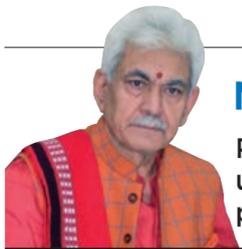


THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 21 JULY 2024



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Pakistan, 'master of terror', unhappy with J&K's peace, prosperity, says Manoj Sinha



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Donald Trump returns to campaign trail after assassination attempt



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Deadpool & Wolverine's Hugh Jackman expresses his desire to work with Shah Rukh Khan

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Vicky Kaushal takes selfies with fans in Patna on Saturday. — PTI

Nearly 1K students back in India amid violence in B'desh

New Delhi: Nearly a thousand Indian students have returned to India from Bangladesh through various land transit points on Saturday as the neighbouring country continued to reel under deadly clashes over a job-quota system. Indian missions in Bangladesh are in regular touch with the authorities concerned to ensure the safety and security of Indians. "Thus far, 778 Indian students have returned to India through various land ports. In addition, around 200 students have returned home by regular flight services through Dhaka and Chittagong airports," the MEA said. **Full report on Page 4**

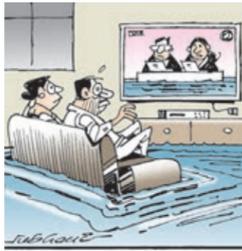
Haryana Congress MLA arrested in mining case

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrested Haryana Congress MLA Surrender Panwar on Saturday in an illegal mining-linked money-laundering case, official sources said. The 55-year-old legislator was taken into custody in the early hours in Gurgaon. **Full report on Page 5**

NTA announces Neet-UG city, centre-wise results

New Delhi: The NTA on Saturday released the Neet-UG 2024 results city and centre-wise for all students. The results have been published in this format following SC direction which is hearing several petitions about the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam including paper leak. **Full report on Page 2**

COUNTERPOINT



No weather report, today... our studio is inundated by heavy rains!

WEATHER

Max: 36°C
Min: 29°C
RH: 63%
Rain: 5

Forecast: Haze

ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Uttarayana
Tithi: Ashada Shukla Poonmima till 3.43 pm
Star: Uttarashada till 12.11 am
Varjyam: 9.14 am to 10.44 am
Durmuhurtam: 5.06 pm to 5.57 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
SUNSET TODAY 7.18 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.37 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 5.02 AM
MOONSET TODAY 11.05 PM

Do not criticise Chair's rulings, no slogans: RS MPs reminded

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Rulings given by the Chair should not be criticised directly or indirectly in or outside the House and members should not raise slogans, including "Vande Mataram" and "Jai Hind", the Rajya Sabha MPs have been reminded ahead of the Parliament session beginning Monday.

The Rajya Sabha secretariat recently published excerpts from the "Handbook for Members of Rajya Sabha", drawing the attention of the MPs to parliamentary customs and conventions and parliamentary etiquette. These excerpts were published in a Rajya Sabha bulletin issued on July 15.

The bulletin also reminded the MPs that displaying "exhibits" on the floor of the House is "not in order".

"The decorum and the seriousness of the proceedings of the House require that there should be no 'thanks', 'thank you', 'Jai Hind, Vande Mataram or any other slogans raised in the House," the bulletin said.

The published excerpts noted that rulings are given by the Chair according to the precedents of the House, and where there is no precedent, the usual parliamentary practice is followed. "Rulings given by the Chair should not be criticised directly or indirectly inside or outside the House," the bulletin said, citing the handbook.

Referring to parliamentary etiquette, it said words containing insinuations, offensive and unparliamentary expressions should be scrupulously avoided. **Turn to Page 4**

Kargil Vijay Divas: A day of courage, remembrance



Indian Air Force personnel celebrate "Kargil Vijay Divas Rajat Jayanti" in Punjab's Bhisiana on Saturday. The silver jubilee of Kargil Vijay Divas was celebrated at the Bhisiana IAF Station with great pride and fervour to honour the bravery, valour and the sacrifices made by Indian bravehearts during the 1999 war. The IAF's No. 17 Squadron, operating MiG-21 Type-96 aircraft, based then at the Bhisiana AFS participated actively in the operations, undertaking several reconnaissance and strike missions to flush out the enemy troops. — PTI

Modi, Kiwi PM pledge stronger bilateral ties

- Luxon calls to congratulate PM on re-election
- Modi hails NZ PM for Indian diaspora's safety

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon on Saturday vowed to take bilateral cooperation to new heights in the years to come.

Highlighting the momentum generated by recent high-level contacts between the two sides, both leaders agreed to advance mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in various areas, including trade and economic cooperation, animal husbandry, pharmaceuticals, education and space, among others.

Mr Modi had received a telephone call on Saturday from Mr Luxon congratulating him on his re-election in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls in the country.



Narendra Modi Christopher Luxon

During the telephonic conversation, both leaders noted that India-New Zealand ties are anchored in shared democratic values and close people-to-people ties.

According to a statement by the Prime Minister's Office on Saturday, Mr Modi thanked Mr Luxon for looking after the interests of the Indian diaspora in New Zealand. Mr Luxon assured Mr Modi of continued efforts towards the security and well-being of the Indian diaspora. The two leaders agreed to remain in touch. The PMO statement

said: "Highlighting the momentum generated by the recent high-level contacts between the two sides, they agreed to advance mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in various areas, including trade and economic cooperation, animal husbandry, pharmaceuticals, education and space, among others."

Later, Mr Modi, in a post on social media platform X, wrote, "I thank Prime Minister Christopher Luxon for his call and warm felicitations. Reiterated our firm commitment to take forward India-New Zealand ties, which are rooted in shared democratic values and people-to-people ties. Appreciate his efforts towards the security and well-being of the Indian diaspora in New Zealand." **Modi to open Heritage Summit today: Page 4**

Reshuffle in UP BJP soon; Yogi stays

'State unit chief to be replaced, accommodated in Cabinet rejig'

SHASHI BHUSHAN NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Despite pressure for a change of guard in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP high command is in no mood to replace chief minister Yogi Adityanath. Instead, the party insiders claim, the axe is likely to fall on the "non-performing" ministers and state unit office-bearers.

According to sources, the BJP is preparing for a major overhaul of the Uttar Pradesh state unit. A Cabinet reshuffle in the state is also in the offing and the pending bypolls in 10 Assembly constituencies will be held shortly.



Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath offers prayers at the Bade Hanuman temple at Sangam in Prayagraj on Saturday. — PTI

Sources in the saffron camp said that after its big setback in politically important Uttar Pradesh

in the just concluded Lok Sabha elections, the BJP leadership has decided to major overhaul in organi-

sation and in the Adityanath government. "The party is also going for major changes to weed out the non-performing ministers in the Adityanath government. The party is also preparing for a major organisational rejig in Uttar Pradesh, which includes the removal of state unit president Bhupendra Chaudhary," sources said.

After the party's below-expectation performance in the last Lok Sabha polls, Mr Chaudhary had recently met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief J.P. Nadda **Turn to Page 4**

Govt worried, Gen. Dwivedi reviews situation Army Chief visits Jammu amid rise in terror strikes

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, JULY 20

As the Centre is reported to have voiced serious concern at the spurt in terror attacks and other violent incidents in the Jammu region, Army Chief Gen. Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday rushed to the Union territory's winter capital Jammu to review the situation at a series of meetings with the local commanders and officers of various law-enforcing and counter-terrorism agencies.

In the evening, J&K Lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha chaired a high-level meeting with the Army Chief, various heads of security and law enforcement agencies, including Border Security Force, Central Reserve Police Force and other Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), the J&K police and various intelligence agencies on the prevailing security situation in the Jammu region.

The L-G asked the officers to proactively conduct coordinated counter-terrorism operations in the Jammu region. The official sources quoted him as telling the meet-



A convoy of Chief of the Army Staff Gen. Upendra Dwivedi arrives at the police headquarters for a meeting in Jammu on Saturday. — PTI

ing, "We must launch meticulous and well-planned counter-terrorism operations with greater synergy between all the agencies to wipe out terrorists and those aiding and abetting them."

Mr Sinha also called for further strengthening the security grid in the hinterland and the counter-infiltration grid along the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border (IB) with Pakistan to ensure zero cross-border infiltration.

The sources said that the Centre has asked the J&K government and the

security forces to scale up counter-terrorism engagement in the Jammu region by strictly following the strategy and practical steps that succeeded in crushing the militancy and terrorism to a greater scale in the Kashmir Valley.

The counter-militancy and combat terrorism model pursued in the Valley envisaged "eliminate the combatants and take no prisoners, destroy or take hold of private properties used by militants as hideouts or for planning or carrying out terrorist acts, book their **Turn to Page 4**

UPSC chief steps down, Cong says he's 'nudged out'

'Linked to scandals?': Kharge

AVINASH PRABHAKAR JHA NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Amid the ongoing controversy surrounding the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), its chairman Manoj Soni has tendered his resignation, citing personal reasons five years before the expiry of his tenure in May 2029. The Congress, however, said that Mr Soni is being "nudged out" given the current controversy in which the commission is embroiled.

Mr Soni's resignation assumes significance as it has come at a time when the commission lodged a criminal case against probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar for faking her identity to fraudulently avail attempts in the civil services examination.

Official sources maintain that Mr Soni's resignation is not in any way connected to controversies and allegations surrounding the UPSC over the probationary IAS officer issue.



Manoj Soni

"The UPSC chairman had tendered his resignation, citing personal reasons, over a fortnight back. It is yet to be accepted," they said.

Attacking the Modi government on the issue, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged the BJP-RSS is systematically indulging in an institutional takeover of India's constitutional bodies, thereby damaging their reputation, integrity and autonomy.

"The multiple scandals that have plagued the UPSC are a cause of national concern. PM Narendra Modi and his minister of personnel, **Turn to Page 4**

AAP launches 'Kejriwal ki 5 guarantee' for Haryana polls

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita on Saturday launched "Kejriwal ki 5 guarantees" for poll-bound Haryana, promising free electricity, school education, medical treatment at no cost, ₹1,000 per month to every woman in the state and employment for youngsters. The Haryana Assembly polls are due later this year.

Besides Ms Sunita, Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann and senior AAP leaders Sanjay Singh and Sandeep Pathak were also present during the launch of "Kejriwal ki five guarantees" in Panchkula.

The Delhi CM, is currently in judicial custody in an excise policy-related case.

While seeking people's support for the AAP during the Haryana Assembly elections, Sunita hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of putting the Delhi CM behind bars as he was "jealous" of his works. **More on Page 4**

Rolled out a fix: CrowdStrike Ops in India smooth, backlogs being cleared Global flight operations crawls back to normalcy

Paris/New Delhi, July 20:

As the global systems crawled back to normalcy following one of the biggest ever IT outages, flight operations in India limped back to be on foot on Saturday. The Union civil aviation minister said all flight backlogs are being cleared and flight operations are smooth now.

Planes were gradually taking off again Saturday after global airlines, banks and media were thrown into turmoil by one of the biggest IT crashes in recent years, caused by an update to an antivirus programme. Passenger crowds had

swelled at airports on Friday as dozens of flights were cancelled after an update to a program operating on Microsoft Windows crashed systems worldwide.

By Saturday, officials said the situation had returned virtually to normal in airports across Germany and France, as Paris prepared to welcome millions for the Olympic Games starting on Friday.

Multiple US airlines and airports across Asia said they had resumed operations, with check-in services restored in Hong Kong, South Korea and Thailand, and mostly back



People wait in a queue at Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta, Georgia on Saturday. — AFP

to normal in India, Indonesia and at Singapore's Changi Airport as of Saturday afternoon. "There are no long queues at the airports as

we experienced yesterday," Airports of Thailand president Keerati Kitmanawat said. Microsoft said the issue began at 1900 GMT on

Thursday, affecting Windows users running the CrowdStrike Falcon cybersecurity software.

CrowdStrike said it had released an update on Thursday night that caused a system crash and the infamous "blue screen of death" fatal error message. It said it had rolled out a fix for the problem and the company's boss, George Kurtz, said he wanted to "personally apologise to every organisation, every group and every person who has been impacted". The company also said it could take a few days for a full return to normal. — Agencies

IN BRIEF

'JNU walls defaced with casteist slurs'

New Delhi: The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus walls were found to be defaced with casteist slurs and communal slogans on Saturday, the Congress' students body alleged. Slogans like "Dalit bharat chhodo," "Brahman baniya zindabaad," and "RSS zindabaad" were scribbled on the walls of Kaveri hostel on the campus, NSUI unit general secretary Kunal Kumar alleged sharing its photos on social media. The students claimed that the authorities painted the walls after the photos were circulated on social media. Requests for a response to the allegations were declined by Kaveri hostel warden Manish Kumar Barnwal. "We, the Humans of JNU, are deeply disturbed by the recent incidents at Kaveri hostel, where alongside the casteist slur against the dalit bahunjan community, slogans like 'Brahman baniya zindabaad' and 'RSS zindabaad' have been inscribed. "These slogans starkly reveal the brahmanical and manuvadi nature of RSS and its supporters within our university community," the students' body said in a statement.

Class 11 student stabs schoolmate

New Delhi: A Class 11 student was allegedly stabbed by another in Northwest Delhi's government school, the police said on Saturday. The incident occurred in Jahangirpuri after which the victim was rushed to a hospital immediately where he is undergoing treatment. The incident happened over a minor dispute between the two students on Friday, they said. The police said the juvenile accused of the stabbing was taken into custody. During investigations, it was found that he stabbed the victim over something the latter had said the previous day. He carried the knife he used to attack the victim in his school bag, they said. The police further mentioned that he was taken into custody and sent to the juvenile home after the police produced him before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), an officer said. Further probe was underway, the police said.

Kalkaji society to protest encroachment

New Delhi: The Kalkaji civil society wrote a letter to the MCD commissioner regarding immediate action against illegal encroachments in the Kalkaji area. In the letter, advocate Khavinder Singh Captain, president of the society said despite the Delhi high court order against the illegal encroachment in the area continues to plague at an alarming scale. As responsible citizens, we believe it is imperative to uphold the rule of law and ensure the enforcement of court orders to maintain the sanctity of our neighborhood. Therefore, we have decided to organise a peaceful protest in the form of a candle march on Sunday.

NDMC LAUNCHES DRIVE TO CHECK WATERLOGGING

New Delhi: The New Delhi Municipal Council has installed CCTV cameras at 20 new locations to monitor waterlogging and procured 75 portable pumps to drain water in case of heavy rainfall during the world heritage committee meet, a civic body member said on Friday. The meet will be held in the capital from July 21 to 31. "Nearly 175 officials will be monitoring the ground situation," NDMC vice-chairman Satish Upadhyay said. "There are 120 fixed pumps and 75 portable pumps to manage water accumulation and forty eight temporary operators are on standby, the vice-chairman further added. Delhi recorded 228 mm of rainfall on June 28 leading to waterlogging in many posh areas. CCTV cameras have been installed at Satya Sadan, Lodhi Estate, Africa Avenue underpass, Panchkuian Road, Raisina Road, Nyay Marg, Bharti Nagar and Zakir Hussain Marg, and a special beautification drive has been carried out Connaught Place, and Janpath, the V-C said. The NDMC's horticulture department has supplied approximately 50,000 ornamental plants and flowers.

