of the Congress. However, he joined the BJP before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Jawaid, the only new face in this team, is the party's working president in Bihar and one of the three Congress MPs from the state in 2024. He also has a rich legislative experience being a four-term MLA, a former minister, and a two-term MP.

Two senior leaders indicated that the Congress was likely to retain its current team led by LOP and party president Mallikarjun Kharge in the Rajya Sabha.

The Lok Sabha team has been reconstituted a week before the monsoon session of Parliament. The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha was a tumultuous one with protests, walkouts and an all-out attack against the government. Gandhi accused the BJP of being "fake Hindus", and Modi launched a frontal attack by chiding the Congress leader's "balak buddhi" (childish intelligence).

{ HAILS MODI'S FARSIGHTEDNESS }

NEP key to achieve goal of developed India by 2047: Shah

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

INDORE: Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday virtually inaugurated hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's farsightedness in bringing in the New Education Policy amid the aim of making India a developed country by 2047, as he inaugurated

Prime Minister's College of Excellence for all 55 districts in Madhya Pradesh.

Speaking at an event at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government Arts and Commerce College in Indore, which has been developed as a PM College of Excellence, Shah said students must download the NEP document as it will teach them to

"think out of the box". "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target to make India a developed nation by 2047 when the country will celebrate 100 years of Independence. NEP will play a major role in it. In order to become a developed nation, the foundation of education has to be strengthened and PM Modi has shown farsighted-

ness by bringing in NEP that fulfils the needs of the next 25 years," he said. "NEP will get our students on par with international standards while keeping them intact with their culture. It focuses on quality and not quantity and provides an opportunity to students to think out of the box," Shah said. The Union minister said the

55 colleges he inaugurated meet all parameters to provide top quality, practical and modern education.

The Union home minister also praised MP for being the first to implement the NEP, which he said took place when chief minister Mohan Yadav was state higher education minister (in the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government).

MATHERAN HILL STATION MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
MATHERAN-410102, TAL-KARJAT, DIST-RAIGAD Email ID mc@matheran@gmail.com
OUTWARD NO - MHMC/820 /2024-25 DATE - 12/07/2024

Public Notice E-Tender

The Chief Officer Matheran Municipal Council has Published the declaration of E-Tender for 1) OFFER FOR APPOINTMENT AS AGENCY FOR CAPITATION TAX, 2) OFFER FOR APPOINTMENT AS AGENT FOR VEHICLE SPECIAL SANITATION SERVICES SECURITY CHARGES COLLECTION. Details information is available on the <https://mahatenders.gov.in> website

Sd/-
(Rahul Ingle)
Chief Officer
Matheran H. S. Municipal Council, Matheran

WESTERN RAILWAY - RATLAM DIVISION
W/623/NT/1 Date 10.07.2024

E-TENDERING NOTICE

The Divisional Railway Manager (WA) RATLAM for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through e-tender on website www.ireps.gov.in in the details as under:-

Sr. No.	E-tender No. & Name of Work	Approx. Value ₹	EMD in ₹	Completion Period
1	RTM-2024-25-61 Mandsaur-Providing of Modern RPF Thana at including electrical work	1,36,89,794.57	2,18,500.00	12 Months
2	RTM-2024-25-67 Ratlam-Khandwa Section : Carryout various P. Way Maintenance activities in connection with outsourcing under Jurisdiction of SSE (PW)KNW for 2 years	3,56,59,197.31	3,28,300.00	24 Months

Similar type of work: Construction of any Building Work.
Approx Quantity: As per Tender Schedule

Similar type of work: Any Track Work
Approx Quantity: As per Tender Schedule

Date of uploading on website : 10.07.2024. Date of opening of Tender : 07.08.2024. Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria and terms and conditions are available at Website www.ireps.gov.in.

5/1/138
Divisional Railway Manager (WA)
Ratlam Division, Western Railway

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PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Mohd. Arbaz Khan, S/o: Mohd. Iqbal, R/o: H. No. 1257, 2nd Floor, Katra Hussain Mirja, Pharash Khana, Delhi-06, Also at H. No. 1474, Shop No. 2, Star Market Near Multan Sewa Samiti, Pharash Khana, Delhi-06, Also at Shop No. 1, Plot No. 13, Welcome Colony, Rawalji ka Bandha, Khadi Pura Road, Jaipur, Rajasthan-302006 has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case Case No. 5048/18, U/s 138 NI Act and Case No. 5046/18, U/s 138 NI Act, Kamla Market, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Mohd. Arbaz Khan cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Mohd. Arbaz Khan has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Mohd. Arbaz Khan accused of Case No. 5048/18, U/s 138 NI Act and Case No. 5046/18, U/s 138 NI Act, Kamla Market, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 17.08.2024.

By Order
Sh. Nitish Kumar Sharma
Metropolitan Magistrate-01, NI Act
Room No. 201, CBA-II
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

DP/8889/CD/2024

MAHATRANSCO (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

SRM e-Tender No. T-2434/MSETCL/CO/Projects/IT/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001210)

MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.

"Establishment of 220/33 kV Bidkin GIS s/s, along with associated line Tal. Paitan, Dist. Ch. Sambhajinagar under Ch. Sambhajinagar zone MSETCL Maharashtra."

Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. <https://srm.tender.mahatransco.in>

The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from 09.07.2024.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE FOR PROVISION OF TRAIN CONTROL COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Sr. No. (1) E-Tender No. 159-ST-Tender -2024. Date : 09.07.2024.

Name of Work: "Provision of VoIP based Train Control Communication System over Bilaspur Division of South East Central Railway."

Tender Value: ₹ 4,23,16,889.53/- (Rupees Four Crore Twenty Three Lakhs Sixteen Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Nine point Fifty Three Paise Only). EMD : ₹ 3,61,600/- (Rupees Three Lakhs Sixty One Thousand Six Hundred Only). Submission of Tender: Up to 15:00 hrs. on 01.08.2024.

The complete information of above e-tender notice is available over website www.ireps.gov.in. Bids other than e-bids shall not be accepted against above tender.

Divl. Sig. & Tele. Engineer
CPR/10/140 S.E.C. Railway, Bilaspur.

South East Central Railway @secrail

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NOTICE FOR RECRUITMENT ON DEPUTATION BASIS

Applications are invited for the following posts on deputation basis from the eligible officers/officials of Central Government/State Government/Public Sector Undertaking/Autonomous Bodies:

S. No.	Name of the Post	No. of Posts	Level of the Pay Matrix
1.	Deputy Director (Engineering Works)	01	Level-11 [Rs.15600-39100+6600 (GP): Pre-revised]
2.	Deputy Director (Urban Planning)	01	Level-11 [Rs.15600-39100+6600 (GP): Pre-revised]
3.	Assistant Director (Civil)	01	Level-10 [Rs.15600-39100+5400 (GP): Pre-revised]
4.	Assistant Director (Architecture)	01	Level-10 [Rs.15600-39100+5400 (GP): Pre-revised]

The deputation shall be initially for a period of one year but it is likely to extend further. The applicants may be requested to forward their application through proper channel alongwith NOC, Vigilance Clearance and APARs for the last five years. For further details regarding eligibility etc. the applicants are requested to refer to the detailed notice on our website: <http://srdc.delhi.gov.in>

The complete application (in all respect) shall reach this office by 16th August, 2024, as applications received after due date shall not be entertained.

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0123/24-25 Dy. General Manager (Projects & Administration)

Attack on Trump triggers row as PM, Rahul express concern

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Indian leaders cutting across party lines on Sunday condemned the assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump and asserted that violence has no place in a democratic and civilised society, even as the attack triggered a political row with some Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders accusing the Congress of "encouraging violence" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

On his part, Modi said he was deeply concerned by the attack on his "friend", referring to Trump. Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi stressed that such incidents were condemnable, and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge criticised the "heinous act" saying "such violence has no place in any democracy and civilised society".

Trump was shot in the ear in an assassination attempt during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday — an attack that will likely reshape this year's US presidential race while raising sharp questions about security provided to the Republican candidate. The suspect, 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks, was shot dead by Secret Service agents. One person who attended the rally was killed and two other spectators were critically wounded.

In a post on X, Modi said violence has no place in politics

Trump attack fallout

NO PLACE FOR VIOLENCE, SAYS PM
"Deeply concerned by the attack on my friend, former president Donald Trump. Strongly condemn the incident. Violence has no place in politics and democracies. Wish him a speedy recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of the deceased, those injured and the American people."
— NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

RAHUL EXPRESSES CONCERN
"I am deeply concerned by the assassination attempt on former US president Donald Trump. Such acts must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. Wishing him a swift and complete recovery."
— RAHUL GANDHI, Congress MP



and democracies. "Deeply concerned by the attack on my friend, former President Donald Trump. Strongly condemn the incident. Violence has no place in politics and democracies. Wish him speedy recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of the deceased, those injured and the American people," he said. Gandhi said that such acts must be condemned "in the strongest possible terms". "I am

American people, we offer our deepest condolences to the family of the deceased," he wrote on the micro-blogging site. Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, however, alleged that right-wing leaders across the globe were being targeted by the radical left. "Physical or otherwise, right-wing leaders across the globe are now active targets of the radical left. However, these attacks will not be able to defeat the 'nation first' ideology," he wrote on X.

To be sure, American authorities did not disclose what may have motivated Crooks to try to assassinate the former President, and many experts cautioned against jumping to conclusion on the gunman's political leanings — Crooks was a registered Republican, and had, when he was 17, donated to a political fund that funnelled money to Democrats.

"My best wishes to Donald Trump as he stands strong. #StandWithTrump #NationFirst," Sarma added. BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya said that "had Donald Trump not moved away in time, the bullet would have got his temple, leaving his skull split wide open".

"Let that sink in. The deranged Left can go to any extent," he said, accusing Gandhi of allegedly encouraging violence against Modi. "...Rahul Gandhi has often encouraged and justified violence against Prime Minister Modi, who he

has lost election to several times now. How can India ever forget how Punjab Police, then under the Congress, deliberately compromised PM's security, when his convoy was left stranded on a flyover?" Malviya said. He was referring to the purported security breach during Modi's visit to Punjab on January 5, 2022. Modi's convoy was stranded on a flyover for 20 minutes during his visit to Ferozepur due to the presence of protesters along that route.

Malviya also alleged that Gandhi has used similar rhetoric against Modi, such as calling him a "dictator", that Trump's critics like Democrat leader and US President Joe Biden have.

In the US, politicians from all sides condemned the shooting and the Biden campaign suspended "all outbound communications" and was attempting to pull down ads in light of the attacks. Biden also talked to Trump on Saturday night and was expected to make another address to the nation late on Sunday after homeland security and law enforcement officials briefed the President, and the White House continued to call for national unity.

QR code and text: READ: Trump's shooting seals his political edge for 2024

Accused in BSP leader's murder shot dead: Cops

Divya Chandrababu

letters@hindustantimes.com

CHENNAI: The Chennai police on Sunday gunned down a key accused in the murder of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Tamil Nadu unit chief K Armstrong after he allegedly attacked a policeman and attempted to flee custody, officials said.

According to the police, K Thiruvengadam (33), who was one of the 11 accused arrested in the Armstrong murder case, was taken by sleuths to his residence in Manali area around 7am on Sunday to seize the weapons used in the murder.

"On the way back, he asked us to stop for nature's call and when the police vehicle stopped near Retteri lake, he pushed away the policemen on duty and tried to escape," the Chennai police said in a statement.

Policemen gave him a chase and when a sub-inspector tried to capture him, Thiruvengadam allegedly pulled out a hidden gun and tried to open fire. "The policemen immediately fired at him in self-defence causing him injuries," a senior police officer said, adding the accused was rushed to a government hospital where he was declared dead. The police, however, did not divulge information on how the accused got hold of a gun. An FIR has been registered and a magisterial inquiry has been ordered, a senior officer said.

On July 5, Armstrong was hacked to death by a gang near his residence at Perambur in Chennai. Following the murder, the police arrested 11 suspects and have been questioning them in custody for



K Armstrong

the last five days. The police suspect the involvement of associates of gangster Arcot Suresh, who was murdered in August last year, in the BSP state chief's killing.

Opposition parties, who have been attacking the DMK government over the law-and-order situation, raised suspicion over the encounter killing, claiming it appeared to be a cover act by the ruling party to protect the real culprits in the murder case.

"While taking an accused to a spot, my legal advisors tell me that he must be handcuffed," AIADMK general secretary Edappadi Palaniswami told reporters. "This (police encounter) has only raised more doubts given that those related to Armstrong believe that the real perpetrators have not been caught."

BJP state chief K Annamalai posted on X: "It seems there is an attempt to cover up the truth."

Senior DMK leader and minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Sekar Babu said the accused will be punished. "The case is under investigation so it won't be right to comment but we assure that this government will bring the perpetrators to justice," Babu said. "Our police will not allow the accused to escape."



B Nagendra

VALMIKI SCAM: EX-K'TAKA MIN SENT TO CUSTODY OF ED TILL JULY 18

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

BENGALURU: Former Karnataka minister and Bellary Congress legislator B Nagendra, who was recently arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the alleged multi-crore Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribe Development Corporation scam, was remanded in the custody of the probe agency till July 18, officials said on Sunday.

This came after the former minister, who was arrested in the late hours of Friday after a day-long interrogation, underwent medical tests at Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital.

In its remand application before a court, ED argued that Nagendra orchestrated the scam in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Limited, where funds amounting to ₹84 crore were embezzled.

"On his directions, the accounts of the corporation were transferred from Vasant Nagar branch of Union Bank of India to its MG Road branch. Nagendra held meetings with officials and others at a hotel to pressure them to illegally divert the money," the application said.

Nagendra was arrested following a two-day raid across locations linked to him.

Guj school teacher held for sexually harassing minor

MAHISAGAR: Police have arrested a physical training teacher of a government school in Gujarat's Mahisagar district on charges of sexually harassing and threatening a 16-year-old girl student, an official said on Sunday. Upset over the incident, a group of persons on Saturday vandalised the high school, DSP Kamlesh Vasava said.

4 kids drown in well as mother attempts suicide

MANDSAUR: Four children drowned after their mother jumped into a well with them in an attempt to commit suicide in Madhya Pradesh's Mandasaur on Sunday, police said. Locals managed to rescue the mother but could not save her children in time.

Three die of asphyxiation at illegal Guj mine

SURENDRANAGAR: Three labourers died of asphyxiation at an illegal coal mine in Surendranagar district of Gujarat, police said on Sunday. A case was registered against four people for culpable homicide not amounting to murder.



The Audi was confiscated by Pune Police on Sunday.

{ AMID ROW } NOTICE TO MOTHER

Pune cops seize IAS trainee's luxury car

SHRINIVAS DESHPANDE
PUNE: Pune Police on Sunday confiscated a luxury car that was used by IAS trainee Puja Khedkar by illegally installing a red beacon light and VIP number plate, besides a "Maharashtra government" sticker, amid an ongoing probe into a series of complaints against her conduct, officials said.

The police also issued a show cause notice to Puja's mother Manorama for allegedly threatening a farmer with a pistol and sought a response within 10 days on why her gun licence should not be revoked, the officials added. The developments came amid a raging row over the probationary officer's conduct and flurry of claims that she used illegal means to clear her civil services exam. According to officials, the luxury vehicle, an Audi, was dropped by the driver of the Khedkar family at the traffic division of Chatur-

Priests hold protest against plan for Kedarnath temple in Capital

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

MUSSOORIE: Priests at the Kedarnath temple in Rudraprayag district on Sunday staged a protest in front of the shrine against the laying of a foundation stone of another Kedarnath temple in New Delhi last week by Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami.

On July 10, Dhami took part in a *bhoomi puja* at a ceremony in Hiranki neighbourhood near Burari in northwest Delhi and laid the foundation stone for a new Kedarnath temple at the site.

The priests of the Uttarakhand shrine gathered under the banner of Kedar Sabha, along with various other associations, in front of the temple premises



Kedarnath temple in Rudraprayag

in Rudraprayag district and raised slogans against the state government and Dhami, alleging the government was encouraging the construction of a temple in the name of Kedarnath and conspiring against the Char Dham Yatra in the Garhwal Himalayas by undermining the sanctity of the ancient shrines. "We are not against a temple

being constructed, but are opposing the construction of a Kedarnath temple by a religious trust in Delhi, which as claimed, will have the same form," said Pankaj Shukla, spokesperson of the Kedar Sabha. "A stone from the Kedarnath shrine area will also be shifted, thus reducing the religious sanctity of the Kedarnath shrine in Rudraprayag," Shukla said.

HT reached out to state government officials for a comment but did not get one immediately.

