

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI MONDAY 22 JULY 2024



CITY | 2

Sanjay Singh accuses BJP, L-G Saxena of conspiring to kill Arvind Kejriwal in prison



WORLD | 6

K.P. Sharma Oli, new PM of Nepal, wins a vote of confidence in Parliament



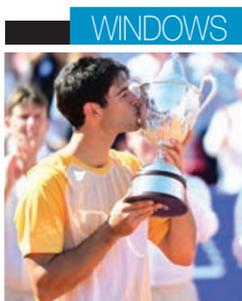
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I'm still living with the label of a cheater and casanova, says Ranbir

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

Vol. 31 No. 157 | 16 PAGES | ₹5.00



Portugal's Nuno Borges kisses the trophy after winning the singles final of the Nordea Open against Spain's Rafael Nadal in Bastad, Sweden, on Sunday. The Spaniard was beaten by 6-3, 6-2 in the final.

## SC to hear batch of pleas related to Neet-UG '24 today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a batch of petitions related to the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam, Neet-UG 2024, which was held on May 5. The National Testing Agency (NTA) had on Saturday released city and centre-wise results of the medical entrance exam, which is riddled with accusations of paper leak and inordinate inflation of marks. According to the cause list of July 22 uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench comprising Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra would hear more than 40 pleas. Full report on Page 2

## 14-yr-old infected with Nipah in Kerala dies

Kozhikode: The 14-year-old boy from Kerala's Malappuram, who was undergoing treatment here for Nipah infection, died on Sunday, state health minister Veena George said. The boy from Pandikkad suffered a massive cardiac arrest at 10.50 am on Sunday. Full report on Page 4

## T'gana CM in Delhi, may meet Kharge and Rahul

New Delhi: Telangana chief minister Revanth Reddy is in Delhi ahead of the Budget Session. He is expected to meet Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha to invite them for a farmer loan waiver event to be held in Warrangal. Full report on Page 3

## COUNTERPOINT



Our son's marriage will be the most expensive in India as we are preparing all dishes using tomatoes and onions!

## WEATHER

Max: 35°C  
Min: 29°C  
RH: 68%  
Rain: 40%

Forecast: Scattered Showers

## ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Ashada Bahula Padyami till 1.09 pm  
Star: Sravanam till 10.19 pm  
Varjyam: 1.58 am to 3.26 am  
Durmuhurtam: 12.48 pm to 1.40 pm; 3.23 pm to 4.14 pm  
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am  
SUNSET TODAY 7.18 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.38 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.03 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 6.12 AM

## 55 leaders at all-party meet TMC, RLD, Manjhi skip Cong seeks Dy Speaker post Let Parl function: Govt Opp, NDA allies raise Kanwar order, protest over Neet leak

VINEETA PANDEY NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Neet exam paper leaks, the UP government's orders on eateries during Kanwar Yatra, the appointment of Lok Sabha deputy Speaker and special status for Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha were some of the issues that figured prominently during the all-party meeting on Sunday called by the government ahead of the Budget Session that begins Monday. Conveying willingness to discuss all issues, parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijiju called for cooperation from all parties for running Parliament smoothly. The all-party meeting was attended by 55 leaders from 44 parties. The Trinamul Congress did not attend the meeting



Defence minister Rajinath Singh and Congress MP Jairam Ramesh leave after attending the all-party meeting in New Delhi on Sunday.

RLD chief Jayanth Chaudhary and HAM president Jiten Ram Manjhi — were also missing from the meeting. On the Kanwar Yatra order, not just the Opposition parties but also NDA allies like NCP-Ajit Pawar spoke against the UP government's order. From the government's side, defence minister

due to party functions in West Bengal. Interestingly, two of the NDA ally members —

## Shops in Ujjain told to display owners' names

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, JULY 21

The local civic body in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, has made it mandatory for the shop owners in the city to display their names and contact numbers outside their establishments. The owners who defy the order will be penalised.

According to Ujjain mayor Mukesh Tatwal, a penalty of ₹2,000 will be imposed on the violators for the first offence. It will be increased to ₹5,000 if the violators committed the offence a second time.

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## Eco Survey to be tabled in 2 Houses today, Budget Tues

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is set to present the Modi 3.0 government's first Budget on Tuesday, while the Economic Survey 2024 is expected to be tabled in Parliament on Monday at around 1 pm in the Lok Sabha and 2 pm in the Rajya Sabha. The Economic Survey is crucial as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the past year's economic trends and projections for the upcoming year as well.