Neet-UG results: Over 240 at Rajkot centre score 600+

Figures according to analysis of centre-wise results

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Over 240 Neet-UG candidates who appeared for the medical entrance test at a centre in Gujarat's Rajkot have scored more than 600 marks, with 11 of them getting 700 and above, and one a perfect 720. The figures are according to an analysis of the centre-wise results published on Saturday by the National Testing Agency, which is under the scanner for alleged irregularities in the conduct of the exam, including paper leak.

Among the candidates who appeared for the Neet-UG at the Rajkot-based School of Engineering, RK University, test centre, 12 scored 700 and above — one got 720, two got 710, four got 705, one got 704, one got 701 and three scored 700.

More than 240 aspirants who took the exam at the centre scored more than 600 marks. Of them, the score of 148 candidates was above 650 but below 700.

CBI arrests NIT graduate, 2 MBBS students in Neet-UG paper leak

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

The CBI on Saturday arrested an NIT-Jamshedpur B.Tech graduate, one of the masterminds, in the Neet-UG paper leak case and two MBBS students who allegedly solved the exam papers for money.

With the fresh arrests, the total number of people held so far by the agency in six cases related to the alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam has now reached 21, the officials said.

They said that the two MBBS students arrested on Saturday — Kumar Mangalam Bishnoi (2nd year) and Deepender Sharma (1st year) — are from a medical school in

Bharatpur, Rajasthan, and they solved the exam papers stolen by Pankaj Kumar, an engineer, from an National Testing Agency trunk in Hazaribagh.

The third arrested on Saturday — Sashikant Paswan alias Sashi alias Pasu, a B.Tech (electrical) passout from the National Institute of Technology, Jamshedpur — was acting in tandem with Kumar and Rocky, who were also arrested earlier. The agency alleged that Paswan is one of the kingpins and masterminds in the paper leak case.

The two "solvers" (MBBS students) were present in Hazaribagh on May 5, the date the Neet-UG examination was conducted across the country.

Forty-five candidates of the Model School centre in Haryana's Rohtak scored more than 600 marks, while among those who took the Neet-UG in Lucknow's SDSN Mahavidyalaya centre, more than 45 scored above 600. The scores of these students at these centres was below the 700-mark.

Also, no Neet-UG candidate has scored above 682 in the revised results for the Hardayal Public School centre in Haryana's Jhajjar that was under the scanner after six aspirants who took the medical entrance exam there on May 5 got 720 out of 720.

The scores were revised after a retest was ordered

Gujarat, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Haryana are among the states from where the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested people, including students, parents and members of 'paper solver' gangs, in connection with the alleged leak of the May 5 Neet-UG exam.

In Rajasthan's Sikar, more than 150 candidates from a centre have scored above 600 marks but below 700. The marks of 83 from another centre in Sikar was also above 600 but below 700.

by the Supreme Court following allegations of inflation of marks due to grace being awarded.

Only 13 candidates of the centre managed to score more than 600 marks, according to the centre-wise results.

The results of the May 5 exam, which were initially announced on June 5, have been published in this centre-wise format following an order of the top court.

The court is hearing several petitions about the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the test on May 5 at 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 cities abroad, for more than 24 lakh candidates.

Saxena says CM wilfully avoiding diet, party calls it plan to kill AAP, L-G lock horns again, this time over CM's health

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Yet another political slugfest broke out in the national capital between the ruling AAP and the lieutenant-governor after the latter alleged that chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is lodged in Tihar Jail under judicial custody, may deliberately not be taking medical diet and medicines prescribed to him.

The Aam Aadmi Party, however, assailed the L-G's letter for allegedly insinuating that Mr Kejriwal was "deliberately" making himself sick and accused the BJP of hatching a "sinister plan to kill" the AAP leader.



The AAP workers during a protest over the illegal felling of trees in New Delhi on Saturday. G.N. JHA

Hitting back, BJP president Virendra Sachdeva charged that the report of the jail superintendent has "exposed" Mr Kejriwal's "conspiracy" to gain "sympathy" by "deliberately" taking fewer calories of food and declining insulin to claim weight loss and high blood sugar level in jail.

According to a Raj Niwas communication, lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena, in a letter to chief secretary Naresh Kumar, cited a report by the superintendent (Prison) regarding the health status of Mr Kejriwal to allege that there were several instances of "wilful low-calorie intake" by the CM, despite sufficient home cooked food being provided to him.

The L-G office said Mr Saxena has suggested to the prison authorities that it may advise the CM to adhere to the prescribed

dosage of medicine and insulin, apart from the diet specified, since he has a history of type-II diabetes mellitus.

According to the letter, the diet monitoring chart indicates that between June 6 and July 13, the CM did not fully consume the prescribed diet for all three meals of the day.

"The report also suggests loss of weight (now 61.5 kg which earlier was 63.5 kg on the date of surrender—June 2, 2024). Prima facie, it appears to be due to less calorie intake," the letter read.

Slamming the L-G's letter, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, "What kind of joke is this L-G Sir? Would a man reduce his sugar levels at night? Which is very dangerous. L-G Sir, if you do not know about the disease then you should not write such a letter."

Senior AAP leader and Delhi minister Atishi claimed Mr Kejriwal's sugar level has dipped below 50 mg/dL, more

than eight times, in jail and added, "He may go into a coma and there is also a risk of brain stroke in such a situation."

Ms Atishi also attacked the L-G saying the communication from his office is "very unfortunate" and does not befit a constitutional head of the state.

"Does L-G think that any person will deliberately make himself sick like this? This is a conspiracy of the Bharatiya Janata Party. They know that the longer he stays in jail, the more his health will keep deteriorating."

"So, I would like to request L-G Sahab that it does not suit him to make such comments on anyone's health," she said.

The Delhi BJP president said, "He campaigned hectorically for 21 days, after getting bail from the court, during Lok Sabha polls and he had no health problems then. But, now he is trying to gain sympathy on the pretext of his health condition."

Atishi demands ₹10K-cr from Budget for MCD

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Delhi finance minister Atishi on Saturday demanded a budgetary allocation of ₹10,000 crore for the MCD from the Centre, alleging the civic body does not get its share in the Budget.

In a joint press conference with Delhi mayor Shelly Oberoi, he mentioned that Ms Oberoi has written a letter to Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in this regard.

"Delhi is among the highest tax paying states in the country. Last year they paid a total of ₹2.32 lakh crore taxes to the Central government. However, still Delhi is the only state which does not get its share of allocation for maintenance of the city," Atishi said.

She demanded a five per cent allocation from the taxes paid by Delhi in the Central government's budget.

"The people of Delhi paid ₹2.7 lakh crore to the Central government as income tax last year and also paid CGST of ₹25,000 crores. In total people of Delhi paid ₹2.32 lakh crore tax to the Central government last year," Atishi further said.

"While every state in the country gets this money, Delhi is the only state which does not get a single penny," she added.

Day after outage, flights crawl back to normalcy

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JULY 20

As the global systems crawled back to normalcy following one of the biggest ever IT outages, flight operations in India limped back to be on foot on Saturday. The Union civil aviation minister said all flight backlogs are being cleared and flight operations are smooth now.

On Friday, in one of the biggest-ever IT outages, an update of a product offered by global cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike triggered problems with Microsoft's Windows across the planet, hitting

operations at financial sector companies and airlines while hospital operations got postponed and some television channels went off air.

Airline systems across airports, which were impacted due to a global IT outage on Friday, have started working normally.

Civil aviation minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu said his ministry is constantly monitoring the operations at airports and airlines to ensure travel readjustments and refunds are taken care of.

The reservation and check-in systems of most of the airlines, including IndiGo, SpiceJet, Akasa, and Air India Express, were operational by Saturday noon.

Over 200 flights in India were cancelled or delayed due to the outage.

"The global outage that led to operational difficulties is nearly resolved, and our teams have made significant progress in restoring normal operations. However, customers may still experience delays and schedule

disruptions over the weekend," IndiGo Airlines said.

SpiceJet said all its systems at airports, ticket bookings, and call centres were up and running smoothly.

Air India said that though it had flights delayed, none of its flights were cancelled on Friday.

"Our team's efforts and swift response across flight dispatch, airport services, and care centre collaborating to activate our operations continuity plan that called for manual processes including manual check-in and boarding of thousands of passengers and yet maintained continu-

ity of our services with nil cancellation of flights," the Akasa airline said.

Meanwhile, the mutual fund industry, AMFI, said the outage in Microsoft services impacted five asset management companies, which reported disruptions to some important functions but the issues were resolved during the day.

In a statement on Saturday, the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) said that all the asset management companies (AMCs), their mutual funds, and registrar and transfer agents (RTAs) functioned without any impact.

Bharti moves HC challenging election of BJP MP Bansuri

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

AAP leader Somnath Bharti on Saturday approached the Delhi high court challenging BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj's election in the Lok Sabha polls 2024 on the grounds of alleged corrupt practices.

Justice Manmeet P.S. Arora is scheduled to hear the election petition on July 22.

The plea said while Mr Bharti secured 3,74,815 votes, Ms Swaraj got 4,53,185 votes as per the returning officer. They both contested from the New Delhi parliamentary constituency and Ms

Swaraj was declared as winner.

"The present election petition is being filed by the petitioner (Bharti) under Section 80 and 81 of the Representation of the People Act challenging the election of the respondent no.1 (Swaraj) as a Member of House of the people from the New Delhi Parliamentary Constituency on the grounds of 'corrupt practices' indulged into by the respondent no.1, her election agent and other persons with the consent of the respondent during the course of the Lok Sabha election 2024 held on May 25, 2024," the plea said.

24 Army men among 117 Indians to take part in '24 Paris Olympics

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Some twenty four (24) armed forces personnel are among the 117 Indian athletes who are all set to make the nation proud at the Paris Olympics, beginning July 26.

Among these 24 athletes, 22 are men, including star Javelin thrower Subedar Neeraj Chopra, and two women, which marks the maiden participation of female service athletes at the Olympics.

Subedar Neeraj Chopra, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics Gold medalist, will again vie for top honours as his participation in the Paris Olympics comes on

the back of exceptional performances which earned him a Gold medal each at the 2023 Asian Games, 2023 World Athletics Championship, 2024 Diamond League, and 2024 Paavo Nurmi Games.

2022 Commonwealth Games Bronze medalist Havelidra Jaismine Lamboria and 2023 Asian Wrestling Championships Bronze medalist CPO Reetika Hooda are the two women service personnel who are taking part in the games for the first time, and would aim to create history. They will feature in boxing and wrestling respectively.

Subedar Amit Panghal (boxing), CPO Tajinderpal Singh Toor (shot-put), Subedar Avinash Mukund Sable (3000m steeplechase), CPO Muhammed Anas Yahiya, PO(GW) Muhammed Ajmal, Subedar Santhosh Kumar Tamilarasan and JWO Mijo Chacko Kurian (4x400m Men's Relay), JWO Abdulla Aboobacker (triple jump), Subedar Tarundeep Rai and Subedar Dhiraj Bommadevara (archery) and Nb Subedar Sandeep Singh (shooting) are also among the service personnel who would aim to bring laurels to the country.

Raise our issues in Parl: Guild to Rahul
Claims government has taken legislative steps to regulate, control media

New Delhi, July 20: The Editors Guild of India on Saturday sought Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's support in raising issues of press freedom and the right to information in Parliament and claimed the government has taken several legislative steps to regulate and control the media.

In a letter to Mr Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the guild expressed concerns on the legislative measures taken to control the media—print, broadcast, and digital—over the last few years and called for



Rahul Gandhi

Periodicals Act, and the IT Rules 2021 and subsequent amendments to it in 2023.

"We believe that a free and independent press is vital for the health of our democracy and it is imperative that these legislative measures are revisited to safeguard these fundamental principles," the guild said.

It said a general concern about these legislative measures was that they were taken without adequate stakeholder consultation and parliamentary scrutiny in the drafting and passing of these laws.

"They carry provisions that are vague and over-broad, which could be misused to restrict legitimate journalistic activities. These provisions give sweeping powers to a wide array of government authorities and agencies to take actions that can have a potential chilling effect on journalism and press freedom due to increased government control and punitive measures," the guild said.

The guild said there were inadequate safeguards for press independence and freedom of expression.

— PTI

NORTHERN RAILWAY			
Tender Notice			
Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)			
N.I.T. No. 12 (A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K,L,M)24-25/WE			
Name of work with its location			
(A)	Renovation of new allotments in type-IV, type-VI and type-VI flats with improvement to kitchen, toilet, balconies flooring etc. at PK road colony in the section of SSE/W/PG under ADEN/E-I.		
(B)	Repair to stair case area and damage Doors and windows and court yard CC flooring in the section of SSE/W/SSB under ADEN/E-IV.		
(C)	Repair to balance roof repair and replacement of SCI stack to PVC stack block No. 290 to 300, 307 to 309, 294 to 296, 342 to 346 in the S/O SSE/W/SSB under ADEN/E-IV.		
(D)	Repair to doors, windows, floors and Toilet bathrooms and circulating areas of service building Power House, Bridge Office, S&T Office, Health Unit, General store etc. in the S/O SSE/W/SSB under ADEN/E-IV.		
(E)	Repairs to Administrative block, Staff Canteen, Bill Section, Dispatch and D, E, H section in General store in the S/O of SSE/W/SSB under ADEN/E-IV.		
(F)	Repair/renovation of vacant quarters/ Flats at SOJ, CNKP, SWNR, LDCY, LPNR and Laxmi bai Nagar railway colony in the S/O SSE/W/HNZM under ADEN/E-III.		
(G)	Repairs of sun shade, replacement of damaged balcony, provision of door/windows. Repair to plaster surface, flooring in pocket areas and tile work in new room in type-1 Quarters at Sarojini Nagar Railway colony in the S/O SSE/W/HNZM under ADEN/E-III.		
(H)	Repair/renovation of toilet bathroom and kitchen, provision of floor tiles, replacement old damaged paneled windows by aluminum windows and development of circulating areas at Okhla Railway colony in the S/O SSE/W/HNZM under ADEN/E-III.		
(I)	Repair/ renovation of toilet, bathroom, kitchen and floor tiles. RCC beams at Gulabi Bagh, Okhla, NZM and LPNR railway colonies in the S/O SSE/W/HNZM under ADEN/E-III.		
(J)	Repair/renovation of toilets, Floor tiles and kitchen cabinets in Type-V flats at Chankya Rail Enclave in the S/O SSE/W/HNZM under ADEN/E-III.		
(K)	Covering of water storage tank by expanded metal fencing to avoid monkey menace at Gulabi bagh and LPNR railway colony in the S/O SSE/W/HNZM under ADEN/E-III.		
(L)	Repairs to for path at Tilak Bridge Railway Colony in the section of SSE/W/BH under ADEN/E-III.		
(M)	Construction of Badminton Hall two turfs and other allied works in San Martin Marg Colony in the section of SSE/W/S.M. Marg under ADEN/E-III.		
Approx. cost of work (In Rupees)	(A) 9999993.13 (D) 7999985.41 (G) 6499997.3 (J) 7999943.34 (M) 14999975.71	(B) 8499987.11 (E) 7999988.97 (H) 5499973.45 (K) 6999999.51	(C) 7499997.58 (F) 7499992.74 (I) 6999961.33 (L) 6999967.32
EMD amount (In Rupees)	(A) 200000.00 (E) 160000.00 (I) 140000.00 (M) 225000.00	(B) 170000.00 (F) 150000.00 (J) 160000.00 (N) 140000.00	(C) 150000.00 (G) 130000.00 (H) 110000.00 (K) 140000.00
Completion period of work	(A) 06 Months (E) 06 Months (I) 06 Months (M) 08 Months	(B) 06 Months (F) 06 Months (J) 06 Months	(C) 06 Months (G) 06 Months (H) 06 Months (K) 06 Months
Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Closing date of tender on 09.08.2024 at 15:00 hrs.		
Website particular notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	Above tender available on website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in		
128-W/269/OET/24-25/WE/NIT/12(A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K,L,M) Dated :- 18.07.2024			
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE			