Surinder Rautela, who heads the Shri Kedarnath Dham Delhi Trust in Burari, clarified that only a temple is being developed and "not a dham (shrine)." There are many temples in India based on famous temples and there should not be any controversy about it, Rautela said.

3 terrorists killed near LoC as Army foils infiltration bid

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

SRINAGAR: Three terrorists were killed near the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district of north Kashmir, the Army said on Sunday, as it foiled an infiltration bid in the sensitive area.

The infiltration bid was foiled in Keran sector of Kupwara along the LoC, the Chinar Corps said on X, adding that a huge cache of arms and ammunition were recovered from the spot.

"Three terrorists have been eliminated in the ongoing anti-infiltration operation on the LoC in Keran sector along with recovery of weapons and other war-like stores," the Chinar Corps said.

The operation was underway at the time of going to print, and the army did not release information about the identity or affiliations of the slain terrorists. "We are yet to receive any information about the operation," said an official at the police control room, Kupwara.

The operation comes just a week after security forces killed six terrorists in two separate encounters in Kulgam district of south Kashmir on July 6 and 7.

Two army jawans were also killed in the gunfights.

Four terrorists and one soldier were killed on July 6 in Chinggam, while another soldier died in Modergam. The remaining two terrorists were killed on July 7 as the Modergam operation concluded.

On June 23, a terrorist was killed in an anti-infiltration operation by security forces near the LoC in Uri sector of Baramulla district of north Kashmir.

The army foiled the infiltration bid by a group of terrorists to sneak into the Valley near Basgrain village on the LoC in Uri sector by challenging the infiltration group leading to exchange of fire.

In April, the army had killed two infiltrators in Uri near Rustam post. The army later blamed Pakistani forces for giving cover fire to two infiltrators who were killed by the security forces near Sabura nullah on the LoC in the Uri sector. It was the first infiltration attempt of the year, which was averted by the alert forces.

In November last year, the army had foiled a similar infiltration bid in the Uri sector and neutralised two terrorists.

{ MADHYA PRADESH } TWO ARRESTED

Man proves brother's murder two years after cops shut case

Shruti Tomar and Nitin Gupta

letters@hindustantimes.com

BHOPAL/DEWAS: Twenty-one months after his elder brother was killed, a resident of Manasa village in Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh managed to prove that it was a case of murder, and not "accidental drowning", as first concluded by the local police's probe into the death.

Subhash Sharma, 36, fought against a faulty investigation for two years and managed to prove — with the help of videos and photos clicked by fellow villagers when the body was found in a local drain — that his late brother Mahesh Sharma, 40, was brutally murdered on September 4, 2022 over a political rivalry.

Vindication came on June 30, 2024, when police in Sonkatch registered an FIR against Bharat Chawda and Jitendra Chawda, and arrested them on July 2. Last Tuesday, police also ordered an inquiry against the former investigating

officer in the case, Neeta Darwal. According to police, on September 4, 2022, Mahesh Sharma had gone to meet a doctor in Sonkatch but he did not return home. After hours of searching, some villagers suggested looking for him in a drain passing the village, but one of their neighbours, Jitendra Chawda, stopped them, saying there was a ghost in the drain. "Later... another neighbour, Bharat Chawda, informed us that his body was lying in a drain. The body was fished out — there were injury marks on the body and Mahesh's shirt was wrapped

around the neck as if he was killed by strangulation," said Subhash. "Everyone said it was murder, but police didn't see that. The autopsy said he died of drowning, and police closed the case on September 8, 2022," he added. Subhash was convinced that Bharat and Jitendra were the accused since it was Jitendra who first stopped villagers from going near the drain, and later Bharat who found the body. Bharat found Mahesh's mobile four days of his death. He was also clear about the motive — a political rivalry over the local sarpanch polls in which the Sharma and Chawda families were on opposite sides. "I collected all the photos and videos shot by the villagers when the body was recovered," said Subhash, adding that he made a file of all the evidence and started filing complaint to senior police officers. His complaint reached Sonkatch police on April 1, 2024, where inspector Shyam Charan Sharma saw merit in the case and started a probe. Darwal refused to comment.

VIDEO OF DRONE ABOVE TAJ MAHAL SURFACES, CISF TO CONDUCT INQUIRY

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

AGRA: A video of a drone flying near the Taj Mahal in Agra surfaced on social media on Sunday, triggering panic among local officials and prompting the Central Industrial Security Force and the Taj Security Police to constitute a joint committee to probe the matter. While the video emerged early on Sunday, and was widely shared, the police denied any such incident being reported recently in the area.

"No drone was spotted today by CISF personnel deployed for internal security of Taj, neither was any such matter reported by Taj Security Police spread around the monument," Syed Areeb Ahmed, Taj Security assistant commissioner of police (ACP), said. The official said the video appeared old, but a probe had begun. "Further there is no clue about timing and day. Prima facie, it seems to be an old video," he said.

In view of the monument being a Unesco World Heritage Site, the government in 2006 declared a 500-metre radius around the mausoleum a no-fly zone, prohibiting commercial flights and operation of drones. "Keeping in view the sensitivity of Taj Mahal, a joint team of CISF and Taj Security will probe the matter," the ACP said.

In the video, Ahmed said "the drone appears towards the other side of Yamuna, and the distance from Taj could not be assessed". "In case breach of security, a case will be registered against the person responsible," he said.

THE POLICE DENIED ANY SUCH INCIDENT BEING REPORTED IN THE AREA ON SUNDAY

Search for missing sanitation worker in Kerala continues

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

KOCHI: The search operation to trace a missing sanitation worker, who was swept away in rainwater while cleaning the Amayizhanchan canal near Thiruvananthapuram, continued till Sunday evening and will resume on Monday, officials said.

Forty-two-year old Joy went missing on Saturday while cleaning the waste-filled canal criss-crossing through the heart of the capital city. Joy and two other workers were engaged in cleaning the Thampanoor part of the canal near the railway station when the water flow increased due to heavy rainfall, sweeping him into a 200-metre-long tunnel below the tracks of the platform at the central rail-

JOY WENT MISSING ON SATURDAY WHILE CLEANING THE WASTE-FILLED CANAL THAT CRISS-CROSSES THE STATE CAPITAL

way station. According to officials aware of the details, efforts are being made to remove the piles of waste and marsh accumulated in the canal to facilitate a search inside a manhole leading to the tunnel. "Our priority is to find Joy. The rest of the matter, including how the railway was handling the canal, will be dealt with later," labour minister V Sivan-kutty said.

{ DEHRADUN } RADIOGRAPHY CAMERA SEIZED

Accused wanted to sell item for crores: Police



The device was seized by Dehradun police last week.

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

DEHRADUN: The five people who were arrested in connection with the recovery of a radiography camera from a Dehradun flat last week had allegedly procured the device for ₹5 lakh and were trying to sell it for ₹10-15 crore, police said on Sunday, as it arrested one more person in the case.

Radiography cameras use X-rays or gamma rays to create images of the inside of an object or body. These images can be used to inspect industrial objects. The recovery of the device on Thursday had initially triggered panic

among local residents over suspicion that it was a radioactive object. "It appears that the accused were planning to commit fraud. One of the accused, Tabrez Alam, said he brought the device from Rashid Hasan at a price of ₹5 lakh and wanted to dupe people by selling it for ₹10-15 crore," a senior Dehradun police officer privy to the investigation said.

Hasan, was arrested from his hometown in Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday for allegedly selling the radiography camera to the remaining five people earlier. "During probe, police learnt that five people who were arrested earlier procured the

device from Rashid. He was later arrested," Dehradun SSP Ajai Singh said.

The incident triggered a probe into how the device, labelled "Radiography Camera Manufactured by Board of Radiation And Isotope Technology Government Of India, Department Of Atomic Energy BARC/BRT Vashi Complex Sector 20 Vashi Navi Mumbai", reached the Dehradun flat.

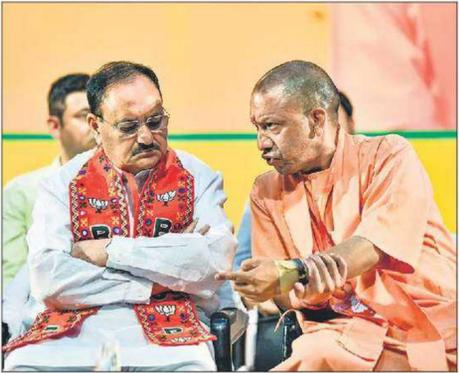
Singh earlier said that an examination of the item revealed that it did not contain radioactive elements. "It did contain some other chemicals. It was decided to send it to Bhabha Atomic Research Centre for testing."

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS CHIEF
Narendra Modi ji, yesterday you were weaving a web of lies about providing jobs in Mumbai... Why has the NRA not conducted a single exam in the last four years?

People backed us as they aspire for Viksit Bharat: Nadda in UP

Pawan Dixit
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LUCKNOW: People have supported the party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the Centre for the third consecutive term as they aspire for a "Viksit Bharat" (developed India), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president and Union health minister JP Nadda said on Sunday.



BJP president JP Nadda with UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow on Sunday.

Nadda, who was in Lucknow to preside over the closing session of the BJP's state executive meeting held to review the party's poor performance in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh, hailed the chief minister Yogi Adityanath government for overall development of the Hindi heartland state. "When the lotus blooms in the country or at the state level, good governance follows," Nadda said, addressing party workers at the Ram Manohar Lohia Law University's auditorium. "People of our country have supported us for the third consecutive term because they believe in and aspire for a Viksit Bharat by 2047."

He also used the opportunity to attack the Congress, saying even after three previous parliamentary elections, the opposition party could not surpass the BJP's 240 seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. "The Congress couldn't cross the 100-seat mark. The total number of seats won by all their allies combined is still less than what the BJP won alone in these elections," Nadda asserted, referring to the larger opposition INDIA bloc's tally of 234 seats in the recent general elections. "I want to tell you that in 13 states, the Congress has zero MPs. I also want to inform you that in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, the Congress won only

two seats out of 64 seats where BJP was in a direct contest with them. It is a parasitic party where it relies on others to win," Nadda said.

Referring to the opposition's attack on the BJP in the run-up to the polls claiming the latter wanted to change the Constitution, Nadda said: "We need to tell the people who played with the Constitution. The Congress has dismissed elected state governments 90 times."

He praised the Adityanath government for improved law and order scenario in the state and making Uttar Pradesh the second biggest economy in the country.

Meanwhile, reacting to Nadda's attack, Congress spokesperson CP Rai said, "BJP has finished all its allies right from AIADMK, Biju Janata Dal and (undivided) Shiv Sena. But Congress has always taken care of its allies. BJP must introspect its defeat in the recently concluded by-election on 13 assembly seats."

OVERCONFIDENCE HURT PROSPECTS IN LS POLLS, SAYS YOGI AT BJP MEET

LUCKNOW: Chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said overconfidence of the party workers and candidates hurt the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) prospects in the Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing the BJP's state executive meeting on Sunday, Adityanath said, "This time the BJP managed to get the same vote percentage as in the previous elections, but overconfidence of the party workers and candidates hurt our prospects. The opposition, meanwhile, has been able to regain some of its relevance in the state."

Adityanath also urged the party workers to gear up for the upcoming bypolls in 10 assembly seats and the state elections in 2027.

Many stranded, schools and houses submerged as Bihar floods worsen

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PATNA: Thousands of residents in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district were cut-off from the block and district headquarters on Sunday after floodwaters of the rapidly rising Bagmati river entered hundreds of houses in low-lying areas of 18 panchayats, officials said, adding flood situation in most of the northern parts of the state remained grim.

Many schools in those 18 panchayats have been inundated, disrupting the education of children, as soaring current of Bagmati was rising on both sides of the pontoon bridge in Muzaffarpur, an official from the state's water resources department (WRD) said.

"We received information that the water level of the Bagmati river has risen. The district administration instructed us to monitor the panchayats. We

took stock of three panchayats and have arranged five boats," Katra circle officer Madhumita Kumari said.

Several rivers passing through north Bihar districts were in spate having crossed the danger level, following medium to heavy rainfall in their catchment areas in Nepal in the last 24 hours, according to a flood bulletin issued by the WRD on Sunday evening.

Floodwaters from rivers such as Gandak, Bagmati, Kosi, Mahanand and Kamla Balal have entered low-lying areas of West Champaran, Muzaffarpur, Madhubani and Purnia districts, affecting standing crops and vegetables on hundreds of acres.

Though discharge in major rivers such as Gandak and Kosi has subsided a bit, as compared to Saturday, WRD officials apprehended the possibility of greater surge of water due to forecast of medium to heavy



Several people were affected as many houses in Muzaffarpur were flooded due to a rise in water level of Bagmati River.

rainfall in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Arughat, Karmaya and Sindhuli Garhi in the neighbouring Himalayan country on Monday.

Heavy rains in Mumbai
Heavy rainfall lashed Mumbai and its suburbs over the last 24 hours, especially the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday,

but the weather department predicted the intensity of the downpour to recede in the city.

In the 24-hour period ending at 8:30 am on Sunday, the Colaba observatory in south Mumbai recorded 92 mm rainfall, while the Santacruz observatory (representative of western suburbs) recorded 142 mm rain, as per the

India Meteorological Department (IMD) data.

Meanwhile, train services on the Konkan Railway route came to a standstill due to a landslide amid heavy rainfall in Raigad and Ratnagiri districts.

Situation in Assam improves

In the northeastern state of Assam, the flood situation continued to improve on Sunday, even as two more people died and nearly 600,000 people were affected across 17 districts, according to the daily flood report of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

One person each died at Karimganj and Nilambazar revenue circles of Karimganj district, taking the toll in this year's rain- and flood-related incidents to 109, the report said.

(With inputs from PTI)

NTA announces CUET re-exam dates for students hit by glitches

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NEW DELHI: The National Testing Agency on Sunday announced that it will conduct a re-exam for around 1,000 students who appeared for the Common University Entrance Test for undergraduate admissions on July 19.

The 1,000 students will also include those who took the exam from a centre in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand which is also under the scanner for leaks in NEET-UG.

In an official notification, issued on Sunday evening, the agency said that "based on these grievances, a re-examination will be conducted for those affected candidates on 19 July 2024, Friday, in the Computer-based Test (CBT) mode".

CUET re-exam on July 19

1,000 students to appear for re-exam
250 from a Hazaribagh centre which is under scanner for leaks in NEET-UG



THE GRIEVANCES
The agency received complaints of change of examination centers at the last moment and late distribution of question papers at some centers, amid a raging controversy over leaks and irregularities in the NEET-UG exam

On July 7, the agency announced that it was examining the grievances and will conduct a re-exam if they were found to be genuine.

Agency officials said the grievances included issues like change of examination centers at the last moment and late dis-

tribution of question papers at some centers.

"Besides, re-exam will be conducted for 250 candidates who had appeared from the school in Hazaribagh, which is also under scanner for alleged NEET-UG leak," a senior NTA official said on condition of anonymity.

AIMPLB to challenge SC ruling on alimony for Muslim women

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LUCKNOW: The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Sunday decided to challenge the recent Supreme Court ruling mandating the payment of maintenance to Muslim divorcee women beyond iddat (period of waiting after divorce). The board will also contest implementation of the uniform civil code in Uttarakhand.

These decisions were taken during a meeting held on Sunday. The board's legal committee, after going through the top court order, resolved to explore all possible legal avenues to defend Muslim personal laws.

"Our legal committee reviewed the order thoroughly and decided to go ahead with the defence of Muslim personal laws," said AIMPLB member Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali. "According to the Constitution, every citizen has the right to live according to the customs of their religion. For communities with personal laws, like Muslims, these laws guide their daily lives, including matters of marriage and divorce." The UCC in Uttarakhand was also a direct violation of personal laws, the board said. "No government has the power to challenge Muslim personal laws," Mahali said. "The UCC is perceived as a violation of Shariat law and the constitutional protections afforded by the Shariat Appli-

Our legal panel reviewed the order and decided to go ahead with the defence of Muslim personal laws

MAULANA KHALID RASHID, AIMPLB member

cation Act and Article 25, which guarantees the freedom to practise religion."

The potential challenge to the Waqf Act in various courts was also discussed at the Sunday meeting. The board expressed concern that any changes to the law could jeopardise the security of Waqf properties. AIMPLB members resolved to "vigorously" fight to protect the Waqf Act.

During the meeting, AIMPLB members emphasised that marriage in Islam was intended to be a lifelong commitment. However, provisions for divorce exist if irreconcilable differences arise. In such cases, Shariat law required a man to pay maintenance only during the period of iddat, which lasts three months and 10 days.