The Economic Survey, typically presented a day before the Union Budget, mostly delivers a macroeconomic overview, including gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates, inflation statistics, the fiscal deficit, the current account deficit and sectoral performances, among others. This data-driven evaluation also helps stakeholders understand the economy's health, identify emerging challenges and formulate informed decisions.

As the Budget for fiscal 2024-25 is Ms Sitharaman's seventh in a row, there are a host of demands and expectations from it, ranging from higher allocations for various initiatives and schemes, including tax relief for the middle

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## India's heritage is not merely history but also science: PM

Opens Delhi session of World Heritage Committee meet

SHASHI BHUSHAN NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that heritage is a shared consciousness of humanity and called the world to come together to promote each other's heritage and amplify the spirit of human welfare. Speaking after inaugurating the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, Mr Modi also said that India's heritage is not merely history but also science.

Underscoring the significance of heritage, the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during the inauguration of the 46th Session of World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Sunday.

Prime Minister said, "Heritage is not only history. Rather, a shared consciousness of humani-

ty. Whenever we look at historical sites, it lifts our mind from the current geopolitical factors."

Mr Modi encouraged people to use this potential of heritage for the betterment of the world, using it to connect hearts. "It is India's clarion call to the world to come together to promote each other's heritage, amplify the spirit of human welfare, encourage tourism and create more job opportunities through the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting," he said.

Recalling a time when

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## Shah targets Sharad Pawar, calls him corruption 'leader'

Dubs Uddhav 'Aurangzeb fan club' head, Rahul arrogant

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, JULY 21

Still smarting from the BJP's heavy defeat in Maharashtra in the last Lok Sabha elections, Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday made a scathing attack on state's two main Opposition leaders — NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena (UBT) head Uddhav Thackeray — who played a prime role in the saffron party's debacle.

Addressing the BJP's

state convention in Pune, Mr Shah dubbed Mr Pawar as the leader of corruption in the country, while he labelled Mr Thackeray as the head of the "Aurangzeb fan club".

During his address, Mr Shah hit out at Mr Pawar, a former Union agriculture minister, by accusing the latter of "institutionalising corruption in the country". "If there is the biggest sargana of corruption in Indian politics, it is Mr Pawar. If there is anyone who has institutionalised corruption in

this country, it is Mr Pawar...but that is not going to work any more."

Calling Mr Thackeray the head of the Aurangzeb fan club, Mr Shah said, "Who is the head of Aurangzeb fan club? Those who serve biryani to (26/11 terror attack convict) Kasab, those who seek clemency for Yakub Memon (1993 Mumbai serial blasts convict), those who give (controversial Islamic preacher) Zakir Naik a messenger of peace award and those

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## Biden quits race, will back Kamala for Prez

Move after intense pressure from parties and allies Dems face chaos Prez will stay at WH till Jan

Washington, July 21: President Joe Biden dropped out of the 2024 race for the White House on Sunday, ending his bid for re-election following a disastrous debate with former President Donald Trump that raised doubts about his fitness for office just four months before the polls.



Joe Biden

Kamala Harris

The decision comes after escalating pressure from Mr Biden's Democratic allies to step aside following the June 27 debate, in which the 81-year-old President trailed off, often gave nonsensical answers and failed to call out the former President's many falsehoods. Mr Biden endorsed vice-president Kamala Harris to take on Mr Trump and encouraged his party to unite behind her.

With Mr Biden out of the race, Democrats now face chaos in picking his successor.

Mr Biden plans to serve out the remainder of his term in office, which ends at noon on January 20, 2025.

"It has been the greatest honour of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus

solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term," Mr Biden wrote in a letter posted on X.

Nearly 30 minutes later, Mr Biden threw his support behind Ms Harris, the party's instant favourite for the nomination, at its August convention in Chicago. "Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year," he said.

## Private bill to bar ex-judges from politics is listed in RS

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Private Members' Bills listed in Rajya Sabha for the upcoming Monsoon Session include one that seeks prohibition on holders of constitutional posts, like judges, joining a political party post-retirement, a few bills on artificial intelligence and deepfake, as well as one on amending the citizenship law.