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER: PWD: BUILDING: ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3.
No. 525638/1

PRESS NOTICE

The Spl. Chief Engineer, P.W.D. Building (Health & Education), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf of the Governor of Assam, invites bids in electronic tendering system for Infrastructure Development of Secondary Schools for construction of new school buildings under North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme - Other Than Road Infrastructure (NESID-OTRI) for the year 2024-25, for 65 nos of Secondary Schools in 32 groups through Engineering, Procurement and Construction, (EPC-I) mode of contract (Single stage two-part bidding system) in Baksa, Barpeta, Nalbari, Bongaigaon, Cachar, Chirang, Charaideo, Darang, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Dima Hasao, Goalpara, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kamrup (M), Kamrup (Rural), Karbi Anglong, Karimganj, Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur, Majuli, Morigaon and Nagaon districts with an estimated cost of Rs 43502.83345 Lakhs (Approx. including GST) including Routine Maintenance for four years from the completion of defect liability period from the eligible contractors registered with Assam Public Works Department (Building & NH) or Contractors registered with other State/ Central Government Departments, Institutions, Undertaking and Authorities having experience in similar nature of work. The Bid price may vary at the time of detail tendering for which no claim will be admissible. All terms and conditions will be as per the Bidding Documents. The Press Notice will be a part of the Bidding Documents.

The Work will be allotted only after receiving Government approval.

Details of the bid may be seen at website i.e. <https://www.assamtenders.gov.in> from 10.00 Hrs, 23-07-2024.

Spl. Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Building), Assam, Health & Education Chandmari, Guwahati-3

Janasanyog /C/ 1481 / 24/ 21-Jul-24

Destination Uttarakhand

STRENGTHENING RURAL ECONOMY, PROMOTING LOCAL PRODUCE



Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are committed to the holistic development of our state, leveraging its natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and immense potential. Through sustainable policies and strategic initiatives, we aim to foster economic growth, improve infrastructure, and enhance the quality of life for all our citizens. Our goal is to make Uttarakhand a model of progress, where tradition meets innovation, and every individual can thrive in a conducive environment for prosperity and well-being."

Pushkar Singh Dhama
Chief Minister

Uttarakhand's 'organic' tale of success

UOCB has played a vital part in the organic cultivation movement in India, setting up vast supply chains and developing the 'Organic Uttarakhand' brand

Formed on May 19, 2003, under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, the Uttarakhand Organic Commodity Board (UOCB) functions as the nodal agency for boosting organic farming in Uttarakhand. UOCB's mission is to help Uttarakhand develop as the organic capital of India, acquiring sustainable rural growth via organic agriculture methods.

The board's measures span farming and allied sectors, including horticulture, medicinal aromatic plants and herbs, and animal husbandry. UOCB is divided into four key wings: the Technical Cell, the Training Cell, the Certification Cell, and the Marketing Cell. The Technical Cell recognises groups inclined to embrace organic agriculture, forms farmer groups and creates cultivation techniques. The Training Cell furnishes farmers with the required aptitudes via demonstrations, training sessions, and different academic materials. The Certification Cell encourages organic certification for farms and stores, while the Marketing Cell promotes organic produce to B2B customers via exhibits and panels.

In recent years, UOCB's endeavours have demonstrated noteworthy outcomes. In 2019, farmers under UOCB's direction partook in 35 fairs and exhibits, yielding ₹28 lakh in sales and building a market worth ₹210 lakh. By 2020-21, despite the problems posed by the pandemic, farmers still partook in 11 fairs, achieving ₹8 lakh in sales and yielding a market worth ₹85 lakh.

UOCB has played a vital part in the organic cultivation movement in India, setting up vast supply chains and developing the 'Organic Uttarakhand' brand. Their offerings contain different grains and cereals like Dehradoni Basmati Rice, Pusa-1 Basmati, Red Rice, and wheat. The spice range includes bay leaf, black jeera, coriander, ginger, and turmeric. The pulses range includes black chickpeas, black gram, kidney beans, and lentils, along with millets such as barnyard millet and finger millet. Further, they offer apple juice, detergent powder, groundnut, herb oils, honey, mustard oil, soapnut, sugar, temperate fruits, and fresh vegetables.

Driven by the vision of PM Narendra Modi, the Uttarakhand government led by CM Pushkar Singh Dhama has undertaken various initiatives that promote and market the hill state's well-crafted products. A significant step in this direction is the formation of 'House of Himalayas', a flagship brand created to bring Uttarakhand's high-quality, genuine products to both domestic and global markets

House of Himalayas Boosting rural economy of Uttarakhand



CM Pushkar Singh Dhama presenting 'House of Himalayas' brand products to PM Narendra Modi at GIS 2023, Dehradun

Nestled in the lap of the Himalayas, Uttarakhand is well-known for its beautiful landscapes, along with its rich treasure trove of organic and traditionally prepared products. Identifying the untouched potential of these products and the demand to strengthen rural livelihoods, the Uttarakhand government has been working actively by undertaking several schemes.

ABOUT 'HOUSE OF HIMALAYAS'

On December 8, 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi founded 'House of Himalayas' during the Global Investor Summit of Uttarakhand, marking it as an unparalleled initiative. This initiative sought to encapsulate various small-scale brands and products under one strong, cohesive identity. The purpose of House

of Himalayas is to improve the business opportunities of these unique products, which include goods made by Self-Help Groups (SHGs), crafters, individual entrepreneurs, and community-based societies.

The state boasts of a wide range of organic products that are nutritionally rich and have very little chemical impact. While a few private players exist, the majority of these products have not tapped into a broader consumer base. Therefore, House of Himalayas seeks to close this gap by offering a robust platform that ensures quality assurance, provides expert business guidance, and implements effective marketing strategies.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS OF HOUSE OF HIMALAYAS

Superior Quality: House of Himalayas

distinguishes itself with products that are known for their uncompromising quality and premium craftsmanship, which sets them apart from mass-generated alternatives.

Authenticity Assured: Focused on traditional methods and authentic experiences, the products under this initiative go through rigorous quality controls and hold certifications verifying their exceptional quality.

Community Commitment: Choosing House of Himalayas means supporting the local communities through meaningful social initiatives, and promoting positive change with every purchase.

Open Sourcing: The initiative prioritises complete transparency when it comes to sourcing materials and production processes, thus ensuring consumer trust.

Sustainability Focus: With sustainable sourcing and production practices, the brand caters to buyers who appreciate ethical consumption.

Holistic Brand Experience: A holistic experience is offered by enclosing compelling storytelling, educational insights, and immersive programmes that enhance every consumer journey.

LAUNCH BY PM NARENDRA MODI

The launch of 'House of Himalayas' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrated a noteworthy milestone in Uttarakhand's journey towards economic autonomy and rural advancement. At the Global Investor Summit, the Prime Minister

emphasised the brand's potential to promote Uttarakhand's products to meet international standards of quality. This initiative resonates with his vision of 'Vocal for Local, Local to Global', advocating for the global promotion of local products. By acknowledging the exceptional value of Uttarakhand's organic and traditional products, the Prime Minister highlighted the significance of empowering rural communities and building sustainable livelihoods.

CM PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMA'S E-COMMERCE PUSH

Yet another noteworthy action was taken to increase the visibility and accessibility of the state's products on July 5, 2024. The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhama, in association with Amazon India, initiated House of Himalayas into the e-commerce giant's platform. This initiative is aimed at



CM Pushkar Singh Dhama with Radhika Jha, secretary, rural development, and other officials, signing an MoU with an e-commerce platform for House of Himalayas

making the state's products available to a more expansive consumer base, both within India and the global markets.

At the launch event, held at the secretariat, CM Dhama bought local



I congratulate the Uttarakhand government on the remarkable progress achieved in the last few years. This has been made possible by sustained policy push and focus on key sectors such as tourism and renewable energy. Alongside, the state has made significant strides in infrastructure development, setting new benchmarks for sustainable growth. Uttarakhand's commitment to harnessing its natural resources and promoting tourism has not only bolstered its economy but also showcased its potential on the global stage. I applaud the state's dedication to inclusive development and look forward to its continued success in the years ahead.

Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

products, representing the state's loyalty to sustaining its own. He stressed that the primary objective of House of Himalayas is to take Uttarakhand's local products to an international level. The CM emphasised that most of the processing and production of these products is carried out by self-help groups, thereby strengthening the livelihood of women and rural communities.

Radhika Jha, secretary, rural development, highlighted the strategic categorisation of products under House of Himalayas. These comprise GI-tagged products, organic and food products, and scented products, each undergoing category-wise branding to improve their market presence.

A step to promote local handloom & handicraft

The craftsmanship of Uttarakhand, embedded in age-old practices, has been a significant basis of livelihood for regional people for years

In the domain of conventional craftsmanship, Uttarakhand's handloom sarees maintain a unique position alongside well-known products from other states. The craftsmanship of Uttarakhand, embedded in age-old practices, has been a significant basis of livelihood for regional residents for years. Realising the prospect of this domain for further job prospects and financial evolution, the Uttarakhand government founded the Uttarakhand Handloom & Handicraft Development Council (UHHDC).

A registered society set up by the government, the UHHDC functions as the apex body for the overall growth of handlooms and handicrafts in the state. Its task is to encourage, direct, and manage the state's craftspeople, enabling sustainable work via the promotion of handicrafts. Under the reputed label 'Himadri', UHHDC has emerged as a hallmark of quality and genuineness for craft products stemming from Uttarakhand. The 'Himadri' label promises that buyers acquire authentic, handcrafted products,

while also assuring appropriate revenue for the crafters' hard work and talent. UHHDC's measures to facilitate Uttarakhand's handloom and handicraft products



PIC: DIPR, UTTARAKHAND GOVERNMENT

spread far beyond the state. Beneath the Himadri brand, these magnificent products are showcased at prestigious occasions such as Craft Bazaars, Dilli Haat, International Trade Fairs, and the Surajkund Mela. Crafters from Uttarakhand have the chance to show their creations to a wider audience, earning praise and fondness for

their craftsmanship. Himadri showrooms are strategically situated in major places such as Dehradun, Uttarkashi, Haldwani, Haridwar, and Uttarakhand Sadan in New Delhi, assuring overall accessibility to these special products.

In addition to physical showrooms, UHHDC has developed a beneficial collaboration with the well-known e-commerce platform Amazon, extending the reach of Uttarakhand's handicrafts internationally. This alliance has resulted in the flourishing sale of handicraft products worth lakhs of rupees, garnering global praise and honour. Via this endeavour, craftspeople are furnished with a forum to showcase their skill to a global audience, assuring their art is valued and cherished on a multinational level.

As the nodal agency of the government, UHHDC diligently puts up multiple art fairs, exhibits, and promotional occasions throughout the year. These endeavours furnish crafters with a venue to exhibit their dexterities as well as play a vital part in maintaining and elevating Uttarakhand's rich cultural legacy.

PIC: DIPR, UTTARAKHAND GOVERNMENT



Doon Silk: Empowering artisans, reviving tradition

Doon Silk is a label under the Uttarakhand Cooperative Silk Federation (UCRF) and is committed to maintaining and restoring the ancient silk-weaving customs of Uttarakhand

Highlighting the usage of natural fibers, Doon Silk is dedicated to protecting our surroundings and ecosystem while providing magnificent handloom products. The brand's offerings contain silk, wool, cotton, bichhua (nettle), and hemp, all selected for their minimal environmental effect.

Each Doon Silk product is a testament to the talent and artistry of Uttarakhand's farmers, reellers, weavers, craftspeople, and dyers. The label's detailed craftsmanship assures that each article maintains the highest measures of quality, gaining the confidence and respect of buyers globally. By concentrating on handloom methods, Doon Silk maintains conventional techniques as well as furnishes sustainable job prospects to more than 6,000 people in Uttarakhand.

Doon Silk's dedication to purity is depicted in its 100% natural fiber guarantee. This commitment to quality has helped the brand achieve a firm foothold in both national and global markets. With products such as silk sarees, coats, stoles, and shawls, Doon Silk caters to a myriad clientele, assuring that these timeless articles stay available at unbeatable costs. The global market has especially

adopted Doon Silk, with considerable exports to Europe and the US. The label's products have acquired overwhelming reactions, additionally fueling the need for Uttarakhand's conventional silk weaving. By selecting Doon Silk, buyers get excellent products and contribute to the financial empowerment of proficient craftspeople in Uttarakhand.

In nature, Doon Silk is a crusade committed to maintaining legacy, encouraging sustainability, and empowering residents. By means of its uncompromising dedication to quality and custom, Doon Silk persists in making a deep mark, one beautifully prepared product at a time!

#ExploreUttarakhand



@DIPR_UK

Uttarakhand Bamboo and Fiber Development Board: Saga of Himalayan sustainability

The Uttarakhand Bamboo and Fiber Development Board stands as a testament to nature's grace and sustainability, presenting a range of bamboo and nettle products that emphasise the best offerings of the Himalayan province. Among their beautiful innovations are bamboo and nettle lamps, carefully prepared by traditional crafters from Uttarakhand. These lamps, featuring tender cuts, splits, and complex weaves, are made using nettle fiber fabric obtained from the Himalayan foothills. The oval lamps emit a gentle, warm glow, effortlessly mixing natural radiance with grace, enriching any indoor area with their light.