The board questioned the logic behind extending maintenance payments beyond iddat, arguing that once the marital relationship is dissolved, there should be no further financial obligations.

70-YR-OLD RAPED BY SUSPECTED CATTLE THIEF IN ASSAM, PROBE ON

Biswa Kalyan Purkayastha
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SILCHAR: An unidentified man suspected to be a cattle thief allegedly raped a 70-year-old woman and tried to strangle her in Assam's Goalpara district, police said on Sunday, adding a case has been registered in the incident.

The survivor's family alleged that the incident took place in the Matia area of Goalpara on Sunday evening when she had gone to the fields to bring her grazing cows back home.

"She is traumatised and it is difficult for her to speak at the moment. As much as she told us, the attacker was covering his face with clothes. He raped her and tried to strangle her while attempting to steal her cows, but she fought back," one of her family members alleged while talking to reporters.

Police said they were awaiting the survivor's medical test report to ascertain the allegations made by the family.

Goalpara superintendent of police (SP) Navaneet Mahanta said some local residents are under the suspicion in the incident, but nobody has been arrested yet.

"We have registered a first information report (FIR) and investigations are going on," Mahanta said. "Nobody has been arrested yet."

The senior police officer said that the woman was taken to a local government hospital for treatment and released later.

ICSSR invites research proposals on JJM scheme

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NEW DELHI: The Indian Council of Social Science Research has invited study proposals on the central government's Jal Jeevan Mission to assess the socioeconomic impact of the scheme to provide tap water in all rural households and analyse the challenges faced in its implementation.

The council, an autonomous body under the education ministry, has invited the proposals in line with the United Nations'

sustainable development goal that focuses on clean water and sanitation for all, which was adopted by India in 2015.

The idea is to evaluate the impact of mission on rural water access, quality and management, according to a notification issued by the council earlier this week. "The research will focus on evaluating the socioeconomic impact of the JJM on the beneficiary Indian households, identifying and analysing the challenges faced in the implementation and sustainability of JJM, and examin-



PM Modi launched the Jal Jeevan Mission on August 15, 2019.

ing the role of community involvement, with a focus on gender and inclusivity, in the

success of JJM," the council said.

The state research institution

{ FOR PREGNANT WOMEN, CHILDREN }

Govt to soon launch CoWIN-like platform for its vaccination drive

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NEW DELHI: India will soon deploy a centralised online platform and database called U-WIN on the government's immunisation programme for children and pregnant women that has been developed by the health ministry on the lines of the CoWin platform that was successfully used for vaccination during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to people familiar with the matter.

"The platform formally is likely to be launched towards the end of this month or early next month, even though it has been successfully tested on a pilot project basis in many states," a government official said, seeking anonymity.

"U-WIN is a meticulously designed platform, having taken lessons from the CoWin platform that was the backbone for implementation of the national immunization programme against Covid-19."

U-WIN will capture each vaccination event of all pregnant women and children under India's universal immunization programme.

For the convenience of those needing to be vaccinated, the platform will allow the facility of scheduling an appointment online and then record immunization details. People will also be able to download or view their e-vaccination certificate. Similar to the model followed during Covid-19 vaccination, people will be able to look for a nearby vaccina-

tion centre online and book a slot according to their convenience.

Online self-registration for pregnant women includes creating a one-time registration number. Those who were already registered on CoWIN would be required to use the same mobile number to access U-WIN. The new registration of a child can also be done using the guardian's existing account.

Apart from the platform, the usual registration process through walk-in or on-site modes at nearest vaccination centre will continue to remain available. Beneficiaries will get a digital acknowledgement for vaccination every time a dose is administered and receive a digital vaccination certificate.

Tribals can opt to come under the ambit of UCC in U'khand

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DEHRADUN: The rules for the recently enacted Uniform Civil Code law in Uttarakhand will have a provision for the members of tribal communities to opt to come under the ambit of the UCC through self-declaration, a senior member of the UCC rules drafting committee said on Sunday.

The UCC law was passed in the Uttarakhand assembly in February, months before the Lok Sabha elections, and the process of the framing of corresponding rules is underway.

Notified tribal communities, who traditionally follow their own set of practices, have been kept out of the ambit of the UCC

filling a self-declaration form on the UCC portal," Shatrughan Singh, retired IAS officer who heads the Uttarakhand UCC legislation Rules Making and Implementation Committee, said. "As tribals have been kept out of the ambit of UCC, this provision is being incorporated so that those tribals who want to come under the ambit of the UCC can do so."

Singh pointed out that the decision was taken after it was found during the consultation with stakeholders that 100% of over 7,000 suggestions from tribals were in favour of the UCC.

The retired IAS officer added that in case of non-tribal communities, 50% suggestions came in favour of the UCC while an equal number opposed it.



Siddaramaiah

K'TAKA TO SHARE 8,000 CUSECS OF CAUVERY WATER TO TN DAILY: SIDDA

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BENGALURU: Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday said the state government was ready to release 8,000 cusecs of water a day from the Cauvery river to neighbouring Tamil Nadu instead of one TMC as directed by the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee till the end of the month.

There is only 63% water in the Cauvery basin dams and in this situation, the state was not in a position to release one TMC water each day, the CM said after an all-party meeting in the state capital.

"Everyone was of the opinion that we should release 8,000 cusecs of water and not one TMC, which is 11,500 cusecs of water. If there is no rain then we will minimise the release of water and file an appeal before the Cauvery Water Management Authority," Siddaramaiah said.

Advocate Mohan Katarki, who was present in the meeting, said this time Krishnarajasagar dam on Cauvery river has only 54% water whereas other dams in the Cauvery basin have only 63% water, Siddaramaiah said.

Siddaramaiah said all the parties in Karnataka were unanimous that they should appeal to the CWMA stating that releasing one TMC water was not possible.

{ GREENPIECE }

The butterflies can't breathe in the polluted air of the country

Bharati Chaturvedi
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NEW DELHI: This is the season for relatively clean air across India. Such annual good news should not lull us into being complacent.

A new study from the University of Reading, published on July 11 in the journal Nature Communications, examines research papers on 40 types of insects in 19 countries to inform us that pollinators like butterflies and bees have seen a 39% decline in foraging efficiency, likely from air pollution. In fact, the study points out that beneficial insects like

these are definitely impacted, but pests like aphids remain unimpacted. Why? It's not entirely clear but one undeniable link is the impacted insects are dependent on their sense of smell for locating flowers, mating and more. The excess chemicals in polluted air interfere with this. Think of this in the context of a global decline in pollinators.

This is unhappy news for India. Within our territories are located some of the world's most polluted cities, and our own list puts down 131 cities as "non-attainment", or those who don't meet the air quality standards. Many of these cities are also

replete with urban local systems or form part of a wider pollution airshed. It was always a sound guess that other forms of life would be impacted by intense air pollution, but we didn't quite know how.

Even as we speak about the tragic state of human health when we think air pollution, we now have evidence that our toxic emissions could also be harming agriculture, food and our security. All the most reason to join efforts for cleaner air.

(The writer is the founder and director of Chintan Environmental Research and Action Groups)

Retail products must mention important consumer info irrespective of weight: Govt

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NEW DELHI: The government will make it mandatory for manufacturers of all products sold in retail to mention key details about their contents on the packaging, irrespective of how much they weigh.

Currently, packaged products above 25 kg sold in retail shops are exempt from including relevant information on labels. To make disclosure of information about products details uniform across commodities, regardless of size and quantities, the government will amend the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011, the consumer

affairs ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

All pre-packaged goods must declare information such as name and address of the manufacturer, packer, importer, country of origin, common or generic name of the commodity, net quantity and month and year of manufacture, the ministry said. Products must also contain the maximum retail price, unit sale price and best before or use by date.

"This revised provision will help in establishing uniform standards and requirements for packaged commodities, promoting consistency and fairness across different brands and products, and will help consum-



Products must also contain the maximum retail price, and best before or use by date.

ers in making informed choices based on complete information," the statement said. The new rules will not be

applicable to the packaged commodities meant for industrial or institutional consumers.

So far, packages of products weighing more than 25 kg or 25 litres were not required to have all product details on labels because it was presumed that the commodities meant for retail sale were not more than 25 kg, an official said, declining to be named.

However, with the changing nature of markets and consumer demands, especially in e-commerce, it has been observed that the packaged commodities above 25 kg are also available for retail sale, requiring a change in rules, the ministry said.



OPINION

The
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{ OUR TAKE }

Political violence haunts America

The attack may boost Trump's prospects, but the larger story of the US's democratic backsliding and violence should worry the rest of the world

American political history is littered with chapters of violence. Yet, when Donald Trump, former president and the presumptive Republican nominee for president, was shot at a campaign rally on Saturday, it shocked the world's oldest democracy, and with it, the rest of the world. It is a relief that Trump is safe, and leaders across the spectrum have condemned the shooting, with President Joe Biden terming it "sick". Political violence must have no place in any society, and definitely not in a democracy where individuals and political parties compete on the basis of their ideas in an election and the public sphere. Yet, even though the motives of the perpetrator in this particular case aren't clear, the episode shouldn't have come as a shock, perhaps because America's bad political habits are coming back to haunt its polity in at least three distinct ways.

The first is how both sides in the American polity now treat each other as threats to the country. For Democrats, Trump threatens democracy due to his actions in power and after the last elections and his campaign promises now. For Republicans, Biden is a threat to the nation due to his record in office, especially on immigration. The almost apocalyptic manner in which both parties talk about each other has radicalised their respective support bases and opened up the space for political violence. Two, America has a gun epidemic. The easy availability of weapons of all kinds stems from a rigid interpretation of America's constitutional provisions framed in the late 18th century. But this democratisation of tools of violence is an affront to civilised society. It shatters the state's claim of monopoly over violence, leads to frequent mass shootings, and makes it easier for lone wolves and groups to plot violence while making it more difficult for law enforcement to tackle threats. Finally, rampant misinformation and disinformation are now a part of America's political theatre and anarchic media environment. This is an inevitable result of new technology and isn't unique to America, but when combined with its polarised politics and guns, it opens up room for ideological extremism and violence.

That the shooter was a young White man, rather than a person of colour, will help in preventing the episode from worsening the already deep ethnic and racial divisions. Electorally, the attack is likely to help Trump position himself as both a victim and a hero and charge up his base. But beyond the immediate implications, the story of America's democratic backsliding, extremism and violence should worry the rest of the world.

In Kathmandu, no end to power games

As KP Sharma Oli prepares for his fourth stint as Nepal's Prime Minister (PM), it would be instructive to recall that no premier of that country has completed a full term since 1990. Oli is back after the fall of the government led by former PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda", who couldn't survive a vote of confidence in Parliament after Oli's Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML) joined hands with Sher Bahadur Deuba's Nepali Congress (NC) joined hands to form a new coalition. The CPN-UML and Nepali Congress, despite being political and ideological rivals, have shared power about half a dozen times in the past.

Occupying the post of PM in Nepal has become akin to a game of musical chairs over the past decade, with most occupants, other than Oli and Dahal, having exceptionally short stints. This political instability, arising mostly from the fractured mandates produced by successive elections, has had wide-ranging impacts on Nepal's economy and overall development. In his last term, Oli had moved his country closer to China and triggered a row with India by issuing a new political map that sought to claim territories controlled by India. The Indian side will be hoping that the presence of the Nepali Congress, which has had long-standing ties with India's political leadership, will help balance the new government's foreign policy stance.

For India, against the backdrop of its strained ties with China, it will be essential that the new dispensation in Kathmandu maintains a balanced position between the two Asian giants. New Delhi will also do well to step up various initiatives aimed at creating physical, transport and energy connectivity between India and Nepal.

Making deterrence on terrorism work in J&K

The terror strikes in Jammu call for refining India's Pakistan policy. Delhi now has to decide how deterrence can be achieved through a more coercive posture

On July 8, two Army trucks moving on a mountain road near Badnota village in the Kathua district were ambushed by a group of terrorists. In the ensuing firefight, five soldiers were killed and five seriously injured. This was the latest in the series of attacks witnessed in the Jammu region, in areas that were, until recently, regarded as militancy-free.

Terror incidents, though isolated, have now taken place across the entire expanse of Jammu Division, stretching from the Poonch district adjoining Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir in the west to the Kathua district bordering Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. Most of these attacks are attributed to Pakistani terrorists who have infiltrated the Jammu region in recent months.

The attempt to reignite violence in Jammu appears to be a meticulously planned and deliberate effort. Under relentless pressure in the Kashmir Valley, terrorists have redirected their focus to areas south of the Pir Panjal Range, where the troop density is lower, the terrain more chal-

lenging for the security forces, and the intelligence network is less developed.

These attacks are aimed at countering the government's narrative that terrorism is on its last leg and will be soon eliminated. Many are contesting the claim that normalcy is being restored in Jammu and Kashmir. When their credibility is questioned, governments often find themselves compelled to take action.

Defence secretary Giridhar Aramane expressed his "profound grief on the loss of five Bravehearts" and said, "their sacrifice will not go unavenged". Some actions are already visible. Additional forces have been inducted into the Jammu region, patrolling has been intensified, suspects are being questioned in large numbers, and the security grid along the international border in Jammu and Punjab is being reviewed to strengthen counter-infiltration measures. There is also a need to improve human intelligence by enhancing outreach to the local communities. A few dozen terrorists are no match for state power applied effectively. There could be costs, but ultimately, the security forces will prevail, particularly in conditions where local support is limited, as is the case in the Jammu region.

How to deal with Pakistan is the more serious question. It is fairly obvious that the planning for the activation of the new areas has been carried out in Pakistan, and the per-

petrators of the recent attacks across the Jammu region are all from there. In deciding India's response, the objective is also clear - to deter Pakistan from continuing with state-sponsored terrorism against India.

The BJP-led governments have shown resolve in dealing with terrorism and have not hesitated to use the military instrument. Improvement in bilateral ties has been made incumbent on Pakistan stopping the use of terrorists to destabilise Jammu and Kashmir, and cross-border operations have been conducted in 2016 and 2019.

However, it must also be admitted that these policies have had only a limited impact. They have served to assuage public sentiment and demonstrate the state's decisiveness, but beyond imposing caution, have not entirely deterred Pakistan. India now has to decide how deterrence can be achieved through a more coercive posture.

The core component of traditional deterrence is the threat of punitive measures. There will be a stated penalty if Pakistan continues with actions that we do not want it to take. However, since diplomatic ties are almost non-existent and there is no economic interdependence, little pressure can be put on these areas. We could continue to call out Pakistan for its support of terrorism in international and multilateral forums, but this has yielded few concrete results.



Deependra Singh Hooda



There must be a consistent demonstration of our political will to follow through if Pakistan continues to send terrorists into our territory ANI

This leaves India with the kinetic option, both covert and direct. Many recent writings suggest that India should conduct cross-border strikes and abrogate the ceasefire in place from 2021. These are decisions for the government to make after carefully considering the pros and cons. However, whatever decision is taken must be clearly communicated and should be credible.

The effectiveness of deterrence hinges critically on the credibility of the threats. There must be a consistent demonstration of our resolve and the political will to follow through if Pakistan continues to send terrorists into our territory. It must also be understood that credible threats involve an element of the risk of escalation, and this should be factored into our planning.

Since deterrence is fundamentally an effort to influence the thinking of the opponent, the other side should also see some perceived benefit of compliance. Benefits provide a positive inducement for the adversary to refrain from taking an undesirable action or to comply with specific demands. What kind of inducements India can offer Pakistan (if at all) is a politically sensitive matter that would have to be closely debated in

the inner circles of the government and would depend on affirmative action by Pakistan.

It could be argued that given Pakistan's record of duplicity, inducements have little meaning, and punishment is the only way to influence Rawalpindi's behaviour. However, as Thomas Schilling writes in his classic *Arms and Influence*, "Coercion requires finding a bargain, arranging for him to be better off doing what we want - worse off not doing what we want - when he takes the threatened penalty into account."

India has shown its resolve in dealing with terror emanating from Pakistan but with limited long-term impact. In the face of continuing intransigence from Pakistan, India must now look to refine its strategy.

While India deliberates its options, Pakistan must also deeply reflect on whether its persistent irrationality over the Kashmir issue truly serves the nation's interests or if it risks plunging the country into an even deeper crisis than it currently faces.

Lt General (ret'd) Deependra Singh Hooda is the co-founder of the Council for Strategic and Defence Research and a Senior Fellow at the Delhi Policy Group. The views expressed are personal

{ GRAND STRATEGY }

Happymon Jacob



The Chinese tangle in India-Russia relations

While several factors drove Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's recently concluded visit to Moscow, the predominant one may be China. Since the Ukraine war and in the context of India's growing proximity to the United States (US), New Delhi has been trying to reassure Moscow that the relationship will continue despite the pressure to turn its back on Russia. While that may be true, what has been under analysed is India's need for assurances from Moscow on the China question.