In all, 23 Private Members' Bills have been listed for introduction in the upcoming session in the Upper House.

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2024 (amendment of Articles 124, 148, 319 and 324 and insertion of new articles 220A and 309A), listed by Rashtriya Janata Dal MP A.D. Singh, seeks to bar those retiring from constitutional posts, like judges and former Election Commissioners, from joining political parties post-retirement, a source said.

The bill comes against the backdrop of controversies such as one involving Calcutta HC judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay, who resigned from his judicial position on March 5, and within two days, joined the BJP.

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## Amid unrest, top Bangla court cuts jobs quota to 5%

Dhaka, July 21:

Bangladesh's top court on Sunday scaled back a controversial quota system for government job applicants, a partial victory for student protesters after days of nationwide unrest and deadly clashes between the police and demonstrators that have killed scores of people.

Students, frustrated by shortages of good jobs, have been demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971. The government previously halted it in 2018 following mass student protests, but in June,

Bangladesh's high court reinstated the quotas and set off a new round of protests.

The Supreme Court ordered that the veterans' quota be cut to five per cent, with 93 per cent of jobs to be allocated on merit. The remaining two per cent will be set aside for members of ethnic minorities and transgender and disabled people.

The protests have posed the most serious challenge to Bangladesh's government since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won a fourth consecutive term in January elections that were boycotted by the main Opposition groups.

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## Didi offers WB 'shelter' to Bangladeshis, sets off row

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JULY 21

Triggering a major controversy, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday offered to provide shelter in the state to Bangladeshi nationals fleeing from their homeland. Her offer led to a strong attack by the BJP immediately.

The TMC supremo told her party's annual Shaheed Divas rally: "I can't make any comment on Bangladesh because it

is a separate country. The Indian government will say whatever has to be said. But I can say at least if helpless people knock on the Bengal's doors, we will definitely give them shelter."

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who attended the rally, said the BJP-led government at the Centre was "not stable... It may fall any day". Ms Banerjee agreed: "It should have resigned... (but) has no shame".

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## New UK foreign secy on visit to India this week: FTA on agenda

London, July 21: The renewed parameters of the India-UK free trade agreement negotiations are set to be defined this week as UK foreign secretary David Lammy is expected in India on Tuesday, the first high-profile visit under the newly elected Labour government in Britain. The free trade agreement (FTA) talks began in January 2022, under the then Conservative government, with a target to significantly boost the GBP 38.1 billion a year bilateral trading partner-



David Lammy

ship but hit a block in the fourteenth round of negotiations to make way for general elections in both countries.

A report in the London Telegraph on Sunday quotes a New Delhi source to claim the Indian

side would seek clarity on whether the Labour government intends to pick things up from where they were left off or start afresh in some way.

"India is keen to resume talks on a positive note, but the date needs clarity," the source told the newspaper.

The trade deal was at the final stage in the previous government, and we want to see whether the Labour government wants to start from where we left it in March before the elections or start afresh from scratch.



Vehicles move on a waterlogged road after heavy rains at Dadar in Mumbai on Sunday. Report on Page 4

## Haryana suspends Internet, bulk SMS for 24 hrs in Nuh

New Delhi: In response to the "Braj Mandal Jalabhishek Yatra" called by Hindu groups for Monday, the Haryana government has beefed up security and ordered the suspension of all mobile Internet and bulk SMS services in Nuh district from 6 pm on Sunday until the same time on July 22. This directive comes ahead of the yatra, which was marred by violence last year. Two home guards were killed and at least 15 others were injured on July 31 last year.

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IN BRIEF

**Fake currency worth ₹2.9L seized, 2 held**

**New Delhi:** More than 580 fake Indian currency notes having a face value of ₹2.91 lakh have been seized and two people arrested, the police said on Sunday. The fake ₹500 notes were smuggled into Bihar from Nepal and were brought to Delhi, they said. Ram Pravesh and Ali Asgar, both residents of Bihar and aged 48, have been arrested, the officials said. They said the police had information about a gang that was involved in smuggling fake Indian currency notes (FICN) from Nepal, and distributing these in different parts of India, including Delhi-NCR. On a tip-off, Pravesh was arrested on July 6 night from the Anand Vihar Terminal area here and 578 FICNs of ₹500 denomination were seized from him, the officials said. He told the police that he got into smuggling and distributed FICNs to earn some money quickly as he was not making much as a small-time construction contractor in Delhi-NCR, Pravesh had met Asgar in Bihar's Muzaffarpur, the officials said and added that Asgar has revealed that a person named Asif is the kingpin of the FICM smuggling racket.