Underscoring an eco-friendly and sustainable lifestyle, the board also offers a series of bamboo bottles. Each bottle is enveloped in a high-quality bamboo shell with a long-lasting stainless-steel interior, assuring

PIC: DIPR, UTTARAKHAND GOVERNMENT



Objectives and Vision

The primary objective of the ODTP scheme is to boost the traditional and craft industries of Uttarakhand. By identifying and developing local products, the scheme seeks to place these products on the national and international stage, thereby enhancing their marketability and economic value. This initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of sustainable rural development, which emphasises the importance of promoting local products to spur economic growth

durable performance while reducing plastic waste. This sleek product flawlessly illustrates the synergy of fashion and sustainability.

The board's foray into eco-textiles is characterised by the introduction of Himalayan nettle, a unique natural fiber. Flourishing between heights of 1200 to 2900 meters in the temperate and sub-tropical Himalayas, this perennial plant presents manifold opportunities. Conventional apparel made from nettle fiber, which dates back thousands of years, is undergoing a revival. Nettle fiber fabrics, known for their intrinsic thermal characteristics, antimicrobial features, and resistance to wrinkling, redefine convenience and fashion.

The Uttarakhand Bamboo and Fiber Development Board helps the environment and sustainable living as well as empowers crafters and encourages marginal tribal communities through promoting nettle fiber products.

Text: Taresh Dutta

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

SHORT TAKES

Misri reviews India, Bhutan partnership

Thimphu: Foreign secretary Vikram Misri on Saturday reviewed the implementation modalities and cooperation in diverse areas of the India-Bhutan development partnership with his Bhutanese counterpart Aum Pema Choden. The two foreign secretaries co-chaired the 3rd India-Bhutan development cooperation talks — commonly called “plan talks” of the 13th five year plan — which focus on developmental cooperation and mutual interests. “Foreign Secretary @VikramMisri & Foreign Secretary Aum Pema Choden co-chaired 3rd Development Cooperation Talks of the 13th Five Year Plan,” Indian embassy in Thimphu posted. “Reviewed implementation modalities & cooperation in diverse areas of development partnership under 13 FYP period,” it said. India is extending development support of ₹10,000cr for the 13th plan period as per the priorities of the Bhutan government. — PTI

1 killed in balcony collapse in Mumbai

Mumbai: An 80-year-old woman was killed and four others sustained injuries after a portion of a balcony of a four-storey residential building in south Mumbai came crashing down on Saturday, officials said. Rubinnisa Manzil, where the incident occurred, is on Sleator Road near the Grant Road railway station, a fire brigade official said. The incident took place around 11 am, he said. “Five persons were injured after a part of a balcony collapsed. They were rushed to a hospital, where an 80-year-old woman was declared dead, while four others are undergoing treatment,” the official said. The deceased was identified as Veera Wadia, while the injured were Atul Shah (55), Niket Shah (26), Vijaykumar Nishad (25) and Siddhesh Palija (30). — PTI

Will plant 36 crore saplings in UP: Yogi

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that they would be creating a record by planting over 36 crore saplings across the state. Addressing a mega plantation campaign, he reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s campaign of calling all countrymen to plant one tree in the name of Mother (*ek ped maa ke naam*) on World Environment Day on June 5. He said that the environmentalists are worried that global warming will create a new crisis for the world. This crisis has been created by human selfishness, so the responsibility of controlling it should also be on humans. “If the tree is saved, the environment will also be saved. By protecting the environment, we can avoid the horrors of global warming, the CM said. — PTI

AAP to go solo in Haryana, unveils Kejriwal guarantees

‘Free power, medical treatment & edu, ₹1K/m to women, jobs to youths’

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Tearing into the BJP-ruled Haryana government, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday launched the “Kejriwal Ki Guarantees” campaign in Panchkula.

The campaign was launched by Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal’s wife Sunita Kejriwal who spearheaded the party during the past Lok Sabha polls.

Ms Kejriwal launched five “Kejriwal’s guarantees” for poll-bound Haryana, promising free electricity, free medical treatment, free education to people, ₹1,000 per month to every woman in the state and employment for youngsters.

The Haryana Assembly polls are due later this



Sunita Kejriwal with Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, AAP leader Sanjay Singh and others in Haryana’s Panchkula on Saturday.

year. Besides Ms Kejriwal, Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann and senior AAP leaders Sanjay Singh and Sandeep Pathak were also present during the launch.

While seeking people’s support for the AAP dur-

ing the Haryana Assembly elections, Ms Kejriwal hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of putting the AAP supreme behind bars as he was “jealous” of his works.

Calling her husband

“Haryana ka laal” (son of Haryana), she urged people not to let even a single seat go to the BJP and said “it is not about Kejriwal, it is about Haryana’s honour”.

Speaking about Mr Kejriwal’s guarantees, she said there will be free electricity for domestic category, and there will be round-the-clock electricity in the state if her party is voted to power.

“Like in Delhi and Punjab, there will be ‘mohalla clinics’ in cities and villages. The condition of government hospitals will be improved and there will be free and good treatment for everyone,” she said.

The condition of government schools will also be improved where good and free education will be provided, Ms Kejriwal added.

Both suffer dehydration during border patrol BSF officer, jawan die due to extreme heat in Gujarat

Ahmedabad, July 20: A Border Security Force (BSF) officer and a jawan died during patrol due to “extreme” weather exposure at the “Harami Nallah” creek area along the India-Pakistan international front in Gujarat, the force on Saturday said.

The incident, in which assistant commandant Vishwa Deo and head constable Dayal Ram are stated to have suffered a heat stroke and dehydration, took place on Friday along the border, the sources said. The officer belonged to the 59th battalion of the BSF.

Officials said the two BSF men were rushed to a health facility in Bhuj by the evening but could not be saved. A similar incident of heat stroke had claimed the life of a BSF jawan posted along Jaisalmer (Rajasthan) in

▶ **CURRENT TEMPERATURES** in the Rann of Kutch and Harami Nallah areas are ranging from 34-36 degrees with humidity levels as high as 80-82 per cent

May this year. A spokesperson of the BSF’s Gandhinagar-based Gujarat Frontier said the two men along with other members of the force were undertaking a “long-range border patrol in remote and inaccessible terrain along borders to the north of Harami Nallah, when they suffered medical exigencies”.

“They were immediately evacuated to nearest medical facilities but they succumbed to critical health situation,” he added.

The current temperatures in the Rann of Kutch and Harami Nallah areas are ranging from 34-

36 degrees with humidity levels as high as 80-82 per cent. The spokesperson said despite their extensive training and experience, the “severity of the situation” proved overwhelming.

The two BSF personnel exemplified the highest standards of bravery and dedication. Their commitment in safeguarding the national sovereignty, even in the face of extreme danger, will never be forgotten, the force said.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with their families, friends, and colleagues during this incredibly difficult time,” the spokesperson said.

The BSF Gujarat Frontier guards 826 kms of the India-Pak front running from Barmer in Rajasthan to the salty marshlands of the Rann of Kutch including the Sir Creek area. — PTI

Ministers in TN govt are deputy CMs: Udhayanidhi

Chennai, July 20: Tamil Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Saturday played down reports of his possible elevation as deputy chief minister, saying chief minister M.K. Stalin has to take a call on the issue.

In a brief chat with reporters here, he said, “It is the chief minister who has to decide.”

Mr Udhayanidhi was responding to a question about reports indicating that he is likely to be elevated soon.

Earlier addressing the 45th foundation day of the DMK youth wing here, Mr Udhayanidhi, who is the youth welfare and sports development minister, said the post of secretary of the party’s youth wing which he held, was close to his heart. “When media persons ask about the speculation about my elevation as deputy chief minister I tell them that all the state ministers and office-bearers of the party and youth wing are functioning as deputies to the chief minister,” he said.

His primary commitment remained as the party’s youth wing secretary he said, adding “whatever the post, the youth wing secretary post is close to my heart.” The Minister called upon the DMK youth wing members to daily devote at least ten minutes in the morning and evening to be active on social media. — PTI

Over 2,000 delegates from over 150 countries to attend Modi to open Heritage Summit today

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee on Sunday at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.

According to the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), India is hosting the “World Heritage Committee meeting” for the first time and it will take place from July 21 to 31 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. Director-general Unesco, Audrey Azoulay will also attend the inaugural event, a

PMO release said. The World Heritage Committee meets once a year and is responsible for managing all matters pertaining to World Heritage and deciding on sites to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

“During this meeting, proposals for nominating new sites on the World Heritage List, State of Conservation reports of 124 existing World Heritage properties, International Assistance and Utilisation of World Heritage Funds will be discussed. Meeting will be attended by more than

▶ **THE WORLD Heritage Committee meets once a year and is responsible for managing all the matters pertaining to World Heritage**

2,000 international and national delegates from more than 150 countries,” the PMO said on Saturday.

Along with the World Heritage Committee Meeting, World Heritage Young Professionals’ Forum and World Heritage Site Managers’ Forum are also being held in the sidelines. Various exhibitions will

also be set up at Bharat Mandapam to showcase India’s culture. The Return of Treasures Exhibition will showcase some of the retrieved artefacts brought back to the country. Till date, more than 350 artefacts have been brought back.

“By using the latest AR & VR technologies, an immersive experience will be offered for three World Heritage Sites of India: Rani ki Vav, Patan, Gujarat; Kailasa Temple, Ellora Caves, Maharashtra; and Hoyalala Temple, Halebid, Karnataka,” the PMO said.

Nearly 1,000 Indian students return home from Bangladesh

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Nearly a thousand Indian students studying in Bangladesh, mostly in medical colleges there, have returned to India till Saturday afternoon following large-scale violence there that has claimed scores of lives. New Delhi said, “Security escorts have also been arranged, where necessary, for their travel by road during repatriation through select land ports.”

The violence began in the neighboring nation after protests over the proposed quota in government jobs for families of those who fought in the 1971 war of liberation against Pakistani troops. When the violence broke

out, there were about 15,000 Indian nationals residing in Bangladesh, of which 8,500 were students.

India had said earlier on Friday that all Indians in the neighbouring nation are safe. However, the number of Indian students returning home is likely to rise further.

This is the second instance in the past few weeks of Indian students returning home following large-scale violence, the first being from the Central Asian Kyrgyz Republic.

Till Saturday afternoon, 778 Indian students had returned to India through various land ports. In addition, around 200 students have returned home by regular flight services through Dhaka and

Chittagong airports, New Delhi said in a statement.

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) said, “The high commission in India in Dhaka and the assistant high commissions in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Khulna have been assisting the return of Indian nationals home following the recent developments in Bangladesh. In coordination with the local authorities, measures are being taken by the high commission and the assistant high commissions to facilitate safe travel to the border crossing points along the India-Bangladesh International Border. MEA is also coordinating with civil aviation, immigration, land ports and BSF authorities to ensure a smooth passage for our citizens.”

12 MLAs from Ajit camp may rejoin Pawar

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, JULY 20

Ajit Pawar’s NCP MLA Atul Benke on Saturday met NCP founder Sharad Pawar at the residence of Shirur MP Dr. Amol Kolhe in Pune. Speculation is rife that a close to a dozen MLAs from the Ajit Pawar faction would shift their loyalties to Sharad Pawar ahead of Maharashtra Assembly polls.

After the meeting, the NCP founder said that those who have worked for his party candidates in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections are his responsibility. Mr Benke said that anything can happen in politics including the reunion of Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar.

Reshuffle in UP BJP soon; Yogi stays

▶ **Continued from Page 1** in the national capital and discussed organisational issues. It has been learnt that Mr Chaudhary has taken responsibility for the BJP’s poor performance and offered to step down as state unit president during his meetings with the top party leadership.

Sources claimed that the UP BJP unit will appoint a new state president. Mr Chaudhary will likely be accommodated in the Adityanath government.

“Many state unit office bearers, along with UP president, will be replaced. Similarly many ministers who failed to perform in the Adityanath gov-

ernment will make way for new ministers,” a party insider said. Meanwhile, amid signs of discontent in the Uttar Pradesh unit following its poor show in the general election, Mr Adityanath has taken over preparations for the impending bypolls in 10 Assembly seats after the sitting MLAs were elected to the Lok Sabha.

While the by-election dates have not been announced by the Election Commission and the BJP Uttar Pradesh unit has also yet to draw a plan for these 10 Assembly constituencies, Mr Adityanath swung into action by delegating responsibilities to ministers, who have been

UPSC chief steps down; He’s nudged out: Cong

▶ **Continued from Page 1** public grievances and pensions must come clean. Numerous cases of unqualified individuals faking caste and medical certificates seemed to have duped a ‘foolproof’ system,” Mr Kharge posted on X.

This is a direct affront to the genuine aspirations of lakhs of aspirants, including SC, ST, OBC, EWS candidates, who work hard, burning midnight oil in preparing for the Civil Services Examinations, he said. “It is disconcerting how the UPSC chairperson has resigned prematurely, five years before his term ends. Why was his resignation kept secret for a month? Is there any connection between the numerous scandals and the resignation?” he said. Mr Soni took over as a member

of the Commission on June 28, 2017. He took the oath as the UPSC chairman on May 16, 2023 and his term was to end on May 15, 2029. Sources said Soni was not keen on becoming the UPSC chairman and had requested to be relieved. However, his request was not accepted then. They said Mr Soni has now desired to devote more time to “socio-religious activities”.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also said the news of irregularities in the processes of the UPSC is surprising. In a long post on X, she said, “It is important that the public and the youth preparing for the UPSC get answers to these questions. Are the people who have come to the higher posts of the UPSC through political appointments responsible

for this? If yes, then when will action be taken against them?”

“The system of fake certificates hurts the opportunities available to the candidates of SC, ST, OBC, handicapped and EWS categories, she said. Can’t a solid institutional mechanism for checking certificates be developed?” she asked.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jai Ram Ramesh also slammed the government, saying the sanctity and autonomy of all constitutional bodies have been badly damaged since 2014 — the year Mr Modi became the Prime Minister. “Whatever the reasons that may be given, it appears clear that he had to be nudged out given the current controversy in which the UPSC is involved,” he said.

Army Chief visits Jammu amid rise in terror strikes

▶ **Continued from Page 1**

over ground workers (OGWs) and sympathisers under anti-terrorism and other tough laws and identify, track and pursue their other supporting networks, particularly terrorism financing.”

The Centre has also asked for strengthening the existing VDGS and involving more people, particularly ex-servicemen, in the counterterrorism campaign in the Jammu region. Already, a number of measures have been initiated to enhance synergy between various agencies. These include joint training involving the Army, the J&K police and CAPFs. Further, a robust intelligence-sharing mechanism between the uniformed forms and the intelligence agencies has been evolved.

Union home minister Amit Shah had at a recent meeting held in New Delhi on J&K asked for crushing the growing militancy and terrorist activities in the Jammu region by “going hard on the perpetrators and the elements supporting them”. He directed the security forces to generate human intelligence to reach out to the militants and plug the points where foreign terrorists have managed to sneak into J&K from Pakistan and PoJK.