The current Indian stance towards Russia appears to be driven by a set of interrelated beliefs. One, New Delhi believes Russia is winning the war, and being on the winning side is a good strategy from its perspective. Two, there has been negligible pressure from the US on India to alter its stance towards Russia. Three, Western and US engagement with India has only strengthened since the war began, providing no disincentives for India to change its policy.

Europe is on the back foot with the Gaza war having eroded its moral standing. Thus, Europe will not be able to exert significant normative pressure on India in relation to Russia. Thus, there has never been a better time in the recent past to organise the India-Russia summit.

Coming back to the China question, first, at a broader level, China has had a paradoxical influence on India-Russia relations. Chinese aggression is, at least partly, both the reason why New Delhi sticks to Moscow (since giving up on Russia could decisively turn the two against its regional interests) and also why it seeks to diversify beyond Russia (since India needs more strategic partners to address the China challenge), which amounts to a certain amount of disengagement from Moscow.

Second, PM Modi's visit took place in the shadow of the growing Russia-China strategic partnership. The growing number of bilateral visits, uptick in the trade, financial and business relationship, and increasing synergy between the two sides on a variety of strategic issues have not gone unnoticed in New Delhi. Russia has increased engagement with India's neighbours, such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Pakistan. While Russia's engagement in India's neighbourhood could help indirectly moderate China's rising influence in the region, such moderation may not be possible without India's active engagement with Rus-

sia. Put differently, if China and Russia increasingly synergise their strategies in India's neighbourhood, it could harm India's interests. For India, the best-case scenario is to drive a wedge between Russian and Chinese strategies in the region. But, if that proves to be too ambitious, which may indeed be the case, the second-best scenario is to ensure their strategies do not align against Indian interests.

Third, despite some recent signalling from New Delhi, Beijing has shown little enthusiasm for a rapprochement. Its lack of appetite for resolution worries New Delhi, thereby prompting it to seek assurances from Moscow. We do not know if there are any assurances from the Russian side on the China question, but it is clear that one of India's biggest challenges when it comes to relations with Russia is to get the latter to publicly acknowledge Chinese aggression against India, let alone support India. Likewise, Moscow too will find it hard to get assurances from New Delhi on the latter's relations with the US.

High on symbolism but somewhat low on substance, the current India-Russia relationship is increasingly transactional. Both sides are hedging their bets and subtly signalling redlines, expectations and limitations. New Delhi reassures Moscow that it will not turn its back on Russia while steadfastly getting closer to the latter's rivals and pursuing policies that are not in line with Moscow's interests. New Delhi has maintained Moscow's redlines so far, such as not openly criticising the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Russia, on the other hand, seeks to maintain its relationship with India while simultaneously strengthening its partnership with China. Moscow faces long-term challenges from Beijing, but they are overlooked given the weight of the short-term benefits. For India, the long-term interests lie with the US, but in the short-term, Russia brings benefits. Both sides recognise the utility and limits of their bilateral strategic partnership. They also acknowledge that the other side will continue to make strategic choices that are contradictory to their own and that they have little power to influence those choices.

Modi's visit underscores the fact that New Delhi realises that trying to align the interests of the two sides that are growing more divergent than ever is futile. In that sense, it makes perfect sense for New Delhi to partner Moscow in spaces where the fundamental interests of Moscow and Beijing diverge, such as Central Asia. We may also see Delhi partnering with Moscow and Beijing when it suits its interests, especially under the ambit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Likewise, New Delhi partners with other countries (the US and the West) in spaces where India's interests are in direct competition with those of Russia and China; the Indo-Pacific is an example of such a space. The test of Indian diplomacy lies in managing these competing pulls, pressures, and interests.

Happymon Jacob teaches at JNU, and is the founder of the Council for Strategic and Defence Research, a New Delhi-based think tank. The views expressed are personal



New Delhi must partner Moscow in spaces where interests of Moscow and Beijing fundamentally diverge AP

{ ELON MUSK } FOUNDER, TESLA AND SPACEX

We were told AI doom would be a paper clip maximizer, but it's actually going to be Strawberry Fields Forever

(On the news that OpenAI is working on a reasoning technology that is called Strawberry)



{ STRAIGHTFORWARD }

Shashi Shekhar

Whiff of continuity and a resurgent Opposition

On July 9, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi was in Moscow for a summit with Russian president Vladimir Putin. The previous day, during an informal conversation with Putin, Modi made two significant statements. First, he said: "I have brought with me the love of 140 crore countrymen." Second: "Peace talks do not succeed amid bombs, guns, and bullets." What did Modi mean?

His first statement aimed to tell world leaders that they should not think the mandate his government now has is in any way weaker than what he enjoyed in his first two terms; he still is the all-powerful prime minister of a sovereign nation. Putin acknowledged this sentiment. Now we get to the second statement. Modi used words such as bombs and bullets to signal to the West that India's foreign policy remains unchanged. Those who feel India should align with the US also got a fitting response.

It's vital to mention Quad here. This informal, but crucial strategic group has India, the US, Japan, and Australia as its constituents. The US also proposes to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as the grouping celebrates its 75th anniversary. Though India is not a member of NATO, its position as a Quad ally demonstrates its balance-of-power policy.

But I won't discuss foreign policy here. My objective is to discuss the first month of Modi's third term. Modi has accomplished and communicated a lot in just one month.

Let's begin with the creation of the cabinet. Many believed Modi would not be as powerful as in his last tenure, since the BJP no longer has a simple majority in Parliament and would have to accept the demands of his coalition partners while forming the government. There was speculation that the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United) would strike a hard bargain. But the Cabinet Committee on Security, or CCS, the most powerful organ of the Union Cabinet, has remained exactly as it was. Similarly, the portfolios TDP and JD(U) received were not discussed prior to Cabinet formation, nor is it expected in the future.

There were rumours about who would be the Speaker. The selection of Bhartruhari Mahtab, who joined the BJP after leaving the

Biju Janata Dal, as pro-tem speaker was seen as a hint. But Om Birla resumed as Speaker. Birla's last tenure was controversial. He suspended scores of MPs. Rahul Gandhi and Mahua Moitra were dismissed from the Lok Sabha. By picking him, the BJP showed that its strength remains intact. Later, during the motion of thanks to the presidential address, there was a lot of bluster, but neither the government nor the Speaker of the Lok Sabha tumbled.

People saw only one difference between the previous Lok Sabha and this one: The Opposition was more aggressive owing to their better numbers. It is a different matter that the ruling party MPs went to great lengths to respond.

Now let us talk about the BJP. The prime minister and the home minister have held the party in a firm grip. There were rumours that the RSS had issues with it and may intervene this time. But it didn't. The current BJP national president, Jagat Prakash Nadda, is already on an "extension" and continues to make decisions as party president a fortnight past the end of his tenure on June 30. It is almost inevitable that the party will elect a new president in time. Perhaps this is why he has been assigned the critical ministry of health. For sure, Modi-Shah's grip on the party remains strong.

Should we presume that PM Modi is entirely unchallenged?

Modi has exhibited unprecedented confidence at home and abroad, but new anxieties are emerging on the internal front. This month, the finance minister will present the first budget of the third term of Modi. Will there be an imprint on NDA allies on that? If so, what will happen to economic reforms?

Additionally, the rising attacks on security forces in Jammu and Kashmir have raised concerns. With assembly elections scheduled by September, Delhi needs to take prompt decisions. Meanwhile, the Opposition is vehemently criticising the Agnipath scheme, demanding a caste census, and asking questions about unemployment. The BJP and the government will need to address these challenges.

Shashi Shekhar is editor-in-chief, Hindustan. The views expressed are personal

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

1 CRPF SOLDIER

Imphal near the Assam border, Jiribam is home to Meiteis, Kukis, Bengalis, Nepalis, Nagas, and other communities. It had remained largely peaceful despite the state being roiled in clashes, with Meitei and Kuki groups pledging not to indulge in violence during a meeting at the police superintendent's office in June last year. However, the killing of 59-year-old S Saratkumar Singh, a resident of the village, last month brought the district to the boil and forced many to flee the region as the houses of both Kuki and Meitei community members were set ablaze by mobs.

Thomas said that one Kuki Liberation Army (KLA) militant was also critically injured in the ensuing gunfight and was undergoing treatment at the Silchar Medical Hospital in Assam. KLA was one of the signatories to the Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement sealed between the Centre and 25 armed Kuki groups in 2008. The agreement, however, currently hangs in limbo as there is no clarity either on its renewal or abrogation from the central government.

Chief minister N Biren Singh said Jha was killed in firing by "suspected Kuki militants".

"I strongly condemn the killing of a CRPF personnel in an attack carried out by an armed group, suspected to be Kuki militants. His supreme sacrifice in the line of duty shall not go in vain. I further extend my sincere condolences to the bereaved family of the deceased soldier, while praying for the speedy recovery of the ones injured during the attack," the CM said in a post on X.

The state government's decision to send teams of Manipur Police commandos to the district in June met with opposition from tribal groups, who have accused the unit of targeting people from the Kuki community and their properties. In Moreh district, Kuki militants attacked Manipur commandos at their camps in January and February, resulting in two deaths.

In a statement on Sunday, Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM), an apex body of the Kuki community, asked the state government to withdraw all "Meitei central forces" from Kuki-Zo areas.

"KIM urgently calls upon the Government of India to ensure the safety and security, as well as lasting peace and stability, for the Kuki-Zo people. It further makes an urgent call to the concerned authorities to withdraw all Meitei central forces from Kuki-Zo areas and prohibit the Meitei state forces from operating in Kuki-Zo areas," it said.

Since May 2023, Manipur has been rocked by ethnic clashes between the majority Meitei community and the tribal Kukis, with other communities increasingly getting sucked into the violence that has continued unabated. Over the past 10 months, at least 220 people, including security personnel, have lost their lives, and over 50,000 people have been displaced.

BULELT GRAZES

On Sunday, the White House said that law enforcement officials briefed Biden and vice president Kamala Harris on the incident. Biden addressed the nation later and said that agencies had no information on the motivation of the shooter, and asked everyone not to make assumptions. Biden also said that he had directed secret service to provide every resource for Trump's security, to beef up security for the Republican convention, and announced an investigation.

Trump, who is leading in polls at the moment, was addressing supporters in Butler county in the swing state, two days before the Republican National Convention is set to nominate him as the party's presidential candidate. Live footage captured a series of shots as Trump was speaking at 6.10pm eastern time (around 3.40am in India). He ducked under the podium and took cover. Within seconds, US Secret Service (USSS) agents covered Trump — one agent, according to a transcript, said "Get down, get down." — even as shots continued.

When agents confirmed with their team that the "shooter was down", they helped Trump up. Trump, according to the transcript, repeatedly asked for his shoes — "Let me get my shoes on" — even as agents told him they had got him. He then asked them to wait, pumped his fist into the air, with the American flag in the background, gave a determined look to the crowd and said, "Fight, fight, fight." As Trump was being escorted out, his ear was bleeding and there was blood on his face.

In a statement late on Saturday night, posted on Truth Social, Trump thanked USSS and law enforcement for their "rapid response". "It is incredible that such an act can take place in our Country... I was shot with a bullet that pierced the upper part of my right ear. I knew immediately that something was wrong in that I

heard a whizzing sound, shots, and immediately felt the bullet ripping through the skin. Much bleeding took place, so I realized then what was happening. GOD BLESS AMERICA!"

Trump went to a local medical facility and then flew to his residence in New Jersey for the night. On Sunday, he thanked everyone for their prayers and thoughts, credited God for "preventing the unthinkable", and promised to remain resilient and defiant and not fearful. "In this moment, it is more important than ever that we stand United, and show our True Character as Americans, remaining Strong and Determined, and not allowing Evil to Win," Trump said, declaring that he would speak at the party convention in Milwaukee this week. The party will officially nominate Trump as the candidate on Thursday.

Biden, who is also Trump's key rival in the presidential poll as the presumptive Democratic nominee, was briefed on the situation soon after the shooting. The President said in a statement that he was grateful that Trump was safe and doing well. "There's no place for this kind of violence in America. We must unite as one nation to condemn it."

Later, Biden told reporters, "It's sick. It's sick. It's one of the reasons why we have to unite this country. We cannot allow for this to be happening. We cannot be like this. We cannot condone this." He said that the bottom line was Trump was at a rally he should have been allowed to conduct peacefully, and this was the kind of political violence that was "unheard of" in America. Asked if this was an assassination attempt, Biden said he didn't know enough, and while he had an opinion, he didn't have facts. Biden also spoke to Trump, though neither side offered details of the conversation.

In a statement, the Secret Service said that at approximately 6.15pm on Saturday evening, "a suspected shooter fired multiple shots toward the stage from an elevated position outside of the rally venue". Secret Service personnel then "neutralised the shooter, who is now deceased". The statement added that USSS had "quickly responded with protective measures". Later, FBI said that it had assumed the role of the lead federal law enforcement agency in the investigation of the "incident" involving Trump.

While the shooting drew almost universal condemnation from across America's political spectrum, Republicans accused Democrats of creating a climate that had led to the violence.

House speaker Mike Johnson told a Sunday news show, "There's no figure in American history, at least in the modern era, maybe since Lincoln, who has been so vilified and really persecuted by the media, Hollywood elites, political figures, you know, even the legal system." He claimed that when the message went out that Trump was a threat to democracy and the republic would end, it heated up the environment. The Speaker referred to a recent statement by Biden — where the President had told supporters it was time to put Trump in the "bullseye" — as language that should be called out.

The House Oversight Committee has also convened a Congressional hearing and called the head of Secret Service for an explanation on July 22. The Secret Service rebutted reports that it hadn't beefed up Trump's security and said that it had in fact "added protective resources and technology and capabilities as a part of the increased campaign travel tempo".

The shooting is sure to affect the political landscape four months before the presidential election where Trump is leading in polls.

Trump is attempting a rare return to the White House for a non-consecutive term. He did not accept the legitimacy of the 2020 election, which was followed by a mob attacking the US Capitol to block the certification of the results in a display of political violence. Trump is also a convicted felon who also faces multiple criminal charges that he rejects.

But he swept the Republican primaries and is running a campaign against the Biden administration's approach to immigration (while promising to deport all illegal immigrants), economy and foreign policy. Biden, whose age-related vulnerabilities came into sharp focus during a debate on June 27, is facing a huge internal backlash within Democratic Party with growing calls that he drop out of the race. Recent polls have shown Trump increasing his lead over Biden, including in critical swing states.

The shooting is a defining moment in an already unprecedented election and brings political extremism, violence, and the widespread availability of deadly weapons, centre-stage in the world's oldest democracy.

MODI'S FOLLOWERS

blessings, constructive criticism and more. Looking forward to an equally engaging time in the future as well," the PM said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

{ MOVE TO AVERT MERGER }

Govt exempts GST for freight corridor unit

Rajeev Jayaswal

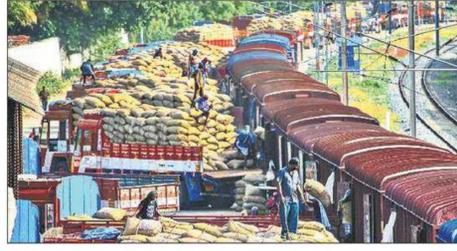
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The government has exempted Indian Railways' special purpose vehicles from paying 18% Goods and Services Tax for providing services to the parent, which may avert an imminent merger of the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd (DFCCIL) with the national transporter and pave way for its further expansion through multilateral funding, officials aware of the development said.

Without this tax exemption, DFCCIL was not financially viable and its merger with Indian Railways was the only solution to avoid paying GST, they said, requesting anonymity. DFCCIL is a vehicle to construct, maintain and operate the eastern and western rail freight corridors.

Infrastructure ministries often create special purpose vehicles to implement major projects for three main reasons, which include operational nimbleness and efficiency, financing from multilateral agencies and attracting investments under the public-private-partnership mode.

"Based on the GST Council's recommendation on June 22, the finance ministry issued a notification in this regard on Friday, implementing GST waiver with retrospective effect. This has addressed one of the key reasons



Without the exemption, the Indian Railways' firm was not financially viable.

for considering the merger of DFCCIL with IR," an official at an economic ministry said. "The merger was the last resort to counter tax authorities' claim that the SPV was supplying services to Indian Railways at an arm's length. In fact, the SPV is an integral part of Indian Railways."