**2-year-old boy found dead in toilet**

**New Delhi:** The body of a two-year-old boy was found in an abandoned toilet near a slum area in central Delhi on Sunday, the police said. The victim's family staged protests near the Anand Parbat area and caused traffic disruptions on the New Rohtak Road on both carriageways. They demanded strict actions against the accused, the police said. According to the police, the body of the toddler was found in an abandoned toilet block around near his family's shanty. Upon receiving information, the police rushed to the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. A case of murder was registered, and multiple teams were formed to investigate the matter, officials said. "The manner of death will be clear only after a post-mortem report is received," deputy commissioner of police (central) M. Harsha Vardhan said.

**Murder accused held after 12 years**

**New Delhi:** A 51-year-old murder accused and narcotics smuggler, who was on the run for the last 12 years, has been arrested here, officials said on Sunday. Mohammad Umar was arrested on July 16 for allegedly killing his associate Taslim in Delhi's Sonia Vihar area in 2012 and disfiguring his face by pouring acid to hide his identity, they said. He was declared a proclaimed offender on July 18, 2013, by a court and a reward of ₹50,000 was announced for information leading to his arrest, the officials said. Besides the murder case, Umar is also named in seven other criminal cases.

**OVER 20K FINED SO FAR FOR FLOUTING TRAFFIC RULES**

**New Delhi:** The Delhi traffic police has booked nearly 20,000 people for permit violations till mid July which was 45 per cent more as compared to the corresponding period last year, officials said on Sunday. Kotwali and Daryaganj traffic circles were among the top ten in the list where such violations were maximum this year till July 15, they said. "The Delhi traffic police booked 20,009 violators for permit violations, a significant rise from 13,751 in 2023. This marks an increase of nearly 45 per cent in prosecutions compared to the previous year," the data showed. According to the police, this rise can be attributed to stricter enforcement measures, and a comprehensive strategy aimed at addressing non-compliance among commercial vehicle operators. Specialised teams have been deployed across the city to conduct regular checks at strategic locations, including major intersections, highways, and commercial hubs, they said. The police has conducted a comprehensive analysis of the ten traffic circles with the highest number of permit violation challans issued till July 15, the officials said.

**CM's sugar levels dropped 26 times in a month: Sanjay Singh BJP & L-G conspiring to kill Kejriwal in jail, claims AAP**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Citing the medical reports of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal that his sugar levels had fallen 26 times to around 50 between June 3 and July 7, the Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday accused the BJP of "conspiring to kill" him in jail. "The documents that the jail authorities have legally provided to Arvind Kejriwal's lawyer are enough to tell that any untoward incident can happen with him inside the jail", claimed AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh. Claiming that the BJP-led Central government and lieutenant-governor V.K. Saxena are playing with Mr Kejriwal's life, Mr Singh alleged: "The way the L-G and the entire BJP are repeatedly making false statements about CM's health by issuing false reports, the suspicion becomes stronger that the Delhi L-G and the BJP are playing with Kejriwal's life in collusion with the central government." "Earlier these people said that Mr Kejriwal is eating too much... Puri, sweets, etc and increasing



AAP MP Sanjay Singh arrives to attend the all-party meeting in New Delhi on Sunday.

his calories and sugar intake. He does not need insulin. He is asking for insulin; we will not give insulin. Then on court's order, AIIMS doctors conducted tests and insulin was administered to the CM. Now, they are saying that Mr Kejriwal is not eating at all, he is staying completely hungry and reducing his sugar," Mr Singh alleged. Hitting back, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said that Mr Singh has also started a drama of being concerned about the chief minister's health. "He, like other AAP leaders, is now saying that Kejriwal's weight has decreased, but perhaps Sanjay Singh forgot to mention that even he was getting facilities inside the jail and that Arvind Kejriwal is getting even better facilities", BJP chief said. Emphasising that a "deep conspiracy" has been hatched to "kill" Mr Kejriwal, the AAP leader asked, "Will any person make such effort to end his life himself? That is why I am reiterating that the BJP is playing with Kejriwal's life and hatching a deep conspiracy to kill him." AAP MP cited a report in which it was said that Mr Kejriwal is suffering from diabetes, weight loss, weak-