This was the second visit of the Army Chief to Jammu in less than three weeks after taking charge as the 30th chief of the Indian Army on June 30.

On July 3, the newly appointed Army Chief overflew the LoC in Poonch district and later held a meeting with senior military offi-

cers at the headquarters of the 93 Infantry Brigade in the strategic town of Poonch and also in Jammu to review the operational preparedness on the J&K frontier.

Dozens of security personnel, mostly from the Army, have been killed in terror-related incidents in the Jammu region since 2021. Earlier this month, nine Army jawans, including a Captain and a Junior Commissioned Officer, were killed in two separate terror attacks in remote wooded areas of Doda and Kathua districts.

Currently, massive search and counterterrorism operations are being spearheaded by the Army alongside the J&K police and the CAPFs in vast areas of Doda, Udhampur, Reasi and Kathua districts. At places, dozens of VDGS, armed with mainly .303 rifles, are helping the security forces in hunting down the assailants who ran into thick woods after attacking the Army in Doda’s Dessa and Kathua’s Machedi areas on July 8 and 15, respectively.

Gen. Dwivedi, during his meetings with the local Army commanders and senior officers of the J&K police, BSF, the CAPFs and intelligence agencies, reviewed the progress of these operations. He also gave instructions to the officers to act tough against militants and their supporting foreign mercenaries and eliminate the “scourge of terrorism” by all means, the sources said. He asked the officers to take more effective counter-terrorism measures and also combat terrorist ideologies.

14 Indians trapped in job scams in Cambodia rescued

New Delhi, July 20: Fourteen Indians, who were lured into cybercrime operations in Cambodia, were rescued by law enforcement authorities of that country, following leads provided by the Indian embassy in Phnom Penh.

The embassy said on Saturday it has facilitated the rescue and repatriation of over 650 Indian citizens who had fallen victim to these job scams.

“Most recently, the embassy provided specific leads to the Cambodian police, leading to the rescue of 14 additional Indian victims,” it said.

“These individuals are currently being cared for by an

NGO working in coordination with Cambodia’s ministry of social affairs, veterans and youth rehabilitation,” the Indian embassy said in a statement.

The embassy said it has been “actively rescuing Indian nationals from fraudulent job offers in Cambodia that lure them into cybercrime operations”.

“In close cooperation with Cambodian authorities, the Embassy has facilitated the rescue and repatriation of over 650 Indian citizens who had fallen victim to these scams,” it said.

“The embassy further said that it continues to closely monitor the situation.

Do not criticise Chair’s rulings, no slogans: RS MPs reminded

▶ **Continued from Page 1** “When the Chair holds that a particular word or expression is unparliamentary, it should be immediately withdrawn without any attempt to raise any debate over it,” the excerpts from the handbook underlined.

It also said every member should “bow to the Chair” while entering or leaving the House, as well as before taking or leaving the seat. When any member offers a

criticism of another member or a minister, the recently published excerpts from the Handbook for Members of Rajya Sabha also observe that the latter is entitled to expect that the critic should be present in the House to hear his or her reply.

“To be absent when the latter is replying is a breach of parliamentary etiquette,” it pointed out.

The Monsoon Session begins on July 22 and is slated to conclude on August 12.

SHORT TAKES

INDIA bloc up in arms over Bihar law & order

Patna: Leaders and workers from Opposition INDIA bloc on Saturday staged protest marches across Bihar, citing deteriorating law and order situation. Leaders from RJD, Congress, CPI-ML (Liberation), CPI(M), CPI, and other Opposition parties took part in the protest march from Income Tax Crossing to Dak Bungalow Crossing in Patna chanting anti-government slogans. Opposition party workers put up posters and banners throughout the state capital, highlighting concerns about the law and order situation and the need to save democracy. Akhilesh Prasad Singh, president of Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC), told reporters, "The Nitish Kumar-led government has failed to address the worsening law and order situation. The state is plagued by daily incidents of murder, rape, kidnapping, extortion, and abduction." — PTI

Naxalite with ₹1 lakh bounty gunned down

Raipur: A suspected Maoist carrying a bounty of ₹1 lakh was on Saturday gunned down in an encounter with security forces in Sukma district under south Bastar in Chhattisgarh. The encounter took place on a hillock near the forested village of Tumar Gatta under Jagagunda police station at around 5.30 pm, Sukma district additional superintendent of police Nikhil Rakhecha said. Acting on intelligence inputs on the presence of armed Naxals, security forces launched a search operation in the area. Later, an exchange of fire took place between them, leading to killing of the Maoist. The slain ultra was identified as Sodi Narsa, a militia commander of Maoists. A muzzle-loading gun, a country-made pistol, explosives and a wireless set were recovered.

Clear stand on quota stir, BJP dares MVA

Mumbai: Turning the tables on the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Saturday dared the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (SP) and the Shiv Sena (UBT) to publicly clarify their stand on Maratha reservation. The three parties have supported Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange's agitation, but remained non-committal on his demand for reservation under the OBC category. "Are MVA leaders supporting Jarange who wants Maratha reservation under Other Backward Class (OBC) category? Will the Opposition support the dilution of the OBC quota? These are some key issues that the Opposition needs to answer first, instead of attacking the state government," Mr Bawankule said.

'I'M BAD ACTOR, KANGANA WON'T DO FILM WITH ME'

New Delhi: Union minister Chirag Paswan, who joined politics after a failed Bollywood debut, has no plans to make a comeback in films and also jokes that he is such a "bad actor" that even his Lok Sabha colleague and first co-star, Kangana Ranaut, will not agree to share the screen space with him again. In an interaction with a news agency, the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief, who made his debut with Ranaut in the 2011 movie *Miley Naa Miley Hum*, said the film was a "disaster". He also said that he has no plans to get married for at least another two years as he wants to dedicate all of his time to politics, especially as the Bihar elections are due next year. "And I think marriage is also a huge responsibility. You can't just be occupied with your work and give an excuse to your better half that my work is my priority. If your work is your priority, then set your priority clear. "I am very clear about my priority that I am married to my work. And if I don't have time for my better half, I should not get into that," Mr Paswan added. — PTI



Chirag Paswan

Govt terms report on Covid deaths 'gross & misleading'

'11.9 lakh excess deaths in 2020, 8 times more than official toll'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Around of 11.9 lakh excess deaths occurred in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, 17 per cent higher compared to 2019 in India, an international study has found. The estimate is about eight times higher than the official Covid-19 deaths in India, and 1.5 times the World Health Organisation's estimates, researchers, including those from the University of Oxford, UK, said. Commenting on the study, health ministry said the study's estimates as is "gross and misleading." The study's "untenable and unacceptable" findings are based on a methodology having "critical flaws," the most important one being taking the mortality observed in a subset of households surveyed in the NFHS and extrapolating these results to the entire country, health ministry said. The data was taken from the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5). The life expectancy in



In this file photo, volunteers pray before performing the last rites of a Covid-19 victim, at burial ground in Bengaluru.

women fell by 3.1 years, while it fell by 2.1 years in men, the authors said. Gender inequalities in healthcare and resource distribution within households could be possible reasons, they said. The patterns contrast with those seen in high-income countries, where excess deaths were higher among men than women during the pandemic, the authors said in the study published in the journal *Science Advances*. Meanwhile, health ministry said, "The NFHS sample is representative

of the country only when it is considered as a whole. The 23 per cent of households included in this analysis from part of 14 states cannot be considered representative of the country". The study fails to acknowledge India's "robust" Civil Registration System (CRS), which recorded a substantial increase in death registrations (over 99 per cent) in 2020, up from 92 per cent in 2019, not solely attributable to the pandemic, the health ministry said. Looking at social groups,

the researchers found that high caste Hindu groups experienced a life expectancy decline of 1.3 years, whereas Muslims and Scheduled Tribes experienced a 5.4-year and 4.1-year drop in their life expectancies. The pandemic exacerbated the disparities already faced by these marginalised caste and religious groups in terms of life expectancy, the authors said. "Marginalised groups already had lower life expectancy and the pandemic further increased the gap between the most privileged Indian social groups, and the most marginalised social groups in India," said first author Aashish Gupta, a research fellow at the University of Oxford. Further, the researchers found that deaths in India increased across age groups, most prominently among the youngest and the oldest, whereas drops in life expectancy in high-income countries were largely driven by increased deaths in those aged 60 years and above.

'BJP will bring White Paper on Jharkhand's demography'

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA with agency inputs NEW DELHI/RANCHI, JULY 20

Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that the rampant infiltration has led to the shrinking of the tribal population in Jharkhand and added that if the BJP forms the next government in the state, it will release a "White Paper" on demography to protect tribal lands and rights. Expressing confidence that the BJP will be forming a government in Jharkhand, he said that the party won in 52 of 81 Assembly segments in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls. Speaking to the party workers at Prabhat Tara Ground during the BJP's extended executive committee meeting, he said, "After forming a government in Jharkhand, we will bring out a 'White Paper' on demography to protect tribal people, their lands, reservation, and rights." In a veiled attack on the state chief minister Hemant Soren, he accused him of being involved in "Love Jihad" and "Land Jihad" due to his "vote bank and appeasement policy," which Mr Shah claimed was causing demographic changes. The BJP senior leader alleged that thousands of infiltrators were entering Jharkhand, marrying tribal women, obtaining certificates, and buying land, thus usurping jobs meant for local people. The Union home minister also criticised Mr Soren for focusing on increasing his vote bank and alleged that his welfare measures primarily benefit his family. "Infiltrators are usurping jobs meant for local people and Hemant Soren is busy increasing his vote bank. His welfare measures means welfare of his family," Mr Shah alleged.

Is this route to 'Viksit Bharat': Sibal on Kanwar Yatra order

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Saturday slammed as "divisive agenda" the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments' order to all eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route to display their owners' names and demanded that it should be withdrawn. Addressing a press conference here, Mr Sibal said the politics that is happening on Kanwar Yatra is not going to take India towards becoming "Viksit Bharat". "The Prime Minister, home minister and chief ministers should not raise such issues on which politics is done, that lead to controversies. The common person has nothing to do with these issues. What will happen is that the row will escalate, traders would suffer losses. Such issues will later be raised in the Parliament and issues of economic and political challenges will not be discussed," the former Union minister said. In a post on X, Mr Sibal said, "Kanwar Yatra Route, UP directs eateries including roadside carts

Hindu body wants ID display in shops along Kanwar route

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, JULY 19

A Hindu body on Friday demanded chief minister Mohan Yadav to enforce display of identity (ID) by owners of the shops set up in the route of Kanwars (Shiva devotees performing particular rituals on Mondays of the Hindu calendar month of Savan), in different parts of Madhya Pradesh. The Hindu Jagaran Manch has submitted that the MP government should follow the footsteps of its counterparts of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand by issuing an order to make it mandatory for the owners of the shops established along the "Kanwar Yatra" route in different parts of the state, to identify them. The Hindu body said that this would help the kanwars get the option of choosing the shops where they would like to buy their needs during their journey. The kanwars visit a Shiva temple on a Monday of the month of Savan, falling in July-August this year, after travelling on foot by carrying water from a river or a water body in their respective areas. Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind chief Maulana Arshad Madani on Saturday slammed the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments' order to all eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route to display their owners' names as "discriminatory and communal", and said the Muslim body will examine the legality of the move.

Row in Kerala over foreign secy appointment

BJP says CM should not consider state as an independent country; CS says nothing unusual

Thiruvananthapuram, July 20: The BJP in Kerala on Saturday slammed the LDF government for giving an IAS officer additional charge of matters connected with

Shortly thereafter, Kerala chief secretary Venu V, in a post, said that the external cooperation was in existence for some time and was created for better coordination with delegates coming to the state from other nations. He said the state government has not issued an order appointing a foreign secretary as it was not ignorant of the fact that foreign affairs were the domain of the Centre. He said that many foreign agencies, multilateral agencies, institutions working in embassies of other countries and delegations regularly contact the Kerala government and other state governments. When the CM or ministers from the state go abroad and hold discussions there, representatives of those countries come to Kerala and to deal with them was the responsibility of different

departments earlier, he further said. However, as the number of such discussions increased, the need for better coordination was felt and therefore, a division called External Cooperation was created for that purpose. Principal secretary, industries, Suman Billa was given the responsibility of that division in 2023 prior to which former OSD Venu Rajamony had that charge, the chief secretary said in his post. After Ms Billa went to Central services, the responsibility of that division was handed over to K.

Vasuki who is the secretary of labour and skills department, Venu said in his post. He said the state government did this to establish new relations for the development of Kerala and not to engage in diplomatic relations with foreign countries or interfere in matters falling under the jurisdiction of the central government. Earlier in the day, BJP state president Mr Surendran termed the handing over of charge of External Cooperation to Vasuki as appointment of a "foreign secretary of the state". — PTI

He said that the people of Jammu have always withstood terror, and that he had full faith in the bravery of our jawans.

'Tribals cultivate 52 varieties of millet crops at a time' ■ Sowing season begins in June-July

Primitive tribe Baigas guardian of millet cultivation in MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JULY 20

The unique farming practice by Baigas, a primitive tribe of India, has contributed immensely to the preservation of millet crops, billed as the future food grains of the world in view of climate change. The forest dwellers have developed the "most diversified farming system" involving cultivation of no less than over four dozen millet crops, and pulses in their agriculture lands at a time.

"Baigas are known for their unique farming tradition, being practiced since time immemorial. It is the most diversified farming system adopted by any farming community in India. Baiga farmers are often seen cultivating as many as 52 varieties of millet crops at a time in their agriculture lands," noted ethnologist Naresh Biswas who has been working in the tribal areas of Central India particularly among the Baigas told this newspaper on Friday. Almost all the millet

Padma Shri awardee Kamala Pujari, paddy seeds conservationist, dies

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, JULY 20

Kamala Pujari, a tribal woman who was awarded Padma Shri awardee for her outstanding efforts to preserve native varieties paddy seeds, passed away on Sunday due to cardiac arrest while undergoing treatment at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Odisha's Cuttack. She was 74. Known for her contributions to organic farming and conservation of paddy varieties, Kamala was admitted to SCB two days ago due to health-related issues. Dindori, Mandla and Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh, he said.

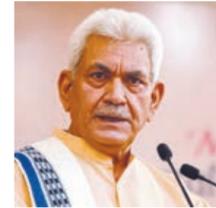
No wonder, the coarse grains have become an inseparable part of their culture playing a significant role in wedding rituals, and festivals and finding strong imprints in their folk songs. "A Baiga folk song says, 'Kutaki kutela barik dana, ragelin moriya jo bhar re, kon bhauji kute sanva haren, kon bhauji kute sanva rasseni.'" which translated loosely into English says "When a guest visits a Baiga family, he first asks which brother-in-law is pounding the little millet".