Indian Railways pays a fee for using the track operated by the SPV, which is the only major revenue stream for its survival, a second official said. "GST authorities misconstrued it as service transaction and imposed 18% GST, which the SPV could not pass on to the consumer (Indian Railways). Hence, there was a view in the government to merge DFCCIL with IR to resolve this contentious situation if GST exemption was not granted," he said.

"However, the GST Council on

June 22 recommended the government to exempt GST on the Indian Railways' SPVs for the entire concession period. This is a major relief, which may avert one of the major reasons to merge DFCCIL with the Indian Railways," he added.

"Now, a final decision on the fate of the merger proposal would be taken by the railway minister," a third official said. The railways ministry, finance ministry, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), chairman of the Railway Board and DFCCIL did not respond to emailed queries on this matter.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 25 inaugurated the Dadri-Rewari section of the dedicated freight corridor (DFC), which signifies its importance as it establishes crucial connectivity between the western and eastern DFCs, the second official

said. In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the construction of eastern DFC (1,337 km) was complete and 1,220 km out of 1,506 km of the western corridor was complete, with trains operating in the completed sections.

"The construction of Dedicated Freight Corridors will reduce the logistic cost with higher axle load trains, Double Stack Container trains (DSC) and faster access to Northern hinterland by Western Ports and will also lead to development of new industrial hubs and Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals," Vaishnaw told the House. As on October 2023, cumulative expenditure in developing the infrastructure was over Rs 1.08 lakh crore.

In order to reduce logistics costs and time, the railways ministry planned to construct high-capacity, high-speed dedicated freight corridors along the golden quadrilateral and its diagonals, which would eventually span to 1,012.22 km, contributing more than 60% of the freight traffic and 52% of the passenger traffic carried by the railways, according to DFCCIL's 2020-24 corporate plan, the document said.

The track structure and geometry of the DFC would raise maximum permissible speed of a freight train to 100 km per hour, compared to 25 kmph on the existing network, the document said.

Maha launches drive to install AI-powered CCTVs at bars, pubs

Manish Kumar Pathak
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MUMBAI: The Maharashtra excise department has initiated a special drive, making it mandatory for all restaurants, bars and pubs in the state to have CCTV cameras installed at their front counters, officials said, with the move coming close on the heels of a hit-and-run case in Mumbai and an accident in Pune involving a luxury car allegedly driven by a boy in an inebriated state.

The cameras will be controlled by excise officials to monitor any irregularity. The department has also formed a five-member team, which is working on installing high-resolution cameras powered by artificial intelligence (AI) that can also determine the age of a person through facial recognition.

The AI camera will detect persons below 21 years entering bars and pubs, and the excise official monitoring the CCTV footage will get a notification on their mobile phone. "All these systems will prevent mishaps," a senior excise official said. "Bar owners and managers will also be alerted with a notification, and [they] will think twice before allowing minors to consume alcohol."

Prasad Surve, director of the

state excise department, said the department would control the cameras of around 2,000 bars, restaurants and pubs in Mumbai. "The rules mandate that only people above 21 can enter a bar," he said, adding the legal drinking age in the state is 25. "Hard drinks are forbidden to be served to those between 21 and 25, and they can consume only mild drinks that contain less than 5% of alcohol."

On May 19, a Porsche car allegedly driven by a 17-year-old drunk boy fatally struck two motorbike-borne engineers in Kalyani Nagar area in Pune. On July 7, a BMW car allegedly driven by the 24-year-old son of a politician rammed a bike in Worli. A woman died in the crash after being dragged by the BMW for over 1.5 kilometres.

"After the Pune crash, we launched a special campaign and have made it mandatory to install CCTV cameras in the permit room and bar counter in all bars and pubs," Surve said. "The excise official posted in the area will get access to the camera by taking the email ID and password from the bar owners and will monitor it."

In the last 45 days, the excise department has checked the licences of 23,690 restaurants and bars in the state.



हरियाणा सरकार

बाजे राम चरण सिर डारै, भवानी सबके कारज सारै



हरियाणा के प्रसिद्ध रागनी गायक एवं संस्कृतिकर्मी

सांग सम्राट बाजे भगत

की जयन्ती पर हरियाणावासियों की ओर से

हार्दिक नमन

15 जुलाई, 2024

“हरियाणा की कला एवं संस्कृति को एक बड़े मुकाम तक पहुंचाने में बाजे भगत का अहम योगदान रहा है। उन्होंने अपनी रागनी और सांग के माध्यम से कला के क्षेत्र को एक नई दिशा दी।”

- नायब सिंह सैनी



सूचना, जन सम्पर्क एवं भाषा विभाग, हरियाणा

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Leaders
in crosshairs

Before Saturday's attempted assassination of former President Trump, there have been multiple instances of US presidents, former presidents and presidential candidates being targeted.

<p>ABRAHAM LINCOLN (16th President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assassinated by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865, at Ford's Theatre Motive: Lincoln's support for Black rights Booth was killed on April 26, 1865 	<p>WILLIAM MCKINLEY (25th President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shot by Leon Czolgosz on September 6, 1901, in Buffalo, New York Died four days later. Czolgosz was executed on October 29, 1901 	<p>HARRY S. TRUMAN (33rd President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survived an assassination attempt in November 1950 at Blair House Oscar Collazo was arrested and released in 1979 	<p>GERALD FORD (38th President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survived two assassination attempts in 1975 by Lynette Fromme and Sara Jane Moore Both assailants were later released 	<p>GEORGE W. BUSH (43rd President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survived a grenade attack in 2005 at a rally in Tbilisi, Georgia Assailant was sentenced to life in prison 	<p>THEODORE ROOSEVELT (Presidential Candidate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shot during a campaign event in Milwaukee in 1912 but survives after bullet impact is blunted by folded papers and a metal glasses case
<p>JAMES GARFIELD (20th President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shot by Charles Guiteau on July 2, 1881, at a train station in Washington Died in September 1881 after infection from wound 	<p>FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT (32nd President-elect)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survived an assassination attempt in February 1933 in Miami Mayor Anton Cermak was killed instead. Assassin Giuseppe Zangara was executed 	<p>JOHN F. KENNEDY (35th President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assassinated on November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas Succeeded by Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson Assassin Lee Harvey Oswald killed two days later 	<p>RONALD REAGAN (40th President)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survived gunshot on March 30, 1981, in Washington, D.C. Shooter was confined to a mental hospital and released in 2022. 	<p>ROBERT F. KENNEDY (Presidential Candidate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assassinated on June 5, 1968, in Los Angeles Assassin Sirhan Sirhan remains in prison 	

Trump saga gets new inflection point

Prashant Jha

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WASHINGTON: The image of Donald Trump raising his fist in the air, giving a determined look to the crowd and calling on them to "fight, fight, fight", with blood dripping from his ear to his face, will define the 2024 American presidential elections.

The image allows Trump to position himself as both the hero and the victim, and is already charging up his base. It allows his supporters to neutralise the Democratic narrative that has painted Trump as the source, rather than the target, of political violence so far. It can possibly earn him sympathy and respect among swing voters in critical swing states. It is likely to give him a major bounce in polls in a critical week when the Republican National Convention is set to formally nominate him as the party's presidential candidate. And it opens up the room for Trump's campaign to portray him as a brave fighter for the nation, and contrast this with his inward-looking Democratic rivals who appear stuck with an ailing candidate and low morale among supporters.

Four months before an election, it is imprudent to speculate. And a lot can still change. But there is little doubt that after Saturday's shooting, Trump, who has been leading in the polls, now has the clear political momentum to return to the White House.

Examine how the shooting is playing out in American politics. First, for Trump's base, which identifies itself as the Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement, Trump has always been the champion who has fought for ordinary Americans against an all-powerful American establishment that encompasses the existing leadership of both parties, the "deep state", and the liberal elites across the media and cultural spaces. This base has internalised Trump's narrative that he is fighting to secure America's borders and protect American jobs at home and American interests abroad. And this base believes that the amorphous establishment has taken every possible step to block Trump. In this view, all the allegations Trump has faced, from Russia's possible role in the 2016 election to the subvert-



Donald Trump is helped off the stage at a campaign event in Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday.

ing of the 2020 elections to his recent conviction in a business fraud case, are examples of this politics of vendetta against Trump. Indeed, the criminal charges and conviction have only helped Trump consolidate his standing and raise more money for his campaign.

And so, for Trump's supporters, the shooting confirms what they have always believed. The former president is a selfless nationalist who has given up a life of luxury and comfort to fight for poor Americans. The former president is brave and has taken on Washington. The former president is willing to sacrifice his interests, and now even his life. And the former president's opponents will do anything, even take his life, to block his return. The fact that Trump took a bullet, yet instinctively stood back up, with a message to stay on in the battle, will go down as the biggest morale-booster of this election cycle for the Republican base.

Two, the shooting fundamentally reverses the narratives that have dominated the current phase in American politics,

allows Republicans to wash away the stain of the January 6 mob attack on the US Capitol and take the moral high ground, and gives the MAGA movement a way to appeal to swing voters.

Till now, Democrats have claimed that the rise in political violence is due to the rise of the MAGA movement and Trump's active encouragement, or at least ambivalence, about violence. The fact that Trump didn't accept the 2020 elections, resisted the peaceful transfer of power, and encouraged a mob to march to the US Congress that then engaged in violence and vandalism, allowed Democrats as well as liberal civil society to project Trump as the instigator of violence and a threat to democracy. The fact that the line between racist mobs, and the MAGA support base, is often blurred has also given ground to Democrats to cast Trump as representing White majoritarian extremism in civil society.

But after Saturday, Trump can, rightfully, also claim to be the target of political violence. The attack allows Republicans to shift the focus from January 6, 2021, to

July 13, 2024. It will lead to Trump and his supporters blaming Democrats for creating a climate that led to the shooting in the first place, even though Democrats of all stripes have forcefully condemned the shooting. As JD Vance, among the top contenders for Trump's vice presidential pick, said on X, "The central premise of the Biden campaign is that President Donald Trump is an authoritarian fascist who must be stopped at all costs. That rhetoric led directly to President Trump's attempted assassination." Expect this line of attack to intensify, irrespective of its factual validity. And expect this line of attack to persuade at least some swing voters to develop some sympathy and respect for Trump.

And finally, the timing of the attack helps Trump too. His arch rival, President Joe Biden, after a disastrous debate, is facing an unprecedented backlash from his own party with the rank and file wanting him to drop out of the race. As Democrats struggle with internal discord, a fragmented base and low morale, the party's credibility has taken a major hit

among both donors and voters.

Contrast this disarray in the Democratic camp with Trump who will walk into the Republican convention, which commences on Monday in Milwaukee, as a hero. He will be projected as a leader who has taken a bullet for the nation. The convention will further unify the Republicans. Trump will dominate the airwaves and public consciousness even as Democrats, out of respect for him and their condemnation of the shooting, have had to pause their campaign. And all of it may give him a bounce in polls that may be hard for his rival to offset in the coming months.

With his base charged, his past stain eroded, his appeal among fence-sitters enhanced, and his image assuming an even larger-than-life dimension, Donald Trump is set to convert what was clearly a moment of shock, a moment that could have taken his life away, a moment that will be etched in his consciousness and in any examination of his politics forever, into a historic opportunity for the biggest political comeback in American politics.

Violence normalised
by politicians can turn
against them: US expert

Prashant Jha

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WASHINGTON: The attack on former American President Donald Trump is part of a rising trend of political violence in America.

To make sense of it, HT reached out to Rachel Kleinfeld, a senior fellow with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and an authority on political violence and democratic backsliding in the US.

How do you place the attack on President Trump in the broader arc of recent political violence in America?

Political violence and threats have been rising in America for much of the last decade – against politicians at every level. America has had past eras of political violence, when politics have been highly polarised and political figures have implicitly called for violence against Americans who differ.

These ugly parts of our history end when the government prosecutes violence, politicians stop normalising it, and regular Americans make it clear that they believe political violence is unequivocally wrong. That is what we need now.

Is there radicalisation and violence on the Left that's been underestimated?

We do not yet know if the shooter, who was a registered Republican, acted out of political belief on the Left or Right, or was simply disturbed.

However, people who believe that violence can be used to solve political differences exist on all parts of the ideological spectrum. In the 1960s and 1970s, most political violence in the United States came from the Left.

In the last eight years, research shows it has overwhelmingly come from the

Right, though there has also been a normalisation of violence by the extreme Left. In all cases, the targets are not just the other side, but are often moderates on the same side as the perpetrators – because political violence is used to hollow out the centre and force people to extremes.

What is leading to this spike in violence in recent years?

Populist politicians who polarise their societies have heralded spikes in political violence in many countries. In the US, polarising rhetoric from MAGA politicians, and normalisation among far left fringes, has increased violence against Republican and Democratic politicians at all levels.

In America, this looks something like the 1960s, when America faced rising violence and assassination attempts against multiple politicians.

But globally, I fear it looks like the early 1930s, when we saw violence from Fascists on the Right leading to clashes with Communists on the far Left in many countries.

That sort of extremist violence tends to lead to a centralisation of power and government violence.

What do you think will be the political implications of the attack on Trump?

I hope that it will serve as a shock to the system, and force politicians to stop finger pointing and dividing American society.

I fear that it will do the opposite. In either case, it is incumbent on regular Americans to speak out.

Majorities of Americans across the political spectrum condemn political violence as unequivocally wrong, in every single case, against anyone. That voice needs to be heard loud and clear.

WHO SAID WHAT

I send President Trump my wishes for a speedy recovery. A spectator has died. It is a tragedy for our democracies

EMMANUEL MACRON,
French Prime Minister

I am appalled by the shocking scenes at President Trump's rally and we send him our best wishes.

KEIR STARMER,
UK Prime Minister

The attack on US presidential candidate Trump is despicable. Such acts of violence threaten democracy.

OLAF SCHOLZ,
German Chancellor

We don't believe the attempt on Trump was organised by current govt, but the atmosphere created by this administration provoked it

KREMLIN,
Representative

I am appalled to learn about the shooting of former US President Trump at his rally.

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY,
Ukrainian President

What we know about 20-year-old suspect

Associated Press

letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: The man identified as the shooter in the apparent assassination attempt of former President Donald Trump was a 20-year-old from a Pittsburgh suburb not far from the campaign rally where one attendee was killed.

Investigators were working on Sunday to gather more information about Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, who they say opened fire from a rooftop outside the rally venue in Butler.

An FBI official said late Saturday that a motive had not yet been determined.

Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, said on social media the

upper part of his right ear was pierced in the shooting. Two spectators were critically injured, authorities said.

Bomb-making materials found

Meanwhile, law enforcement officials told AP that bomb-making materials were found inside the vehicle of Crooks. There were also bomb-making materials found at his home. However, the two officials were not authorised to speak publicly and spoke to AP on condition of anonymity.

Relatives of Crooks didn't immediately respond to messages from The Associated Press. His father, Matthew Crooks, told CNN late on Saturday that he was trying to figure out "what the hell is going on" but

wouldn't speak about his son until after he talked to law enforcement.

Crooks graduated from Bethel Park High School in 2022, the school district said in a statement to KDKA-TV. The school district said it will cooperate fully with investigators.

In 2022, Crooks was among several students given an award for math and science, according to a Tribune-Review story at the time. Crooks' political leanings were not immediately clear. Records show Crooks was registered as a Republican voter in Pennsylvania, but federal campaign finance reports also show he gave \$15 to a progressive political action committee on January 20, 2021, the day President Joe Biden was sworn in to office.

Public Pennsylvania court records show no past criminal cases against Crooks. The FBI released his identity early on Sunday morning, hours after the shooting. Authorities told reporters that Crooks was not carrying identification so they were using DNA and other methods to confirm his identity.

Law enforcement recovered an AR-style rifle at the scene, according to a person familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing investigation.

An AP analysis of more than a dozen videos and photos from the scene of the Trump rally, as well as satellite imagery of the site, shows the shooter was able to get close to the stage where the former president was speaking.

'Got real very soon': Spectators
recount confusion and disbelief

Reuters

letters@hindustantimes.com

BUTLER: Six minutes into his speech at a Butler, PA rally, Trump was talking about immigrants under a clear sky when a volley of pops, sounding like gunshots, rang out. He clutched his ear, saw blood, and quickly dropped behind the podium.

The crowd screamed, and those in the bleachers crouched. Secret Service agents and armed officers rushed the stage, surrounding Trump, who was kneeling behind the podium. Other law enforcement officers armed with rifles also took to the stage. There was a second volley of apparent gunshots. The Secret

Service agents kept Trump on the ground for 25 seconds. Someone could be heard shouting: "Shooter is down!"

Someone yelled, "Move!" as the crowd screamed. Agents lifted Trump, his "Make America Great Again" cap gone, hair dishevelled, and ear bloodied. "Let me get my shoes," Trump said. He then started pumping his fist as an agent shielded his head from potential shots. Trump continued to pump his fist towards the crowd, mouthing "fight."