ness, hypoglycaemia. "This is the first report. After this, the L-G and BJP get a little restless. Then they create a false narrative but still some truth is written in it. A second report is issued in which it is said that Arvind Kejriwal is fine. And it is deliberately leaked to the media by L-G's office. But in this report also it is written that his weight is continuously decreasing, a panel of AIIMS doctors has examined him. It is written in it that he is suffering from hypoglycaemia," he said. The senior AAP leader said on Mr Kejriwal's request, a third report was given. Sharing date-wise blood sugar readings of the Delhi CM from June 3 to July 7 during his stay in the Tihar jail, Mr Singh said, that Mr Kejriwal's sugar levels were around 50 more than 26 times between June 3 and July 7. "If something untoward happens and even on the basis that he is lying, it can be a case of attempted murder. We are also taking advice from lawyers that a case of attempted murder should be registered against those involved in this conspiracy," he said.

**State-level boxer held for shooting at his uncle**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Delhi police has arrested a 30-year-old state-level boxer for allegedly shooting his uncle over a property dispute, officials said on Sunday. The accused, identified as Rajan, was arrested on Saturday. The police found that he was previously involved in four criminal cases of attempt to murder, abduction, and other heinous cases in Haryana, they said. "Rajan Phour had a property dispute with his uncle Azad, residing in the village Nangla Paar in Haryana's Panipat. Last month, Azad had hurled abuses and insulted Rajan's mother, following which Rajan vowed to take revenge," a senior police officer said. On June 23, when Azad was travelling in his car to his village, Rajan and his associates opened fire at him. One of the bullets pierced through the car and hit Azad in the waist, the police said. However, Azad continued driving and reached home, dodging Rajan, who was tailing him. Azad was taken to the hospital by his family, where he was treated for gunshot injuries, the police said. "Accordingly, a case was registered by the Haryana police for an attempt to murder, and a probe was initiated. While the Haryana police were looking for the accused, the crime branch of the Delhi police received a tip-off about Rajan's presence in the Rohini area. They laid a strategic trap, and Rajan was apprehended," the officer said. Further investigation into the matter is underway, he added.



A cyclist passes by a mural in New Delhi on Sunday made as part of the beautification work for the 46th session of Unesco's World Heritage Committee that will take place from July 21 to 31.

**'600 PUC centres in Delhi shut due to AAP govt's internal churn'**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav Sunday alleged that 600 PUC centres, which check vehicles for their emission levels, have closed due to the AAP government's "internal churn", and lakhs of vehicles are plying on the road without pollution clearance certificates. He said the BJP and the Aam Aadmi Party should emulate the governance model of the Sheila Dikshit-led Congress dispensation to eradicate air pollution



Devender Yadav

from the city, he said. "Due to the internal churn, the government's internal churn, 600 PUC (Pollution Under Control) centres have been closed - lakhs of vehicles ply on roads without getting pollution clearance certificates in the Capital," Mr Yadav said. Delhi petrol dealers' association (DPDA) has been demanding the government revise the rates for pollution under control (PUC) certificates in the national capital. It recently shut down nearly 600 PUC centres functioning at petrol pumps, saying the hike announced recently was not commensurate with operational costs. Mr Yadav said that during the Congress rule, no one had to worry about air pollution. The AAP government and the BJP are equally responsible for the dangerous level of air pollution in Delhi, he said.

**Delhi govt sanctions ₹100 crores to fund 12 DU colleges**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Delhi education minister Atishi has sanctioned the release of ₹100 crore for the financial year's second quarter to fund 12 Delhi University colleges. This amount represents the second instalment of the Delhi government's financial commitment to the colleges. According to a statement issued on Sunday, the Delhi government has allocated a budget of ₹400 crore for 12 colleges for the

fiscal year 2024-25. Ms Atishi gave her nod to release the second instalment for the 12 colleges funded by the Delhi government. The colleges are Acharya Narendra Dev College, Aditi Mahavidyalaya, Bhagini Nivedita College, Bhaskaracharya College, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Keshav Mahavidyalaya, Maharaja Agrasen