Kodo and Kutki millets are the staple diet of a Baiga like rice and roti for the urban dwellers, Shivalik Biswas, who is doing filmmaking following, told this newspaper. The sowing season for a Baiga farmer begins in June-July and the harvesting period ends by September. Ms Biswas has made a documentary on the life of Phulhari Bai, a Baiga woman who set up a millet seed bank in her village of Gaura Kanhari, close to Kanha National Park, in Dindori district.

'Pakistan, master of terror, unhappy with J&K's peace'

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, JULY 20

Jammu and Kashmir lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said that Pakistan, the "master of terrorism", is not happy with peace and normalcy returning to Jammu and Kashmir and the Union territory witnessing a new dawn of prosperity and is, therefore, making desperate attempts to perpetuate terror attacks in the Jammu region. He, however, vowed, "Every terrorist will be eliminated by the bullets of the security forces in Jammu. The security forces will eradicate terrorism from the Jammu region like they did in the Kashmir Valley".



Manoj Sinha

While speaking at an official function here, he called upon the people to stand united in the fight against the divisive forces trying to disturb peace in the Jammu region. He said, "The J&K administration and our security forces will never allow the adversary's nefarious design to succeed. We will eliminate the terrorists and root out terrorism and its supporters from J&K". Mr Sinha reiterated that with growing tourism and peace in J&K, the "neighbouring terror hub country is starved and is

trying to spread terror in the Jammu region. However, we believe in our security forces, and soon these terrorists will be eliminated from the Jammu region, as well. We will never allow Pakistan's terror plans to succeed in J&K". He reiterated, "Just as terrorism and its ecosystem have been eliminated in Kashmir, the strategy in Jammu will be the same: terrorists and their commanders will be eliminated soon."

He said that the people of Jammu have always withstood terror, and that he had full faith in the bravery of our jawans.

J'khand court convicts 5 cyber frauds from Jamtara

AGE CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI/RANCHI, JULY 20

A special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Ranchi on Saturday convicted five Jamtara residents under the anti-money laundering law for running an "organised" cyber crime syndicate. According to sources, those convicted under the PMLA are Ganesh Kumar Mandal, Santosh Kumar Mandal and his sons Pintu Mandal and Ankush Kumar Mandal, and the quantum of sentence is expected to be announced by the court on July 23. The ED slapped criminal charges against these cyber criminals, after taking cognisance of the Jharkhand police FIR and chargesheet that charged them with illegal withdrawal and transfer of money from the bank accounts of gullible people in the guise of being bank officials. The ED had said its investigation found that the accused, in connivance with other persons, acquired funds in their bank accounts and their family members' by cheating bank customers, some other individuals and invested the same in the construction of houses and purchase of vehicles.

ED arrests Haryana Cong MLA in sand mining case

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 20

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has arrested Haryana Congress MLA Surender Panwar in a money-laundering case linked with "illegal" mining in the state.



Surender Panwar

The 55-year-old legislator was taken into custody in the early hours in Gurgaon and will be produced before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Ambala where the Central agency will seek a custodial remand, the sources said. The agency had raided the premises of the MLA in January on the charges of "large-scale illegal mining" in the Yamunanagar area of the state. The Central probe agency then arrested Dilbag Singh — former Indian National Lok Dal

(INLD) legislator from Yamunanagar — and Kulwinder Singh, one of his associates, in the case. The money-laundering case stems from several FIRs registered by the Haryana police for probing the alleged illegal mining of boulders, gravel and sand that took place in the past in Yamunanagar and nearby districts, despite ban imposed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). The ED is also probing an alleged fraud in the "e-Ravana" scheme — an online portal that was

introduced by the Haryana government in 2020 to simplify collection of royalties and taxes and prevent tax evasion in mining areas. It is estimated, as per the ED, that the alleged illegal mining generated slush funds of about ₹400-500 crore over the last few years. Meanwhile, senior Congress leader Ashok Mehta called Mr Panwar's arrest "politically motivated". Elections to the 90-member Haryana Assembly are slated to be held later this year.

Water saucers help Kuno cheetahs beat scorching heat

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JULY 20

A series of innovative measures undertaken in the Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh has made cheetahs in the wildlife sanctuary beat the searing heat in the outgoing summer, leading the KNP management to achieve the rare feat of ensuring zero-casualty among the felines in the season. A mechanism was put in place in form of innovative measures to ensure that cheetahs, particularly mothers and their cubs, have easy access to water and not to get exposed much to the torturous heat and hot winds, called in local parlance "Loo", when they venture out for the hunt during the period. Water saucers and guzzlers were constructed in each SRB housing cheetahs and they were supplied water from the water sources in the park (underground bores and wells).

This apart, a 12 km-long pipeline was laid to source water from the nearby Kuno river to ensure an assured supply of water to the water saucers and guzzlers in the park.

INDIAN TOP 10

NON-FICTION

- WHAT WENT WRONG WITH CAPITALISM**
Ruchir Sharma, Penguin, ₹999
- AGE OF REVOLUTION**
Fareed Zakaria, Penguin, ₹1,299
- THE LION AND THE LILY**
Ira Mukhoty, Aleph, ₹999
- GUJARAT UNDER MODI**
Christophe Jaffrelot, Westland, ₹899
- THE ROAD TO FREEDOM**
Joseph E. Stiglitz, Penguin, ₹799
- THE HANUMAN CHALISA**
Vikram Seth, Speaking Tiger, ₹399
- TWILIGHT PRISONERS**
Siddhartha Deb, Westland, ₹599
- IMPERIAL GAMES IN TIBET**
Dilip Sinha, Pan Macmillan, ₹599
- BAHRISONS: CHRONICLE OF A BOOKSHOP**
Anuj Bahri, India Research Press, ₹350
- BACKSTAGE CLIMATE**
Rajan Mehta, Westland, ₹599

FICTION

- KAIRO**
Jenny Erpenbeck, Granta, ₹599
- ROSARITA**
Anita Desai, Pan Macmillan, ₹499
- MORE DAYS AT THE MORISAKI BOOKSHOP**
Satoshi Yagisawa, Manilla Press, ₹399
- FUNNY STORY**
Emily Henry, Penguin, ₹799
- A FIRESTORM IN PARADISE**
Rana Safvi, Penguin, ₹699
- CAMINO GHOSTS**
John Grisham, Hachette, ₹699
- THE LION WOMEN OF TEHRAN**
Marjan Kamali, Simon & Schuster, ₹499
- BUTTER**
Asako Yuzuki, HarperCollins, ₹599
- THE BOOK OF EVERLASTING THINGS**
Aanchal Malhotra, HarperCollins, ₹599
- RADHA THE PRINCESS OF BARSANA**
Nilima Dalmia, Westland, ₹699
Bahrison, New Delhi

Timeless hymn, glibly rendered



Pavan K. Varma

review

Vikram Seth seems to have finally surfaced from his prolonged creative hibernation to write a translation of Tulsidas' *Hanuman Chalisa*. It is a small, slim volume, where one full page is occupied by one two-line chaupa, and the next full page by a two-line English translation. Since the *Chalisa*, as the name itself makes clear, consists of *chaalis* or 40 chaupas, the total length of the book is just about a hundred pages, including the translation of two introductory dohas, and one closing one, and a short introduction. It must have required the full ingenuity of Ravi Singh, the very talented editor of publishers Speaking Tiger, to convert such minuscule material into a book! A fairly competent translation on the web, is of four pages, with the original given on one-half the page, and

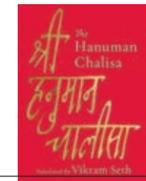
a matching English translation on the other half. The translation was done by Seth — as he himself admits — 10 years ago as a “labour of love”. So, all the publishers had to do was to persuade Seth to publish it, with the obvious intent to capitalise on his formidable reputation, based on some exceptional earlier books, including the best-seller, *A Suitable Boy*, which was made into a popular teleseries. The translation is useful, especially since the original is in Awadhi, and enables the widely recited *Chalisa* to reach a wider audience. For the most part, it is competent as well, given Vikram’s felicity in English, especially the art of rhyme and metre. But there are obvious flaws. In the very opening doha, his translation of the line, “*barnau raghubara bimal jasu, jo dayaku phal chaari*” as “I sing of Ram, from whom all things

come, truth, means, desire and freeing”, is to my mind, a rather inexact rendering. The word “*bimal*” means pure, unblemished, clean and untainted. It can hardly be translated in the manner he has done. Again, “*phal chaari*”, refers to the four *purusharthas* of the Hindu worldview: *Dharma, artha, kama* and *moksha*. It is unacceptable simplification to translate *dharma* into truth, when the most commonly accepted meaning of the word is right conduct. Nor can *artha* be reduced to “means”.

Similarly, the last two lines of the opening second doha, “*bala buddhi vidya dehu mohi, harahu kalesa bikaar*”, is translated by him as “Grant to me wisdom, knowledge and strength; take every blemish away.” While the translation of the first line is simple enough, “*kalesa*” means strife, discord, grief, etc., and “*bikaar*” means disorder, either physical or mental, and represents the six vices. Vikram’s translation as “take every blemish away” is far

from adequate. Of course, I grant that in translations that seek to retain the rhythm, metre and cadence of the original, some liberties can be taken with exact meanings. Yet artificial simplifications will not do, unless they are supported by separate explanatory notes. This book would have been far more substantive if it had additional material supplementing the translation and a commentary illumining the background of the original composition. Seth admits that that was his original intention. In the Introduction, he writes: “I was first tempted to add a few notes... But I eventually decided against this on the grounds that it would encumber a simple translation with too much by way of apparatus.” In my view, he took the wrong decision, and chose the easier option, out of sync with his own erudition and the expectation of readers.

The writer is an author, diplomat and former MP (Rajya Sabha)



THE HANUMAN CHALISA

Tr. by VIKRAM SETH
Speaking Tiger
pp. 100; ₹399

Hiding the heartbreak in Laxmi Panda's heroic life



Varun Andhare

review

Laxmi Rath joined the INA as one of its youngest members at 14 years, and served as a spy alongside a host of figures whose sacrifices were remembered much better than her own. After losing her husband in the 1970s, Rath, known after marriage as Laxmi Panda, worked a range of low-paying, menial jobs. The nation she struggled to liberate failed her: She was accorded the Rashtriya Swatantrata Samman, officially recognising her contribution to Indian Independence, only in 2008. She would pass away a few days later.

In aiming to take Panda's story to

the world, Savie Karnel's children's book, the follow up to her best-selling *The Nameless God*, raises pointed questions of any critic interested in the politics of writing fairytales: what do we talk about when we talk about our heroes, and where do their stories end?

Here, Karnel weaves a fictional tale of courage and resilience around the established facts of Panda's early life. The death of her parents, in a British airstrike in Burma, leaves a teenage Laxmi to fend for herself and her younger brother until she finds herself in a camp run by the Azad Hind Fauj,

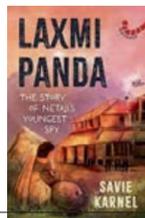
who accepts the siblings into their ranks after much coaxing and persistence. What follows is the story of her involvement, nimbly and vividly imagined by Karnel, as part of the INA's 'Bahadur regiment'. There is much to savour in the latter half of this book, where Karnel ably injects intrigue and danger into what is otherwise a straightforward narrative of precocious bravery, typical of the genre. The author ends the story very early in Panda's long life as a war hero, just as the INA plants its flag on the Indian mainland for the first time.

There are also questions of style. One gets the impression Karnel is eager to rush us to the business end of her story. The treatment of Laxmi's life as a spy, the relief of finding com-

munity and purpose after a wretched life as an orphan in Burma, makes for moving, compelling reading. Less so the oddly stilted preamble to it, where characters come and go within the space of a chapter, seemingly only for the purpose of exposition. These sections are littered with squandered opportunities; the food and folklore of Burma are evoked promisingly but never truly established as motifs. Her brother Nakul, the beating heart of this story, appears as a cipher of an orphaned child.

Children's writing greatly rewards the ability of an author to distil emotional truths out of moments of grown-up pathos. Karnel seems continually at odds with the tragedy of Panda's story — striving to dig a happy ending out of the rubble of a glorious, heroic yet heart-breaking life.

Varun Andhare is a writer. He teaches a course in critical writing at Ashoka University, Sonapat.



LAXMI PANDA: THE STORY OF NETAJI'S YOUNGEST SPY
By SAVIE KARNEK
Westland
pp. 224; ₹350

WORLD

KERALA FAMILY OF FOUR DIED IN KUWAIT BLAZE

Pathanamthitta, July 20: Four members of a family from Pathanamthitta died in a fire that broke out at their residence in Kuwait. The incident took place on Friday night at Abbassia in Kuwait.

The victims have been identified as Mathew Muzhakkal, his wife Lini Abraham and their children Isaac and Erin.

The family left for Kuwait after their vacation on Thursday night.

“Mathew has been working there for the past 15 years. His wife is a nurse. The children are studying there.”

12 DEAD, 60 MISSING IN CHINA FLASH FLOODS

Beijing, July 20: At least 12 people were killed in a bridge collapse and more than 60 others went missing in flash floods in China's Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces, officials said on Saturday.

The highway bridge collapse triggered by torrential rains in northwest Shaanxi Province killed 12 people and left 31 others missing.

The bridge, located in Zhashui County in Shangluo City, partially collapsed around 8:40 pm on Friday due to a sudden downpour and flash floods, according to the provincial publicity department.

So far, rescue workers have found 12 dead bodies and rescued one person.

Trump to hold 1st campaign rally after assassination bid

Ex-president says had ‘good call’ with Zelensky, pledges to ‘end the war’

Grand Rapids, July 20: Donald Trump will hold his first campaign rally on Saturday since he narrowly escaped an assassination attempt one week ago and fresh from his nominating convention where his takeover of the Republican Party was cemented.

Trump said in a post on *Truth Social* that he had a “very good call” on Friday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and pledged to end the war pitting Kyiv against Moscow through negotiations.

Zelensky also reported his conversation with Trump and expressed thanks for US military assistance. But he made no reference on social media platform X to efforts to end the 28-month-old conflict.

Trump will appear in Grand Rapids, in the battleground state of Michigan, along with his new vice presidential pick, Ohio US Senator J.D. Vance. It will be their first campaign event together.

Republican Party officials said during Trump's nominating convention in Milwaukee this week that his brush with death last Saturday had changed him, and that when he made his acceptance speech on Thursday night he



US Vice President Kamala Harris and her two grand nieces arrive at Smize Dream Ice Cream shop, owned by Tyra Banks, in Washington, DC, on Friday. — AFP

would call for national unity. While Trump began the address with a call for unity and national healing, much of his speech was his well-known list of grievances and attacks on opponents. It is unclear what type of a speech Trump will deliver on Saturday, but his diehard supporters typically flock to such events to hear Trump's more traditional inflammatory rhetoric. Trump and Vance will take the stage in Grand Rapids with the Republican Party unified. — Reuters

STALWART NO MORE

RNC RACIST ATTACK ON HARMEET DHILLON FLEAYED Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi has denounced the racist response to Republican National Committee Harmeet Dhillon's recital of Sikh prayer ‘ardas’ in the presence of the party's presidential nominee Donald Trump, and said it was “completely unacceptable”.