As the Secret Service agents surrounded Trump and moved him to a nearby black SUV, Trump continuously raised his fist as they pushed him into the

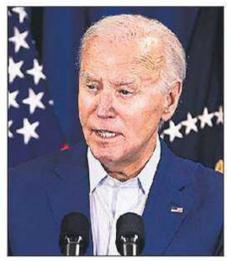
vehicle, to more chants of "USA!"

Shane Chesher, 37, who had been sitting directly behind Trump, said, "It sounded like pop, pop, pop. I thought it was a prank, like fireworks. Then I watched it get real very quickly when President Trump went down and Secret Service came in and more shots went off."

Ben Maser, a 41-year-old welder, was outside the rally when he noticed two officers searching for someone.

"I saw the guy on the roof. I told the officer that he was up there. He went about looking for him," said Maser. Maser said he could not describe the man on the roof but saw he was wearing a grey T-shirt.

Democrats scramble after Trump rally shooting upends campaign



Joe Biden

Reuters

letters@hindustantimes.com

US President Joe Biden's reelection campaign is scrambling for a new strategy after an assassination attempt on Republican rival Donald Trump in western Pennsylvania, including deciding to call off verbal attacks on the former president for now.

Within hours of Saturday's shooting, Biden's campaign suspended all political communications, including ads that high-

lighted Trump's May felony conviction in New York relating to hush money paid before the 2016 election.

Instead of verbally attacking Trump, the White House and Biden campaign will highlight Trump's past condemnation of political violence, including his criticism of campus protests over the Israel-Gaza conflict, say campaign officials requesting anonymity.

Biden's advisers aimed to quell calls for him to step aside

and focus on Trump's threat to democratic norms, reproductive rights, and his false claims about the 2020 election. "This changes everything," one campaign official said of the assassination attempt. "We're still assessing. Making the case against Trump, drawing that split screen, will get much harder." "The president is trying to lower the temperature," the official added.

Biden campaign officials expect the assassination attempt to ease pressure from congress-

sional Democrats for Biden, 81, to step aside due to fitness concerns. Some House and Senate Democrats had urged Biden to drop out after his shaky June debate performance against Trump.

Biden's planned Monday trip to the Lyndon B. Johnson library in Austin, Texas, to speak on the Civil Rights Act and criticise Trump's attacks on immigrants and diversity, is under review and may be cancelled, officials said.

Because the shooting happened in Pennsylvania, which Biden won over Trump in 2020 by a narrow margin, the incident could be especially impactful, according to some political strategists, by increasing Republican turnout by voters sympathetic to Trump.

However, "this doesn't guarantee Trump flips Pennsylvania," wrote Republican pollster Frank Luntz on social media. "But Biden's road just got longer and windier."

Hamas: Military
chief survived
Israeli strike

GAZA STRIP: Hamas said on Sunday that Gaza cease-fire talks continue and the group's military commander is in good health, a day after the Israeli military targeted Mohammed Deif with a massive airstrike that local health officials said killed at least 90 people, including children. Deif's condition is unclear. AP

Kremlin warns of
targeting Europe if
US deploys missiles

MOSCOW: The Kremlin on Saturday warned that the deployment of US missiles in Germany could make European capitals targets for Russian missiles in a repeat of Cold War-style confrontation. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, "We have capacity to contain the missiles, but their capitals could be at risk." AFP

Worst is not over yet, no GenAI fears: TCS CEO

Order book brightens FY25 view; co won't focus on artificial intelligence hype

Varun Sood

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NEW DELHI: Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) is not confident that the worst of the slowdown is past, chief executive officer K. Krithivasan said, as India's largest information technology services company tries to determine client spending in its biggest markets—the US, Western Europe and the UK.

In a wide-ranging interview on Friday, Krithivasan also dismissed fears about Generative AI, expressed confidence that technology will create more jobs, and stressed that TCS wants to bring differentiation to clients rather than ride hype cycles.

"We don't give guidance. We have a good order book (\$42.7 billion). And that is why we will do better in FY25 than in FY24. But we are cautious because we continue to see uncertainty in



K. Krithivasan, chief executive officer, TCS.

our markets," Krithivasan said. "Clients are reprioritizing programmes and calibrating at short notice. Taking all this, it would not be appropriate on our part to say that the worst is behind us. I don't think we are in that situation. Once we feel that we have that confidence, we will do so. But at this time, we do not have that comfort or confidence to say that the worst is behind us."

Krithivasan's comments came after the Mumbai-headquartered company reported a 1.93% sequential dollar revenue

growth in the April-June period on Thursday, crossing analysts' expectations. Hearteningly, headcount rose by 5,452 from the preceding quarter, following a sequential drop in workforce in each of the four quarters last year. All this prompted a scramble for TCS shares, which ended up nearly 7% on Friday.

TCS ended FY24 with revenue of \$29.1 billion, marking a 4.1% growth, the second-slowest full-year growth since it went public in August 2004. Its slowest growth was 0.7% in the pandemic year of FY21.

"The company (TCS) indicated it is too early to call an improved environment though reiterated the view that FY25 growth should be better than FY24, which is supported by sequential growth this quarter," Keith Bachman, an analyst with BMO Capital Markets, wrote in a note dated 11 July. "Hence, though we think IT services estimates are generally bottoming (not going lower), we do not yet have enough conviction that CY25 growth will improve, which would enable us to move to a more positive stance on the sector."

Krithivasan said he was pleased with the company's all-around growth. However, 49.2% of the \$142 million in sequential incremental revenue added by TCS in the June quarter came from only a mega BSNL contract.

Another worry is the rise of GenAI. Since the debut of ChatGPT, doomsayers have argued that GenAI will ring a death knell for the industry as it makes much of the work redundant.

Krithivasan dismissed these fears.

Election, rate hopes hit corporate bond sales

Rhik Kundu

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NEW DELHI: Corporate bond issuances declined steeply in the April-June period, mainly due to the national election and expectations of a drop in yields due to anticipated rate cuts, although some experts anticipate a revival in the ongoing second quarter.

Listed bond issuances through the electronic debt bidding platform (EBP) saw a sharp drop in terms of the total amount raised during the first quarter, to about ₹1.6 trillion from ₹2.42 trillion during the corresponding period of 2023-24, show data from BSE and NSE.

The total number of issues fell to 247 from 287.

The total amount of corporate bonds raised through the EBP also saw a sharp decline sequentially. In the January-March quarter, corporate bond issuances through EBP stood at ₹2.39 trillion.

"This drop was largely influenced by the absence of major issuers like HDFC and a one-off large issue by Goswami Infratech in the first quarter of last year. Additionally, regular issuers such as public sector entities like (Power Finance Corp.) and



The total number of issues fell to 247 from 287. ISTOCKPHOTO

Nabard had issued fewer bonds this fiscal year," said Venkatakrishnan Srinivasan, managing partner at Rockfort Fincap LLP, a financial advisory firm.

Nabard is the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Srinivasan, however, expects a turnaround in corporate bond issuances in the July-September quarter, mostly supported by a large supply of bank bonds.

"SBI has already raised ₹20,000 crore through infra bonds, and this will be followed by other major banks including Canara Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, and HDFC Bank, to name a few," he said.

A spokesperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India

didn't respond to emailed queries.

"Despite attractive yields and strong investor appetite for long-term bond instruments from top-rated private sector issuers, interest has been somewhat subdued since April this fiscal year," Srinivasan added. "Issuers seem to have either postponed their growth plans due to the election or waited for yields to come down in anticipation of a reversal in monetary policy and the beginning of interest rate cuts."

In June, the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee decided to keep the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.5% for the eighth consecutive time.

Last week, Shaktikanta Das, the RBI governor, said he expected retail inflation to be close to 5% in June, in line with the central bank's expectations but far from its 4% target to begin considering lowering interest rates, according to a Reuters report.

Retail inflation based on the consumer price index rose to 5.08% year-on-year during June, after dropping to a 12-month low of 4.75% in May. The rise in June was due to higher food inflation, which accounts for nearly 40% of the consumer price basket.

INDIGO WORKS TO IMPROVE AUTOMATED RESPONSES

Anu Sharma

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NEW DELHI: The usual scripted automated responses to queries and complaints on social media platforms can be frustrating and airlines are increasingly realizing that it impacts the customer experience and hurts brand value. India's largest airline has noticed this as a problem, and has started working on technological solutions to provide more informative and precise responses, to queries and complaints, which would aim to address their concerns and anxiety about a delay, cancellation, or any other grievance.

"In our evolution of implementing skai (AI chatbot) into various use cases, this is a use case we have just kind of started looking at, and over the next year we will make an attempt to help the humans responding on social media, get them augmented with artificial intelligence. So, that is currently project in progress, we have just started the feasibility of it and our hope is to deliver it this year," Neetan Chopra - chief digital and information officer, IndiGo, told Mint.

IndiGo launched an AI chatbot, 6Eskai, powered by GPT-4 technology in November 2023. It was developed in-house by IndiGo's digital team, in close collaboration with Microsoft. By consistently scanning customer chats, the airline is also working on making 6Eskai more personal in its responses to customers.

The airline has been working with IBM subsidiary Red Hat, which provides open source software products to enterprises, to improve the efficiency and experience by adopting newer technological tools.

"Our job is to try and make sure that the innovation goes faster and so that the systems can learn a lot quicker because if a lot of the AI models today are all proprietary and we are trying to make AI a lot more open source, the innovation can help us to short circuit this entire learning," Viju Chakarapany, vice president, Commercial Sales, Red Hat Asia Pacific, said.

Govt plans to cover remotest areas under rural roads scheme

Dhirendra Kumar & Subhash Narayan

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NEW DELHI: The government proposes to revamp its rural road scheme by expanding its coverage to the remotest parts of rural India in a bid to spur economic activity, raise incomes and alleviate poverty, two persons in the know of the developments said.

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) will bring in unconnected villages and habitations with a population of 300-400 people in the plains and 100 people in the hills, deserts and some tribal and

backward regions, one of the two persons said.

The present norm under PMGSY, which is in its third phase currently, is to provide connectivity, by way of an all-weather road to the unconnected habitations in rural areas with a population of 500 and above in the plains and 250 and above in respect of the hill states, desert areas, tribal areas and selected tribal and backward districts.

The new eligibility conditions may be run as an independent programme or included as part of the new PMGSY IV, the second person said adding that the scheme, now in its 24th year of

operation, may propose the changes in the upcoming union budget, to be presented on July 23.

The expected PMGSY IV may get token allocation in the budget with full provisions being made from next year onwards after detailed alignment to be covered under it is finalized and projects are awarded, the first person quoted above said.

However, while hailing the proposed move, former social welfare minister of unified Jammu & Kashmir Sakina Itoo raised doubts, saying that the present government claims a lot, but in reality, there is insignificant development on the



The interim budget presented in February has already provided ₹16,600 crore as a central outlay for the scheme. MINT

ground.

"Let's hope it works well, and that the left-out villages get road connectivity under the rural

road scheme," Itoo said.

The interim budget presented in February 2024 has already provided ₹16,600 crore as a central

outlay for the scheme, which is currently implementing PMGSY-III for the consolidation of 125,000 km of through routes and major rural links connecting habitations, inter alia, to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GRAMs), higher secondary schools, and hospitals. Additionally, the Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Affected Areas (RCLPWEA) is underway. PMGSY-I and PMGSY-II are almost at their end, with more than 99% of the work completed.

"It will provide better road connectivity in small villages, resulting in employment generation as carrying out development works will become easier with

improved road connectivity," said Arun Kumar, a retired Professor of economics at the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

"Better road connectivity will give them access to mandis and other markets, improving trade activities. When there is investment in villages, it will create employment opportunities and contribute to the growth of the economy," Kumar said.

The Central government launched PMGSY on December 25, 2000, to provide all-weather roads (including culverts and cross-drainage structures, which is operable throughout the year) to eligible unconnected habitations in rural areas.

Alternative ways to file ITR with professional help

Taxpayers share login and password credentials with their CA to file tax return. This is a workaround being followed because the tax department has not created an official login section for CAs, putting taxpayers' information at risk. Only CAs with e-Return Intermediary or ERI licence can file without clients' login credentials, but only 32 CAs have this licence, as per the IT website. These are the other options for taxpayers who don't want to share their login details.

Compiled by Shipra Singh

shipra.singh@livemint.com

But if you don't want to share personal details...

Option 1

SHARE AIS, TIS, Form 26AS in PDF and JSON/XML format with CA

CA will prepare ITR and share first draft as PDF

CHECK ITR if changes are to be made

WHEN you ok the draft, CA will share ITR in JSON/XML format

Submit it yourself

Challenges

- Time-consuming
- CA might charge extra for additional work

Option 2

Avail ERI or e-Return Intermediary service

How does it work?

ERIs can submit clients' ITR online without logging into their accounts

Who offers ERI services?

- CLEAR TAX, Quicko have ERI licence. Their APIs are integrated to the tax portal.
- SOME CAs also have ERI licence.

How to access ERI services?

IT department website has list of ERIs with contact numbers.

Type of ERIs

- TAX filing platforms like ClearTax have type 2 licence.
- CAs have type 3 licence. Look under type 3 list for CAs.

Challenges

Only 32 ERIs with type 3 licence listed on IT department website



Graphic: Pranay Bhardwaj/Mint

GOVT MAY PAY BOND INTEREST DUES OF MTNL

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: The government will pay the bond dues of ailing Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL), a DoT source said assuring that there will be no default, and that the amount will be paid before the due date of July 20.

The move assumes significance as it would avert a looming crisis for the telecom corporation which is being seen teetering on the brink with regard to its debt obligations that are becoming due.

All eyes are on MTNL, ever since the debt-laden firm last week expressed its inability to make interest payments to certain bondholders due to paucity of funds.

Telecom Department sources said that the government will step in and pay the said dues, and asserted that there won't be any default on the same.

In this particular case, where the second semi-annual interest (7.59%) on certain bonds is falling due on July 20, 2024, DoT sources said that "the dues will be paid before the date".

{ THE CROSSWORDS }

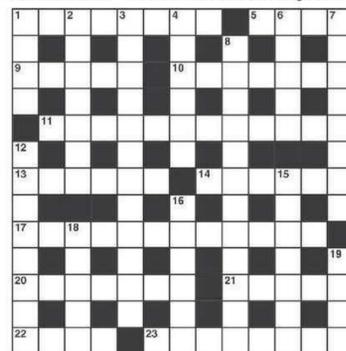
CRYPTIC CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Held firmly and beaten (8)
 - Cut down on church work (4)
 - We accept Henry as a member of the school (5)
 - Bring back old Portuguese coins by petition (7)
 - Their impressions of countries may be valuable (12)
 - Neglect Dad's drink (4,2)
 - Possibly ride round to see the journalist's boss (6)
 - Give no indication (5,3,4)
 - Real setback for Ophelia's brother (7)
 - Film electrician's outright blunder (5)
 - Put your foot in the paste pot (4)
 - Count as an old gasbag (8)

DOWN

- Scatters the pigs (4)
- Stretches between bends (7)
- Court linesman (4,8)
- Mistakes in Latin translation (6)
- They entertain vast crowds (5)
- Meadows in unspoilt surroundings delight (8)
- Acted as stand-in and did a dentist's job (6,3,3)
- Pauline may describe these letters (8)
- Having eye drops? (7)
- Virtuous but cheats badly (6)
- Put oil on some crane levers (5)
- Have in mind to be nasty (4)

PUZZLE 16912 © Gemini Crosswords 2018 All rights reserved



QUICK CLUES

- ACROSS**
- In moral decline (8)
 - Old (4)
 - Area of shallow water (5)
 - Disastrous (7)
 - Neat and clean (5,3,4)
 - A tax (6)
 - Very small margin (5,7)
 - Artillery unit (7)
 - Egg-shaped (5)
 - Limited period (4)
 - Continuous (8)
- DOWN**
- Fling with great force (4)
 - Severe fall (7)
 - Shop selling prepared foods (12)
 - Unexceptional (6)
 - A scientific classification (5)
 - Strife (8)
 - An offence (12)
 - Forbidden (8)
 - Australian bush country (7)
 - Coloured pencil (6)
 - Bury (5)
 - Stitched (4)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS (16911)

CRYPTIC

S	T	E	A	D	F	A	S	T	R	F
E	T	U	A	R	O	M	A			
I	N	K	W	E	L	L	M	A	I	
S	P	I	L	S	P	I	D	E	R	
B	E	L	L	O	W	E	W	S		
A	Y	L	E	N	C	H	O	A	C	H
V	Y	L	E	U	L	Y	A			
W	H	I	S	T	L	E	R			
I	N	A	S	S	U					
N	O	T	I	N	G	A	B	E	O	
D	N	D	D	I	V	O	R	C	E	
O	B	E	S	E	N	U	O			
W	R	M	I	D	S	T	R	E	A	M

QUICK

S	H	I	P	S	H	A	P	E	P	O
E	E	U	F	R	E	E	D			
T	A	R	N	I	S	H	F	R	E	D
V	U	H	M	A	I	Y	H	E	M	
H	E	A	R	T	H	C	A	A		
A	S	Y	U	N	D	E	R	P	I	N
D	E	C	I	P	H	E	R	E	U	
R	D	E	A	A	A	S	S	E	R	T
I	G	N	I	T	E	B	C	A		
R	D	E	O	L	D	H	A	N	D	
S	L	A	I	N	E	E	G			
T	L	E	T	O	M	S	A	W	Y	E

Govt eyes hydrogen-dispensing infra across country

Alisha Sachdev

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NEW DELHI: India is preparing to launch a roadmap aimed at establishing a hydrogen-dispensing infrastructure across the country to promote the gas as a clean mobility fuel.

Currently, with only a couple of operational hydrogen filling stations, the push is on to engage private participants in building additional dispensing facilities locally, two senior government officials aware of the plans told Mint on condition of anonymity.

A specialised steering committee, composed of officials from the ministry of road transport and highways, the ministry of new and renewable energy, and including the Principal Scientific Adviser to the government, is scheduled to convene in August or September. This committee's objective is to develop recommendations and an action



The government is studying a roadmap to set up a hydrogen dispensing ecosystem. REUTERS

plan to create hydrogen corridors, promote domestic storage of hydrogen and dispensing infrastructure, and standardize hydrogen storage pressure in India. Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari will chair the meeting. The ministry is a key stakeholder in India's National Hydrogen Mission and the government's broader initiative to support cleaner, alternative fuels to combat climate change.

"If India doesn't have a dispensing ecosystem, how do we build hydrogen highways and how do we encourage commercialization of hydrogen-run vehicles, a technology auto OEMs have already tested and proven?" the first government official cited above said. "The dispensing infrastructure at this point in time exists only in a handful places, and we need to make it eco-

nomic feasible to scale it across the country as soon as possible." The official emphasized the need to establish the feasibility and return on investment for hydrogen dispensing stations, noting that there are no local manufacturers of the components required for building dispensing stations in India. Instead, assemblers are dependent on imported components.

The government is studying a roadmap to set up a hydrogen dispensing ecosystem. This includes a report with inter-ministerial recommendations involving seven to eight ministries, each tasked with specific responsibilities. "There are enablers needed from various ministries, once they are identified, then a comprehensive roadmap can be chalked out and various accountability parameters and timelines will be set in motion" the official cited above stated, adding that a scientific study conducted by the World Resour-

ces Institute (WRI) will also serve as a resource for the discussions.

A crucial aspect of the plan is determining the appropriate storage pressure for hydrogen, ranging from 350 to 700 bar. High-pressure storage is essential for maximizing efficiency and safety, but comes at a price. "We want to have a hydrogen ecosystem quickly because the auto industry is ready with vehicles and technology," the official added. "Hydrogen is already a proven technology. Now the onus is on the filling infrastructure to be ready as fast as possible." A group of ministers will deliberate on the necessary enablers for hydrogen as a mobility fuel. The inter-ministerial meeting will also consult potential private entrants, particularly those in the steel and high-pressure systems sectors, to foster a conducive environment for hydrogen infrastructure development.

{ WEATHER }

TEMPERATURE HIGH * LOW

MONDAY Generally cloudy sky with light rain or drizzle 33°C 27°C	TUESDAY Generally cloudy sky with light rain or drizzle 34°C 28°C	WEDNESDAY Generally cloudy sky with light rain 32°C 28°C
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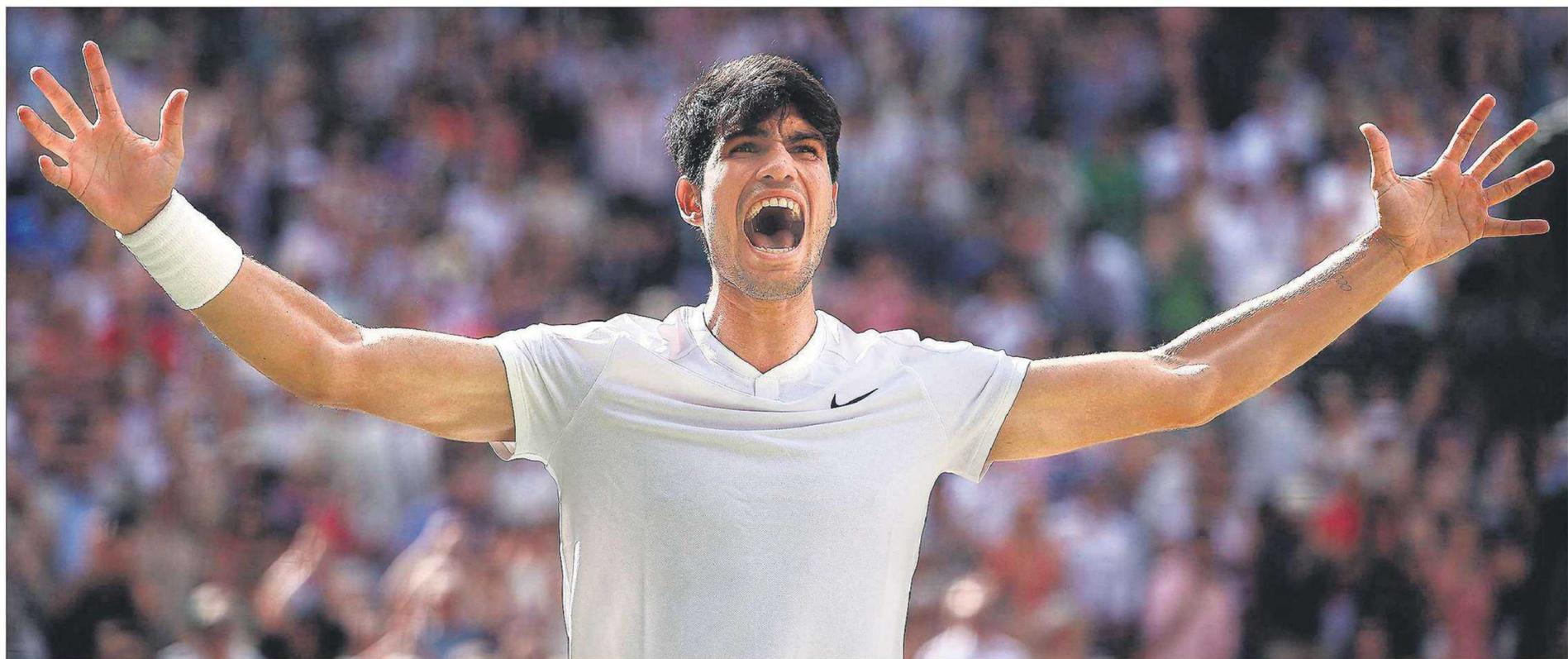
ALMANAC

Today is 15th July 2024

- 8 Maharajm, 1446
- 24 Ashadha, Shukla
- Paksha, 09
- Smasat: 20:01
- Sunset: Monday at 07:20 p.m.
- Sunrise: Tuesday at 05:33 a.m.
- Moonrise: Monday at 01:46 p.m.
- Moonset: Tuesday at 12:45 a.m.

TEMPERATURE IN FOUR METROS

Delhi 33°C 27°C	Mumbai 29°C 25°C
Kolkata 34°C 28°C	Chennai 31°C 24°C



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz celebrates after beating Serbia's Novak Djokovic in the men's singles final of the Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club on Sunday. Defending champion Alcaraz won 6-2, 6-2, 7-6.

AFP

Rookie to ruler, in four Grand steps

Spain's Carlos Alcaraz crushes 24-time Slam winner Djokovic in straight sets to retain the Wimbledon crown

Rutvik Mehta
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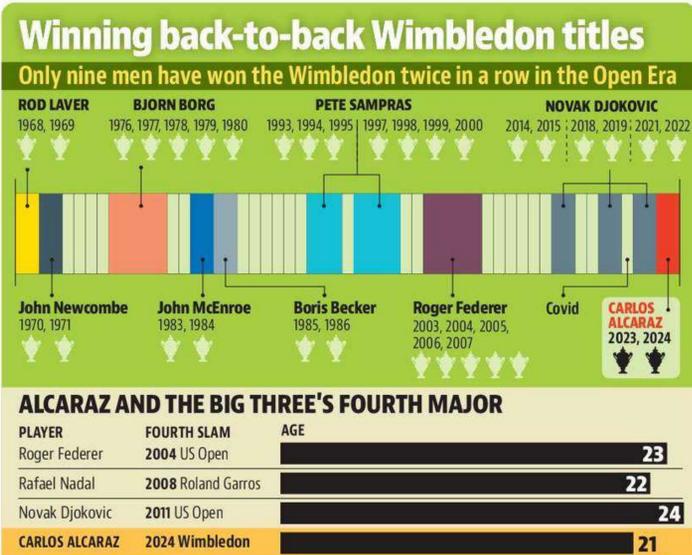
MUMBAI: Once is a wonder. Twice is a statement. By now we know Carlos Alcaraz is a wonder, but this was indeed a statement.

Of defending his crown by defeating the same great in the final. Of silencing a 24-time Grand Slam champion into submission. Of rapidly growing in stature by capturing four Slams at 21, something even the unparalleled Big Three of men's tennis hadn't.

If Alcaraz's 2023 Wimbledon triumph was the signalling of the change of guard in men's tennis, his 2024 defence was a significant stamp on it. Alcaraz beat Djokovic 6-2, 6-2, 7-6(4) on Sunday in a final where so omnipresent was his all-round class that it left the seven-time champion astonishingly clueless.

"He was definitely very hot today," Djokovic chuckled on court.

The sizzling Spaniard has been hot over the last couple of months, adding a second grass-court major to his clay-court first in Paris. He is only the sixth man to do the French Open-Wimbledon double in the same season and the first since Djokovic in 2021.



Alcaraz hadn't been at his best through this Wimbledon but come the big day, he was a beast. His serving was sublime, his forehand bullied the Serb and shot variety lit up the London evening. The only time Alcaraz looked fragile was when, from 40-0 serving for the title, he fluffed three championship points and got broken.

Moments like these tend to linger in the mind of youngsters but, again, Alcaraz showed why he's no ordinary 21-year-old in the sport. Minutes later in the tiebreaker when the fourth

championship point arrived, Alcaraz smiled. And served it out this time as Djokovic's backhand return crashed into the net.

"I was seeing so far away," Alcaraz said of his thoughts within touching distance of the finish line.

Acing Slam finals He eventually crossed it, like he did in all the Slam finals that he has stepped foot in so far. Alcaraz has never gone down when the stakes are highest. And, from the first minute of Sun-

day's clash, he never looked like changing that.

In last year's final, Djokovic swept Alcaraz away in the first set in just 34 minutes. This year, the first game alone lasted 14 minutes. This was a different Alcaraz—locked in from strike one. And it was some strike.

Opting to receive, Alcaraz created three break points, giving an early taster of his silken rhythm while catching Djokovic off guard at the net. First, with a banana forehand passing stinger for the stretched Serb. Second, with a sharp angled

forehand passing return winner off the second serve. Third, with a backhand crosscourt return winner. Djokovic managed to save them all with quality first serves, and then another one. Until at the fifth time of repeatedly asking and relentlessly punching, Alcaraz broke in. And then in no time slammed the door on Djokovic.

Faltering net attacks Djokovic's tactics, though, were a bit perplexing. A master of dictating from the baseline no matter who stood across, Djokovic was quick to move forward and station himself at the net. By the fifth game, he'd rushed to the net 10 times and, on most occasions, without success. Alcaraz's passing shots whizzed past him, his own volleys crashed into the net.

After a Djokovic double fault on another break point down, Alcaraz went double break up. Dazed in the 1-6 opening set of the 2023 final, Alcaraz dazzled in the opening 6-2 set of the 2024 final.

The second set started just like the first: with Djokovic serving, littering errors, and Alcaraz getting the early break catching Djokovic into submission at the net. Djokovic's body language was flat; his returns, surprisingly even off second serves, feeble.

He did applaud an Alcaraz serve and volley winner, but when he netted his own volley to give Alcaraz another break opportunity and hand it to him with another double fault, Alcaraz returned to his chair amid the sound of cheer and the sight

of a barely believable two-set scoreline.

Fightback didn't come It's in moments and adversities like these that greats like Djokovic, starting at a killer blow, find something in them to come alive.

The Serb, playing his 37th Slam final, has been there done that, most recently in the 2021 French Open final that he grabbed from being two sets to love down.

There were signs, like when he began the set with a hold for a change or saved four break points in the third game to yell "C'mon" in a first real show of emotion. But two instances in that set reflected Alcaraz's superiority of the mind and skill on the day.

In the second game down 15-30 on his serve, Alcaraz raced forward to get to a backhand volley from Djokovic and placed it perfectly through the open court. Pressure point, desperate play, ice-cool execution.

Then, serving for the set after getting the break eventually in the ninth game, Alcaraz double-faulted at 40-0 and with his first serve deserting him, got broken. Shrugging it off, he pulled off a volley digging it out off his ankle two games later.

Moments later, at 3-3 in the tiebreaker, a ferocious forehand that took Djokovic wide off court was backed up by a deft volley. Then, a drop shot winner opened another championship point opportunity.

Alcaraz smiled. And not too long after that, stood with the Wimbledon trophy again.

I couldn't have done more, says Djokovic

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NEW DELHI: Novak Djokovic went into Sunday's Wimbledon final seeking a record-extending 25th Grand Slam title, but by the end, he was a distant second as Carlos Alcaraz won a second straight Wimbledon title with a comprehensive 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (4) victory.

"Just overall the way I felt on the court today against him, I was inferior on the court," Djokovic said on the ATP website after the final. "That's it. He was a better player. He played every single shot better than I did."

"I don't think I could have done something much more. Try to pump myself up maybe. Get the crowd involved. That's what was happening in the third. That got me going a little bit. He wasn't also allowing me to have many free points on my serve. He was reading the serve. He was playing with a lot of variety. I've never seen him serve that way, to be honest."

Alcaraz now holds a 2-0 record against Djokovic at the grass-court Major. In 2023, the young Spaniard had prevailed over the Serbian great in five sets.

It should be noted, however, Djokovic had undergone knee surgery less than three weeks before arriving in London for the event. That the 37-year-old was

4 Alcaraz is the fourth man to have won four Slams before turning 22. The others are Bjorn Borg, Mats Wilander and Boris Becker

21yrs, 70 days

Alcaraz is the youngest man to win Wimbledon and French Open in the same year

2 Alcaraz is just the second player in the Open Era after Roger Federer to win his first four Grand Slam men's singles finals

still able to reach his 37th Slam final suggests he can keep going.

"I did all I can to prepare myself for this match and this tournament in general," Djokovic said. "If someone told me I would play Wimbledon finals three, four weeks ago, I would take it for sure. Where I was three, four weeks ago, where I am now."

"Of course, I do feel disappointed. It's a bitter taste to lose the finals the way I did today. It has to be a success at the end of the day with me and my team playing Wimbledon finals and losing to the best player of the tournament."

Samson and Dube fire India to win over Zimbabwe in 5th T20

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HARARE: Sanju Samson's well-crafted fifty, Mukesh Kumar's disciplined spell and Shivam Dube's all-round effort helped India wind up their Zimbabwe tour with a comprehensive 42-run victory in the fifth and final T20 here on Sunday. With this win, India clinched the series 4-1.

Samson's (58, 45b) was central to India's healthy 167/6 along with Dube's flashy 26 (12b). Then the India bowlers led by Mukesh (4/22), Dube (2/25) and Washington Sundar (1/7) did their job, bundling out Zimbabwe for 125 in 18.3 overs.

After the early dismissals of Wessly Madhevere, who dragged the third ball of the first over by pacer Mukesh onto his stumps, and Brian Bennett, the pair of Tadiwanashe Marumani (27) and Dion Myers (34) added 44 runs for the third wicket to keep the hosts in the hunt. Marumani's switch-hit four off leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi, who went for a few runs in this match, was quite stunning in its execution. But such shots were few



India's players pose with the trophy in Harare on Sunday.

AP

and far between from the Zimbabwe batters.