LONGTIME U.S. REP SHEILA JACKSON, DIES

Longtime US Rep Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas, who helped lead federal efforts to protect women from domestic violence and recognise Juneteenth as a national holiday, has died. She was 74. It was confirmed she had pancreatic cancer. — Reuters

VOWING TO FIGHT, BIDEN'S CAMPAIGN TRAIL NEXT WEEK

Washington, July 20: US President Joe Biden has said that he would continue his campaign for re-election and take on Donald Trump, as he deals with the fallout from his Covid-19 diagnosis and growing calls from Democrats for him to quit the race.

Several of US President Joe Biden's re-election campaign fundraisers are on hold, multiple Democratic sources involved in the events told.

Thirty-five congressional Democrats have publicly called on Democratic President Joe Biden to end his re-election bid after the 81-year-old incumbent's halting debate performance against Republican rival Donald Trump.

They represent more than one in eight Democrats in Congress, where Biden's party controls 213 seats in the House of Representatives and 51 in the Senate.

Biden, who tested Covid-19 positive a few days ago, is in isolation at his Delaware residence, where he is expected to spend the rest of the week. — Agencies

Blow to Macron as Far Left keeps crucial Parl post

Paris, July 20: French lawmakers reelected a member of the far-left France Unbowed party to head the National Assembly's powerful finance committee, felling a plan by President Emmanuel Macron's allies to team up with the centre-right opposition and gain the post.

Several of US President Joe Biden's re-election campaign fundraisers are on hold, multiple Democratic sources involved in the events said.

Eric Coquerel, who held the job in the previous legislature, got 29 votes on the commission, beating Veronique Louwagie, who had the support of her own Republican Right party and Macron's group, with 26 votes and Jean-Philippe Tanguy of the far-right National Rally with 18, Le Parisien reported Saturday.

The finance committee, traditionally led by a member of an opposition party, has a key role in the adoption of the French budget in Parliament.

It also oversees how the government spends public money. The committee can also block legislation if it deems that it puts too much pressure on public finances.

Macron's party tried to choose the opposition that it preferred by teaming up with the centre right, Coquerel said. — Reuters

FRENCH POLICE CLEAR WATER DEMONSTRATORS

La Rochelle, July 20: French police removed demonstrators from the western port of La Rochelle with tear gas on Saturday, as environmentalists and small farmers mobilised against massive irrigation reservoirs under construction.

Around 200 people had entered the La Pallice port terminal at dawn, including farmers with old tractors, setting up a street party with music and drinks outside a major grain trader's facility. More than a dozen police vans and an armoured vehicle pushed them out during the morning in a cloud of tear gas, while other police vehicles blocked off access to the port. — AFP

“I'm all the more proud to say that this attempt was thwarted,” he said in televised comments after the vote. “It is totally contrary to the prevailing spirit.” : That the chairman of the finance committee should come from the opposition and therefore be the guarantor of control over the budget that was intended.” — Reuters

Airlines try to be on track after tech issue

Washington, July 20: Transport providers, businesses and governments on Saturday are rushing to get all their systems back online after long disruptions following a widespread technology outage. From fearmongering about a looming “World War III” to false narratives linking a cabal of global elite to a cyberattack, a torrent of online conspiracy theories took off Friday after a major IT crash.

The biggest continuing effect has been on air travel. Carriers cancelled thousands of flights on Friday and now have many of their planes and crews in the wrong place, while airports facing continued problems with checking in and security.

B'desh imposes curfew, shuts offices to curb stir

Dhaka, July 20: Soldiers patrolled the deserted streets of the Bangladesh capital Dhaka on Saturday and the government ordered all offices and institutions to stay closed for two days after at least 114 people were killed this week during student-led protests against government job quotas.

At least four people died, during sporadic clashes on Saturday in some areas of Dhaka, which has been the centre of the protests, and where security forces set up road blocks to enforce a curfew. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government declared Sunday and Monday as “public holidays” due to the situation in the country, with only emergency services allowed to operate. Authorities had earlier closed universities and colleges from Wednesday.

Unrest broke out following student anger against the quotas for government jobs, which included 30% reserved for the families of those who fought for independence from Pakistan. Hasina's government had scrapped the quota system in 2018, but a court reinstated it in June. The Supreme Court suspended the decision after a government appeal and will hear the case on Sunday after agreeing to bring forward a hearing scheduled for Aug.

7. The demonstrations — the biggest since Hasina was re-elected for a fourth successive term this year — have also been fuelled by high unemployment among young people, who make up nearly a fifth of the population. Internet and text message services have been suspended since Thursday, cutting the nation off as police cracked down on people who defied a ban on public gatherings. — Reuters



Protesters pelt stones as they clash with police during the anti-quota protest in Dhaka, on Saturday. — AFP

THE ASIAN AGE

21 JULY 2024



Krishna Shastri Devulapalli

Off the beaten track

On spectacle, time and the speed of money

“What does the money machine eat? It eats youth, spontaneity, life, beauty and above all it eats creativity. It eats quality and shits out quantity.” — William S. Burroughs

The recent wedding celebration in our great land a week ago, a spectacle so blinding, and so maniacally covered by the media that it could have been avoided only by those on life support, made me think of three things. Money, free time and celebration. So bear with me and read these seemingly disconnected ruminations on the subjects and, who knows, they just might add up to the same number as they did in my head.

HOW MONEY TRAVELS

Money travels differently from different destinations. From the hands of the poor, for instance, money travels at dizzying speeds. It zips in and out in a blur, barely making a stop. On salary/wage day, the poor man is like a spectator at a Formula 1 event. He watches his money vroom by from left to right, risking a neck sprain, like it is being driven by Max Verstappen.

The velocity of money changes, and the stops become progressively longer as it moves ‘up’ — and it always does — into the hands of someone richer than the previous holder.

The higher up money goes, the more languid its pace becomes. In its inevitable upward journey, money begins ageing, losing its vigour, and like an arthritic using the stairs, it begins taking longer and longer breaks with each flight, to catch its breath and give its rickety knees some respite.

It finally comes to a dead standstill on the top floor: the hands of the richest. Then it just sits there, immovable, unmoved, doing nothing. Except waiting for the next batch of tired money to come and join it so they can exchange stories and rot away in an ever-growing pile.



Everyone around me, young, old or comatose, seems to be celebrating something, anything, nothing. Nonstop. I guess it isn't surprising, coming as we do from a land that has turned even massacre memorials into amusement parks.

THE COST OF TIME

Have you noticed something about the rich man? He doesn't know how to spend what is available free to everyone — time — freely. If you take out the time he is feverishly using up to make money, a rich man doesn't know how to spend his leftover time without spending money.

Every free minute a rich man has, ironically, is a minute he pays for through his nose — by going on a vacation, buying a new car, throwing a party, redecorating his home, getting a tummy tuck, going on a second vacation directly from his first one in his new car to show off his tummy tuck at a party in his redecorated second home on the beach...

The rich man, poor fellow, doesn't know how to take it as his right. It is free, my friend. You don't have to pay for it. That's why it's called free time.

That time could be spent without spending a rupee, on the sofa he is currently sitting on (desperately trying to figure out what to do with the next terrifying minute that's hurtling towards him like a blazing meteor), by just continuing to sit on it, and looking at a tree, reading a book, listening to a song, doing nothing, being, living — heaven forbid, thinking even — is unfathomable to him.

They say time is money. Apparently it is. In more ways than one.

AT WHAT COST CELEBRATION?

I don't like celebration. Probably because I've always found celebration to be the opposite of intimacy. To me, 'celebrating' a wedding, a milestone birthday or anniversary has felt like the easy way out, something removed and alienating even. For what is intimate about paying tribute to products and services — and people — on a catalogue, paying for them, and indulging yourself with a bunch of folk you pretend closeness to for an hour or so to feel good about yourself for an entire day before the sugar-high goes the way of all highs?

Not too long ago, breathless celebration didn't seem to be the birthright of the average guy. For most, it came once a year. And was commemorated with the distribution of Nutrine orange muttai (one per head, mind you) to the entire class.

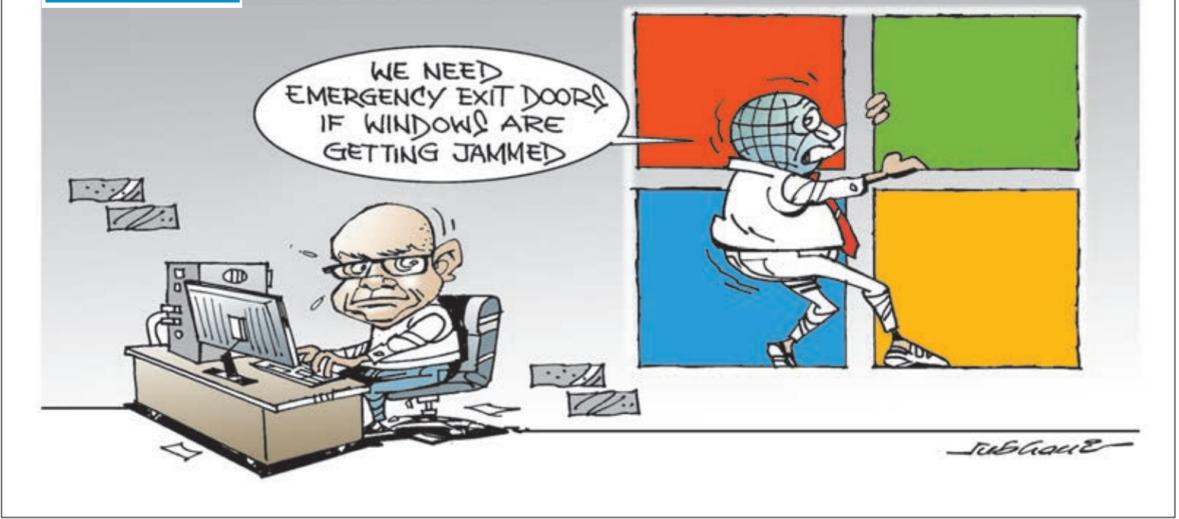
Today, celebration seems to have become as mandatory as an Aadhaar Card, age, gender, social status or occasion notwithstanding. Birthdays, bon voyages, anniversaries, switching off of life-support, it doesn't matter. Everyone around me, young, old or comatose, seems to be celebrating something, anything, nothing. Nonstop. I guess it isn't surprising, coming as we do from a land that has turned even massacre memorials into amusement parks.

Some time ago, a family I know 'celebrated' a milestone birthday of a parent like a roid-fuelled tag team, in a loop, with such indefatigability that, by the time they were done, the parent died. Making it time for them to write a never-ending cycle of eulogies.

Forget the lipstick index, the men's underwear index, and the hemline index; all you need to do is look at the celebration index to know how badly a country is doing.

Krishna Shastri Devulapalli is a humour writer, novelist, columnist and screenwriter

Subhani



Indian shaadis are lavish, why roast just Ambanis?



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

After a seven-month long saga of celebrations, Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant were finally wed in Mumbai on July 12. The pre-wedding festivities included an unprecedented extravaganza in Jamnagar, where the Airforce station was opened to civilian private jets, a four-day luxury cruise to the Mediterranean, and multiple events at the wedding itself. Apart from the usual Indian celebrities, international stars like Rihanna, Justin Bieber, Kim Kardashian, Bill Gates and Ivanka Trump — among many others — were in attendance. Prime Minister Modi attended the reception.

The estimated cost of the entire wedding was ₹5,000 crores, with eyes agog at Nita Ambani's emerald necklace said to be worth ₹500 crores. The wedding has been described as the "Shaadi of the Year", whose every star-studded aspect became a media obsession. Who were invited, who were what, what food was served, were questions that kept the nation glued to this great show of power and limitless wealth by Asia's richest man.

For ordinary people, reactions have been mixed. Some have found the endless display of money vulgar. Others felt that the sheer magnitude of the celebrations was inappropriate in a country where so many still struggle for two meals a day. However, many argued that if the Ambanis have the money, why should they not spend it? As a proportion of their net wealth, what they spent was less than a pittance. Some ascribed criticism to envy, and still others felt that it had boosted employment in the growing sector of the marriage, hotel and

food industries. The fact is that weddings have become a spectacle. This applies both to affluent families and the middle class, and now imposes a great burden on the poor, where the girl's family has to arrange for a "suitable" wedding, while also coping with the still pervasive demands of dowry. According to one survey, families — cutting across class — spend up to 33 per cent of their savings on a wedding. Gone are the days when this ceremony used to be a simple one-day affair. Now, families vie with each other to make the occasion a projection of wealth and status. There are live performers, DJs, lavish decorations, tables heaving with food, and multiple over-the-top events. In destination weddings entire five-star hotels are booked. Wedding planners and event managers are much in demand. If we turn the mirror on ourselves, what have the Ambanis, infinitely richer, done wrong?

There is also another important question. Are Indians inclined to be abstemious, with an aversion to pomp and ostentation? We believe we are, and often flaunt our spiritual halo and expound on the Gandhian emphasis on simplicity and frugality. But actually, we like money, and show exceptional skills in situations of considerable adversity to make it by our resilient entrepreneurship. No wonder that Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, is one of our most ubiquitous deities, and adorns the puja room of almost every Hindu home. Once we have the money, we temperamentally like exhibitionism and flamboyance. After all, what is money for if it cannot be displayed?

Are Indians inclined to be abstemious? We believe we are, and flaunt our spiritual halo, but actually, we like money, and show exceptional skills in situations of considerable adversity to make it by our resilient entrepreneurship.

Our politicians, who bow in obeisance to Mahatma Gandhi, are no exception. They live in luxurious bungalows, love their sirens and armed escorts, and do not really have the reputation of being short of money when they expound on the need to eradicate poverty. Perhaps due to the demands of protocol, the President of the republic lives in the world's largest palace. And the PM and vice-president will shortly move into palatial new residences built for them.

Who is there then to be a role model for the middle-ground between wealth and restraint, money and gracious simplicity? Our ancient texts always emphasised that there must be the right balance between Lakshmi and Sarasvati — wealth and wisdom. In the Hindu worldview, wealth is not reviled. In fact, artha, or the importance of material well-being is one of the four highest purusharthas or goals of life, along with dharma, kaama and moksha. But equally, these same texts stress the importance of proportion and balance, of viveka or discrimination, so that no one of these goals is followed in an uncontrolled manner. In the case of the valid pursuit of prosperity, if this balance is lost, the vulgarity of wealth will inevitably — and brazenly — overwhelm discrimination and moderation.

This self-restraint required to curb the temptation to outrageously flaunt wealth is particularly relevant in our country, where the vast majority still lives in unacceptable poverty and deprivation. When those at the bottom of the pyramid watch the unrestrained shenanigans

of the rich, they must be wondering if they belong to this new "shining" India, where the world's third largest number of billionaires coexist with the globe's largest number of the poor.

The rich have the right to display their wealth. But ultimately, it is every individual's choice to strike the right balance between affluence and social responsibility. Reliance Foundation has a good record in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and has won national and international acclaim for its charitable works. However, if from the estimated Rs 5,000 crores spent on the wedding, the Ambanis would have allocated half to their charitable foundation, they would still have had a lavish wedding, while becoming greater leaders in needed philanthropy, thereby adding to their corporate brand, and generating far more genuine blessings for the newly-weds.

Before leaping to hasty condemnation, all of Indian society needs to introspect. What would we have done, if we had the Ambanis' wealth, at the weddings of our own sons and daughters? In fact, what do we still do, with far lesser resources, on such occasions at our own levels? The younger generation needs to be the catalyst for change. If it resolves to reduce the uncontrolled band-baaja of weddings, and opts for a simpler and more dignified ceremony, then alone will things change. But this is a distant revolution. The ugly truth is that most young men are complicit in the demand for dowry, and want a grandiose wedding, mostly at the expense of the girl's family. Kaiser Jaafr's lines come to my mind: "Kisko patthar marun, Kaiser, kaun paraya hai, sheesh mahal mein ik ik chehra apna lagta hai; at whom should I throw a stone who is not like me, in this mirrored palace each face looks like me."

The writer is an author, diplomat and former member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

LETTERS WORLD STOPPED

There is a need to learn from the worldwide disaster caused by Microsoft's server outage. When so many issues were caused by a breakdown of a software company's server, it's easy to envision how bad things may get if other companies fail at the same time or fall victim to a cyber attack. Air traffic was disrupted in many countries around the world, including India, banking operations were halted, TV channel broadcasting stopped, work of government and non-government organisations was disrupted, and even emergency services in America came to a halt. Remember the film, Leave the World Behind? It's ironic that Microsoft's server failed at the same time that cyber security measures were implemented.

Abhijit Roy Jamshedpur

DIVERSIFY TECH

THE RECENT MICROSOFT software update outage underscores the perils of over-reliance on a few tech giants. As efforts to regulate big tech through anti-trust actions and legislation like India's Digital Competition Bill gain momentum, promoting competition and innovation in the tech industry is crucial. By distributing operational risks and encouraging diversity in IT systems, we can build a more resilient digital infrastructure. Ultimately, finding a balance between technological advancements and accountability is key to harnessing the benefits of technology while mitigating its risks.

Amarjeet Kumar Hazaribagh

KILLING THEM QUIETLY

THE ANTI-MUSLIM action by the government keeps on increasing. In the latest development those selling anything during the kanwar yatra had to mention their identities. This is a mere fig leaf to cover the real reason, which is the economic boycott of the Muslims. It is impossible to believe that those who made the rule would be unaware of the dire situation it would cause for many families. With the political situation in UP being in a state of flux, has the CM Adityanath deliberately made this move to strengthen his credentials as one intolerant of minorities? Coalition partners have expressed their displeasure. But the PM has been silent so far.

Anthony Henriques Mumbai

Anita Katyal Political Gup-Shup



Only Modi came to Ambani event, but Cong second rung attended it

There was considerable chatter in the run-up to the grand finale of the Ambani wedding whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would put in an appearance in view of the Opposition's charge about his undue proximity to two leading industrialists. All speculation was put to rest when Mr Modi put in an appearance during the extended celebrations to bless the newly-weds. Oddly, most senior BJP leaders and chief ministers were not seen though the party's Maharashtra contingent was well-represented. Those who did not show up included Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, defence minister Rajnath Singh or even home minister Amit Shah. Several reasons are on offer by the grapevine in Delhi for their absence. One is that the BJP did not wish to overdo its presence on the occasion as it has been accused of crony capitalism. The other less charitable explanation is that the Prime Minister wanted to make a solo appearance and to send out a clear message that the only leader who matters in the BJP is him and that they should deal

directly with him.

Though Congress leader Sonia Gandhi got a personal invitation from industrialist Mukesh Ambani for his son Anant's wedding to Radhika Merchant, it was known that she would not be travelling to Mumbai to join in the celebrations. As for Rahul Gandhi, it was always a no-no, especially since he has persistently charged the Modi government of being partial to the Ambani and Adani groups with regard to government projects. However, Sonia and Rahul Gandhi's absence did not prevent other senior party leaders like Digvijaya Singh, Kamal Nath, Abhishek Singhvi and Salman Khurshid from showing up at the big fat wedding. Congress leaders who did not get an invite suffered from a serious bout of FOMO as they all wanted to be seen at the grand affair. They were hoping that since Rahul Gandhi was away, their presence at the wedding would go unnoticed. Several Delhi-based party spokespersons are learned to have made discreet enquiries but were disappointed when they failed to get a positive

response. Prominent among them was a leader who has recently been given an important assignment in the party's frontal organisation.

The BJP top brass asked its senior leader Manohar Lal Khattar to step down as Haryana chief minister before the elections as it believed that the anti-incumbency against him would prove fatal for the party. Mr Khattar was subsequently given a Lok Sabha ticket with the express purpose of removing him from Haryana and to keep him away from dabbling in state politics. However, the BJP has been proved wrong as Mr Khattar is constantly in Haryana because his successor Nayab Singh Saini makes it a point to mention him in all his speeches as he regards Mr Khattar as his mentor. Mr Khattar also treats Mr Saini as his protégé and takes time out from his ministerial duties to participate in programmes planned by the chief minister. With Mr Khattar showing no signs of backing off, the BJP leadership is in a fix as they believe this could have an adverse impact on the year-end

Assembly polls in Haryana.

Though BJP leaders are putting up a brave face following the party's below-par performance in the recent Lok Sabha polls, the feedback from the bureaucracy is quite different. The general view is that the BJP leadership has not come to terms with the fact that the party could not get a majority on its own and that it is now dependent on alliance partners. As a result, there is a pervading sense of despair while the officialdom appears directionless. Government insiders said the work culture now has to necessarily change. Unlike the government's last two terms when power was centralised and most decisions were taken by the Prime Minister's Office, there had to be greater involvement of the ministries. Cabinet notes have to be shared with ministerial colleagues and allies consulted on key matters. It is a huge adjustment process and though BJP's allies have not upped the ante, they have to be kept in good humour. The recent move to accommodate alliance partners as special invitees in the

reconstituted Niti Aayog is a case in point.

A section in the BJP is having a rethink about Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's prolonged incarceration. It is an acknowledged fact that if Mr Kejriwal remains in jail indefinitely, it will become increasingly difficult for the second rung of the Aam Aadmi Party leadership to keep its flock together as the year-end Delhi Assembly elections draw close. Like in the case of other regional parties, the AAP is also a one-man show. The party is completely identified with Mr Kejriwal who has built it from scratch and expanded its footprint beyond Delhi. The BJP believes disarray in the AAP could provide space to the Congress which is presently a distant third in the battle between the BJP and the AAP as its social base has shifted to the Kejriwal-led party. The BJP obviously does not want the Congress to revive as it is its chief opponent at the national level.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

ARCHERS TAKE AIM

India's Rowing, Archery teams check in at Games Village

Paris, July 20: India's chef-de-mission for Paris Olympics, Gagan Narang on Saturday informed that archery and rowing contingents are the first from the country to check in at the Games village and said the athletes are eager to begin their campaign at the sporting extravaganza.

While archery and rowing contingents checked in at Paris Games village on Friday, the Indian men's hockey team will arrive on from the Netherlands, where it was undergoing its final preparation.

"I arrived in Paris on Thursday night and have taken stock of the arrangements inside the Games Village for the Indian contingent. Archery and rowing were the first Indian teams to arrive on Friday and have comfortably checked-in. The athletes are slowly settling in and are exploring the Village," said Narang, the 2012 London Olympics bronze medalist shooter.

He further stated the mood among the athletes is that of excitement and anticipation.

"The mood is certainly upbeat. We have the Indian men's hockey team arriving on Saturday night. Surely, I am reminded of my hey days at the Olympics as an athlete. While there is a lot of excitement, athletes will also want to get some game time in the competition arenas. We want to make sure the athletes' have everything they need ahead of the start of their respective events," added Narang, a four-time Olympian.

The decorated Indian shooter, who is also the recipient of the prestigious Khel Ratna and the Padma Shri awards, expressed his gratitude to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for appointing him as the chef-de-mission for the Paris Games.

"It is a matter of great honour for me to travel with the Indian contingent as the Chef-de-Mission for Paris Olympics. I express my heartfelt gratitude for considering me for the role, and giving me a chance to once again serve my country on the sports' biggest stage," Narang said.

"As an athlete myself, I fully understand the requirements of elite athletes at the world's greatest sporting extravaganza. I will work strenuously to motivate and inspire the Indian contingent, while also safeguarding their priorities to perform their optimum," he said.

India will be represented by 117 athletes in 20 disciplines in Paris. "It is a matter of great pride for me to see the growing number of medal contenders in the Indian contingent. Each and every athlete in our contingent is capable of not only being on-par against the best athletes of the world but can also surpass them and bring Narang said.

— PTI



India's chef-de-mission for Paris Olympics Gagan Narang with India's archery and rowing team members on their arrival at the Games Village in Paris on Friday. — IOA

Will miss my daughter, but Oly medal is big: Deepika

Jaux (France), July 20: Deepika Kumari is torn between two worlds. One where the doting mother longs to be with her 19-month-old daughter Vedika and another where the ace Indian archer craves for an elusive Olympic medal.

But the resilience she showed in fusing those two different spaces in her life has taken Deepika to the Paris Olympics Games, the fourth showpiece in her career.

Deepika's determination to achieve glory in the ultimate sporting event in the world was evident when she stayed away from her daughter for two months to finetune her preparation.

"It's difficult to explain the pain of being away from my daughter. But it's also about achieving what we have worked for over so many years," Deepika said ahead of the Games.

Deepika's turmoil had started immediately after giving birth to her daughter in December 2022. She developed muscle stiffness and lifting the 19-kg bow was next to impossible. Forget about shooting or lifting the bow, she was not able to do even simple daily chores, Atanu recalled.

Gradually, she started jogging and put in a lot of hard work at the gym to get going again. Deepika even thought that her career has come to a close. But then came the flicker of hope. Deepika dominated the National Games last year, returning with two gold and one silver.

It led her to the big decision of training under the Korean coach Kim Hyung-Tak. Subsequently, the 30-year-old excelled in the three-month long selection trials.

— PTI



Deepika Kumari

Finally, Atanu Das, her husband and himself an international archer, took Vedika to Army Sports Institute in Pune just before Deepika departed to Paris.

It was an achingly emotional moment for Deepika. "I miss her a lot, but that's how it is. Thankfully, she has been really supportive and has adapted well with my in-laws and Atanu," added Deepika. But

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— PTI

Ancient Olympics

Genesis of the biggest sporting event

The ancient Olympic Games were held in Olympia, Greece, every four years from 776 BC until they were banned by Roman Emperor Theodosius in 393 AD

How did the Games start?

The ancient Games were primarily part of a religious festival in honour of Zeus, the father of Greek gods and goddesses. The Games were staged in the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia. The athletes were all male citizens of the city-states from every corner of the Greek world, coming from as far as Iberia (Spain) in the west and Turkey in the east

What were the events in those early days?

Koroibos, a cook from Elis, won a foot race 600 feet long in the opening Games. This is believed to have been the only athletic event for the first 13 Olympics or until 724 BC. By the 5th century BC, the Games were spread over five days with more events— three foot races (stadion, diaulos and dolichos), pentathlon, pugme (boxing) and pale (wrestling)

Were ideals of amateurism upheld?

Not really. Material rewards were offered routinely to athletes. Several athletic events were established in the 8th, 7th and 6th centuries BC and winners were assured of great wealth. In fact athlete is an ancient Greek word which meant competing for a prize

Image & Information Source: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology

Olympic emblem © COJOP2024

KBK SportsGraphics

Were the Games fair and square?

The answer could well be no. In fact, politics, nationalism, commercialism and athletics were immediately related. Control of the Sanctuary and the Games brought with it prestige, economic advantages and political influence. Cities like Pisa and Elis fought regularly to keep control over the Olympic venue and thereby on the Games. There were instances when the Games themselves were attacked. An Olympic Truce was also instituted

Were the Games just for men?

Along with the Games at Olympia, separate festivals for women were also organised in the honour of Hera, the wife of Zeus. Unmarried girls competed in foot races and married women were not allowed to participate in the ancient Olympic Games

India's archery coach to quit over denial of accreditation

Paris, July 20: Livid at being denied accreditation for the Paris Games, India's Korean archery coach Baek Woong Ki on Saturday said he would not continue after his contract expires on August 30, and lashed out at the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for "poor and hasty administration".

Woong Ki, who reached Paris with the Indian team after overseeing its preparation in Marseille, said he "was removed from the Olympic coaching role at a critical time" and will now be flying back to India with his return ticket already booked. "I am a Korean coach who signed a contract to prepare (the Indian archers) for the Paris Olympics. But at a critical time, I was removed from the Olympic coaching role and my flight schedule told me to return home," the

● **KOREAN ARCHERY** coach Baek Woong Ki, who reached Paris with the Indian team after overseeing its preparation in Marseille, said he "was removed from the Olympic coaching role at a critical time"

renowned coach said. He has been staying in a Paris hotel and was awaiting his Games accreditation. "I have a contract until August 30 and I signed it for the purpose of the Olympics. I plan to arrive at Sonipat and calmly prepare for the formalities of entering Korea," he added, making it clear that he will not renew his contract.

Woong Ki, who guided archery heavyweights South Korea to two gold medals at the 2012 London Olympics, questioned the

logic behind investing on him if he is not to be accommodated with the Indian team. "I have been training them (Indian archers) for two years to win a medal at the Paris Olympics. However, foreign coaches were excluded due to the IOA's poor and hasty administration. Then I don't know why they invested money to appoint a Korean coach. More importantly, it's hitting a major notch just days before the Olympics. I can't stay near the Olympic practice or competition venues," said Woong Ki. The coach said his presence would have surely boosted India's prospects of winning a medal in archery in Paris and termed the Koreans as the strongest opponents. "I can't guarantee it. Korean archers are strong in competition." — PTI

DUTT CONFIDENT OF GOOD SHOW BY WRESTLERS

New Delhi, July 20: London Olympics Games bronze winner Yogeshwar Dutt is confident that wrestling will yet again fetch India a medal at the Olympic Games and the number could be more than one if the grapplers get a favourable draw.

India will have a six-member wrestling contingent in Paris where the mat competition will begin on August 5.

India have not missed a wrestling medal since 2008 Beijing Games where the legendary Sushil Kumar won a bronze. "A lot will depend on the draw. If India get a favourable draw, then I am expecting three medals. In the last four consecutive Olympics, we got medals from wrestling. So I hope, wish & pray the fifth time in a row, wrestling will bring medal for the nation," Yogeshwar Dutt said on Saturday. — PTI