Marumani went for a sweep shot against Washington but missed the line altogether as the ball hit his upper torso to get adjudged leg-before. Dube followed a shuffling Myers with a quicker delivery onto his body, and the Zimbabwe batter merely chipped the ball to Abhishek Sharma at short third man.

The final nail on their hope was the run out of skipper Sikandar Raza (8), which came in a

cartwheel of four wickets for nine runs. Mukesh, who bagged his career-best T20 figures, fittingly ended Zimbabwe's innings. Earlier, Samson (1x4, 4x6) and Riyan Parag (22, 24b) added 65 runs for the fourth wicket as India recovered from a middling Powerplay in which they only scored 44 runs for the loss of three wickets.

Brief scores: India 167/6 in 20 overs (S Samson 58, S Dube 26). Zimbabwe 125 in 18.3 overs (D Myers 34; M Kumar 4/22, S Dube 2/25). **India won by 42 runs.**

{ STRAIGHT DRIVE }
Amrit Mathur



When Lord's discussed an impending end

The first thought walking through the Grace Gates at Lord's is special because cricket has lived at its home in London's St John's Wood since 1814. Lord's, steeped in cricket's culture, burdened and blessed by the weight of history, is embracing change to stay contemporary.

That it must, and signs that cricket has moved on—and keeps evolving—are all too visible. In the media box (which resembles a space ship) Test cricket stalwart Kumar Sangakkara strides in carrying a Rajasthan Royals Halla Bol backpack. During the lunch break kids are allowed to have a hit with plastic balls. Lord's, once stiff and cold, is now less formal, less elitist.

The Lord's Test is an important social event of the British summer and the stadium experience for fans, players, commercial partners is exceptional. There are large signs announcing that Lord's is cashless, and unless you carry the right plastic not even the friendliest steward can help you get coffee, Greek, Lebanese or Indian street food, nor can one buy merchandise. Also, Lord's won't allow anyone to smoke.

What hasn't changed, thankfully, is Lord's celebrates cricket like no other venue. The Father Time Wall of Fame lists major milestones in cricket's journey: MCC issuing the Code of Laws in 1788, the first Oxford-Cambridge game in 1827 and the Parsees, the first team from India, playing here in 1886.

Over the years India's best have excelled at Lord's, their astonishing feats etched in our collective memory. Vinoo Mankad in 1952, Kapil Dev in '83, Sourav in 2002 have bossed this place and at different times several others have left their spike marks here.

Vengsarkar scored three hundreds; Ajit Agarkar is on the batting honours board, a feat that has eluded greats Tendulkar and King Kohli. Indian bowlers on the honours board include Amar Singh, Nissar, Lala Amarnath, Ramakant Desai. Also, Chetan Sharma/Bhuvneshwar/RP Singh/Praveen Kumar/Shant Sharma.

Yet, besides celebrating the greats of the game, Lord's is special as it respects cricket, the great game, and the values it stands for. The MCC is a private club that owns Lord's, it framed cricket's



James Anderson at the Lord's on Friday.

AFP

laws and used to run cricket till that role shifted to ICC.

The MCC now has only moral authority and its prestigious World Cricket Committee (with Sourav Ganguly, Ramiz Raja, Justin Langer, Jhulan Goswami and others as members) is a forum that discusses the state of the game and offers suggestions to the national boards.

One such elaborate conference, the World Cricket Connect, was held last week in the Long Room where players, administrators, commercial partners and broadcasters spoke about the many challenges the game faces. The sessions

were lively and insightful, the outcomes realistic and a bit surprising.

The answer to all major challenges (threat to Tests/cricket's growth/commercial health/club versus country debate) was T20 cricket and professional leagues hold the key, and world cricket must reset keeping that in the centre. This because fans have voted in its favour, and the market has adjusted to the changing reality.

Sangakkara summed it best: We have to respect what the fans consume, that's the only way to grow. Kevin Pietersen, a strong supporter of the shorter format, was equally

clear about the way forward. Everyone agreed Test cricket is on a bad wicket, and there is little that can be done.

A few days later, the England-West Indies Test at Lord's brought out the best of cricket, also its worst aspect. The game was sold out, as all Lord's Tests are, and the setting was just perfect. The only problem was that the West Indies weren't good enough and the cricket lacked quality. A non-competitive game—a five-day contest that barely goes into Day 3—is just bad for cricket.

That 20,000 fans turned up for a Test is remarkable in itself. That they came even on Day 3 (with WI 6 down) is a bigger feat. That they came to celebrate the career of Jimmy Anderson (their greatest bowler, perhaps their greatest Test cricketer) demonstrates their respect and affection.

The standout memory from Lord's is the entire crowd staying for almost one hour after the match ended to bid farewell to a champion player. Tests will survive at Lord's because of the magic of cricket at this fantastic venue but even on sunny afternoons dark clouds will always be around the corner.



EURO 2024

Young guns light up nights in Germany

While emergence of exciting young talent has been a high point, Italy's dire display as defending champs was one of the lows

only rescued in the dying embers by Jude Bellingham's stunning overhead kick, while Portugal just scraped past Slovenia. Matjaz Kek's side reached the knock-out rounds of a major tournament for the first time in their history.

Next-gen arrives
While the established star names fell flat to some extent in Germany, young players have excelled.

Spain's Lamine Yamal became the youngest goalscorer in the competition's history at 16 years old with his stunning strike against France, while on the opposite flank Nico Williams, who has just turned 22, also devastated opponents. Germany's trophy bid was powered by Bayern Munich's Jamal Musiala, 21, and Arda Guler, 19, drove Turkey into the quarter-finals for the first time since 2008.

Man United's Kobbie Mainoo, 19, has also established himself as a vital part of England's midfield.

Lows: Safety first
While Spain have shone on their run to the final, too many of the strongest teams have failed to entertain.

France were eliminated in the semi-finals while scoring just one goal from open play themselves, operating a safety-first approach.

Garth Southgate's England did the same on their run to final, producing just five shots on target over 240 minutes against Slovakia and Switzerland in the last 16 and quarter-final respectively, won in extra time and on penalties.

The tournament's biggest star on paper, France's Kylian Mbappe, netted just once.

Dire defending champs
No side has successfully defended the European Championship apart from Spain in 2012 but Italy's attempt to this summer was nothing short of woeful.

They triumphed at Euro 2020 but shorn of many key players from that side, they fell flat in Germany. They beat minnows Albania 2-1 but were thoroughly outplayed in a 1-0 defeat by Spain.

They were eventually ousted in the last 16 by Switzerland.

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BERLIN: As Euro 2024 draws to a close after a month of high-octane action, it is fair to say that the quadrennial event has largely lived up to its reputation and offered us plenty of interesting talking points. Here's a look at some of the highs and lows from this summer's football festival in Germany

Highs: Great atmosphere
After the Covid-delayed Euro 2020 was spread around the continent, denying it a coherent sense of soul, this summer has seen hordes of fans descend on Germany looking to make up for lost time.

Many who chose not to head to Qatar for the 2022 World Cup were waiting with baited breath for the tournament to begin.

With cheap beer fuelling particularly vibrant atmospheres, the fans have been one of the highlights of the tournament.

Whether it be Turkey supporters tooting car horns into the night after their wins, the Dutch turning host cities into a 'sea of Oranje' or Scots making friends wherever they went, they proved time and time again that fans make football.

Thriving minnows
Debutants Georgia were the biggest success story at a tournament where lots of the smaller teams enjoyed great moments.

While many are critical of the Euros' expansion from 16 teams to 24, some of the smaller nations showed why that can also be a positive. Georgia made history by earning their first ever Euros win with a shock 2-0 triumph over Portugal to reach the knock-out rounds and even took the lead against finalists Spain in the last 16. Slovakia had England on the ropes in that round with the Three Lions

Records that fell at Euro 2024

From Lamine Yamal becoming the youngest scorer in the history of the European Championship to Ronaldo featuring a record number of times in the competition, the 2024 edition featured many feats

YAMAL: YOUNGEST PLAYER AND SCORER

Spain teenage sensation Lamine Yamal made history in his country's opening game against Croatia by becoming the youngest player ever to appear in a European Championship game, at the age of 16 years and 338 days. In doing so he beat the previous record held by Poland's Kacper Kozłowski, who was 17 years and 246 days old when he appeared at Euro 2020. Yamal then claimed another piece of history by becoming the youngest player ever to score a goal at the Euros in Spain's 2-1 semi-final win against France, at the age of 16 years and 362 days.

PEPE: THE OLDEST PLAYER

At the other end of the spectrum, Portugal defender Pepe became the oldest player ever at a European Championship when he took to the field in his team's opening game against Czech Republic at the age of 41. He was 41 years and 130 days old by the time he appeared in the quarter-final against France. The Porto centre-back passed the previous mark set by Hungary goalkeeper Gabor Kiraly, who was 40 years and 86 days old when he played against Belgium at Euro 2016.

RONALDO'S SIXTH APPEARANCE

At 39, Cristiano Ronaldo had been hoping to claim the oldest goalscorer record for himself, but he failed to add to his all-time tournament best tally of 14 goals in Portugal's run to the quarters, missing a penalty against Slovenia in the last 16. Ronaldo did, however, claim other records. Having first appeared at the tournament in 2004, Ronaldo competed at an unprecedented sixth Euros in Germany, and has now made a total of 30 appearances, at least seven more than any other player.

MODRIC: THE OLDEST SCORER

Luka Modric became the tournament's oldest goalscorer when he netted in Croatia's final game, a 1-1 draw against Italy. Modric was 38 years and 289 days old, breaking the record set by Austrian Ivica Vastic in 2008 by 32 days. Croatia were eliminated in the group stage, meaning that game is set to also go down as Modric's last ever at the tournament.

THE FASTEST GOALS

23 Seconds

Albania's Nedim Bajrami netted the fastest ever goal at a European Championship when he put his side ahead after just 23 seconds in their opening game against Italy.

57 Seconds

Merih Demiral of Turkey later scored the second-fastest goal by finding the net against Austria in the Round of 16 after just 57 seconds.

67 Seconds

Bajrami smashed the previous Euro record for the quickest goal of 67 seconds by Dmitri Kirichenko of Russia against Greece in 2004. However, his team went on to lose the game 2-1.

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BCCI releases ₹1 cr for ailing Gaekwad

MUMBAI: BCCI decided to release ₹1 crore for the treatment of former India coach Anshuman Gaikwad, who is battling blood cancer at a medical facility in London. BCCI's decision has come following appeals for support from Kapil Dev and Sandip Patil. Gaikwad is at the King's College Hospital in London. The 71-year-old Gaikwad played 40 Tests and 15 ODIs between 1975 and 1987.

Bol breaks 51secs in 400m hurdles

PARIS: World champion Femke Bol became the second woman to break 51secs in 400m hurdles in Switzerland. The 24-year-old Dutchwoman ran 50.95secs, smashing her European record of 51.45. Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone set a new world record of 50.65 at the US Olympic trials on June 30.

Anirban Lahiri takes 4-shot lead in Spain

SOTOGRADE: Anirban Lahiri inched closer to a maiden win on the LIV series as he carded a 5-under 66 in the second round to take a four-shot lead at the LIV Golf Andalucia. The 37-year-old, who opened with a 2-under 69, is 7-under with 18 holes to go. New Zealand's Danny Lee is his closest pursuer at 3-under.

Aditi rises to T-22nd at Evian C'ship

EVIAN LES BAINS: Aditi Ashok shot three birdies in the last four holes of the third round as she carded a 4-under 67 and jumped 22 places to tied-22 at the Amundi Evian Championship. Aditi vaulted to 5-under for three rounds as she continues her search for her maiden Top-10 finish in a Major. Diksha Dagar had withdrawn from the event after her 1st rd 76.

Mayweather fan Nishant aims to impress in Paris

Shantanu Srivastava
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NEW DELHI: Given his predilection for bravado, it's not surprising that Nishant Dev's sporting hero is Floyd Mayweather Jr, the professional boxing legend known for his 50-0 record, big mouth and watertight defence. Nishant isn't into trash-talking, but the pugilist from Karnal in Haryana loves to put fear in his opponents, "no matter who they are".

"I know I am the best in the world. I don't fear anyone," he says from Saarbrücken in Germany where he is at a camp with the Paris-bound Indian squad, with only the 2019 Worlds silver medalist Amit Panghal still at home, training at SAI's Shilaroo campus at altitude. The team will leave for Paris on July 22, a week before the boxing events start.

"My pre-fight routine is simple. I remember God. Chant Hanuman Chalisa, and jump into the ring. Once I am in the ring, there's no nervousness or fear."

Nishant has already spent over two weeks in the southwestern German city that borders France and is just about two hours by train from Paris. The salubrious climate and excellent training facilities apart, Nishant counts world-class sparring partners as the biggest plus of this German stint.

"There are boxers from the US, Denmark, Australia and Ireland here. I have sparred with some Irish boxers and they are quite good. I am in the best shape of my life and am confident of achieving my target," he says.

The target, he states matter-of-factly, is standing on the top of the victory podium. Only three Indian boxers have medalled at the Games, only one male has stood on the podium, and none has done better than a third-place finish. Vijender Singh's bronze in Beijing 2008 remains the only medal won by an Indian male boxer.

"I am gunning for the gold. Silver and bronze are fine, but I believe I am born to be an Olympic gold medalist," he asserts.

Nishant's confidence stems from his trust in his training where he has done "everything

Know Nishant

Style
SOUTHPAW

Weight class
71kg

From
KARNAL
(Haryana)

AGE
23

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

2019
Silver at National Championships

2019
Gold at Asian Championships Grand Slam

2021
Gold at National Championships

2021
Quarter-final finish at World Championships, Serbia

2023
Gold at National Championships

2023
Bronze at World Championships, Tashkent

humanly possible" to beat the best. In Saarbrücken, his regimen includes 90-minute training in the morning followed by a three-hour session in the evening.

Between recovery and training, he finds time to revisit some of Mayweather's bouts or read his motivational quotes. Considering the strong field in 71kg, he might need every ounce of that mental and physical conditioning, and some more.

His division at the Olympics will feature 2021 World Championships silver medalist Omari Jones of the US, 2023 European champion Nikolai Terteryan of Denmark, 2022 European champion Vakhid Abbasov of Serbia, 2021 world champion Sewonrets Okazawa of Japan and 2023 world champions in Kazakhstan's Aslanbek Shymbergenov and Uzbekistan's Asadkhuja Muydinkhujaev, who has moved up from 63.5kg.

Each was good enough to seal

their spots before the final qualifying tournament in Bangkok where Nishant punched his Paris ticket.

"It is perhaps the toughest division in men's boxing and it is very tough to separate them in terms of quality. I have boxed against most of them and have beaten a few too, so I am well aware of their weaknesses. Before each match, me and my coaches look closely at the bouts that my opponent has lost and pick possible weaknesses.

"Even in the Thailand world qualifiers, I won all my bouts comfortably though none of my opponents were easy. I am sharp enough to notice the weaknesses and strong enough to execute my plans. Boxing is a lot about luring the opponent into making a mistake."

Nishant is also working on his endurance to last the three rounds. Known to lose steam in the final round, he has gone on a

low-fat, low-calorie diet to maintain weight and muscle content.

"I would tire in the third round after shedding weight closer to the competition. So, this time I am focussing on cutting the weight early and maintaining it going into the Games," he says. The occasional cheat meal is out of the question. His diet includes a healthy mix of egg whites, oats, grilled meats and boiled vegetables.

His post-Olympics laundry list, besides gorging on his favourite food, includes going skydiving in Switzerland and river rafting in Rishikesh.

"It's been over three months since I had my favourite *aloo ke paranthe* and *rajma-chawal*. All my life, all I have done is box. Despite travelling to many countries for competitions and training, I have never explored them. I see exotic places through travel reels. It will all be worth it when I win that Olympic gold."

Copa: Uruguay clinch third place

Agencies

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CHARLOTTE: Luis Suarez rescued Uruguay with an injury-time equaliser before the South Americans defeated Canada 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out to win the Copa America's third place play-

off match on Saturday. Uruguay looked to be heading to a shock defeat after the Canadians took a 2-1 lead in the 80th minute through a Jonathan David goal at Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium. But former Barcelona star Suarez, who came on as a second-half substitute, swept in a crisp finish from Jose Gimenez

in the second minute of injury time to make it 2-2 and send the game to penalties.

In the shoot-out, Canada midfielder Ismael Kone saw his spot-kick saved by Uruguay goalkeeper Sergio Rochet before Alphonso Davies saw an attempted panenka hit the crossbar and bounce out.



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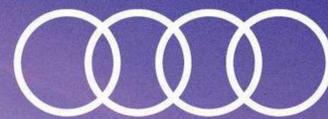
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