Atishi

Maharishi Valmiki College, Shaheed Rajguru College and Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies. In the statement, the Delhi government said

that since the Kejriwal administration took office, the budget for these institutions has "more than tripled, reflecting the government's commitment to education." "Education has always been the biggest priority for the Kejriwal government. Since coming to power, every year, the largest share of the budget is dedicated to education," Ms Atishi said. She added that the government has not only focused on school education but has also made significant strides in

higher education by establishing three new universities and expanding the existing ones. The Delhi University colleges that are fully funded by the AAP government play a crucial role in the city's higher education system, the statement said. "The increase in funding has been substantial. In 2014-15, the allocated budget for these colleges was ₹132 crores. This figure has now risen to nearly ₹400 crores in the current financial year," it said. Ms Atishi said issues of

financial mismanagement have plagued the 12 colleges in recent years, but she added that the Delhi government will ensure that teachers and students do not suffer due to administrative errors. "The government is committed to the welfare of teachers, ensuring they receive their salaries on time, as well as their medical and pension benefits. As a result, the Delhi government has released ₹100 crore for these colleges in the second quarter," the minister said.

**SC to hear pleas related to Neet paper leak today**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Supreme Court is slated to hear on Monday a clutch of pleas related to the controversy-ridden medical entrance exam, Neet-UG 2024, which was held on May 5. Following a directive from the apex court, the National Testing Agency (NTA) had on Saturday released city and centre-wise results of the medical entrance, which is riddled with accusations of paper leak and inordinately high marks. According to the cause list of July 22 uploaded on the SC's website, a bench comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra would hear over 40 petitions. These pleas

include those filed by the NTA seeking the transfer of cases pending against it in various high courts on the Neet-UG row to the apex court to avoid a multiplicity of litigations. An analysis of data released by the NTA indicated that the alleged beneficiaries from the paper leak and other irregularities did not perform well in the medical entrance. Some centres, however, showed a high concentration of well-performing students. The voluminous data of over 23.33 lakh candidates from

4,750 centres was not released in a cumulative format but in a drop-down menu for each centre. Of the 23.33 lakh candidates, 2,321 students got 700 or more marks out of 720 marks. These students were spread across 1,404 centres in the entire country and abroad. "Such a large spread shows that many candidates who were not from the traditional tuition hubs were also able to come in the toppers list in Neet 2024, according to the government sources. The performance of the candidates from the centres under scrutiny - such as Oasis School, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, Hardayal Public School, Hajjar, Haryana, Jay Jalaram International School in Godhra, Gujarat - were comparatively much below par.

**Ahead of Nuh's religious rally, Net suspended**

24-hour suspension on bulk SMSes

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, JULY 21

In response to the "Braj Mandal Jalabhishek Yatra" called by Hindu groups for Monday, the Haryana government has beefed up security and ordered the suspension of all mobile Internet and bulk SMS services in Nuh district from 6 pm on Sunday until the same time on July 22. This directive comes ahead of the yatra, which was marred by violence last year. Two home guards were killed and at least 15 others, including several policemen, were injured on July 31 last year when a mob in Nuh attempted to stop a Vishva Hindu Parishad procession, pelting stones and setting cars on fire. This year, around 2,500 personnel from the police and paramilitary forces have been deployed in the district ahead of the yatra, the police said. Nuh superintendent of police Vijay Pratap Singh stated that forces would be stationed along the procession route and that drones would be used for surveillance. Nuh deputy commissioner Dhirendra Khadgata told the media, "The situation is very peaceful and cordial ahead of the yatra, and both communities (Hindus and Muslims) are ready to welcome it." He noted that many welcome gates had been erected and food stalls set up for the

procession participants. "We also have 100 volunteers who will help the police with the coordination of the movement along the yatra route," he added. According to an order by Haryana additional chief secretary (home) Anurag Rastogi, Internet services in the district will remain suspended from 6 pm Sunday to 6 pm Monday. The order, based on feedback from the additional DGP-CID, Haryana, and a deputy commissioner, stated that the suspension was necessary to "stop the spread of misinformation and rumors" through social media platforms. "There is an apprehension of causing tension, annoyance, agitation, damage of public and private property, and disturbance of public peace and tranquility in the district," the order read. Nuh police spokesperson Krishna Kumar said a search operation is underway in the Aravalli mountains adjacent to the temples on the yatra route. The yatra will start from Nuh's Nalhar temple and end in Singar, passing through Jhir temple. The police are closely monitoring Nuh city, Nalhareshwar temple, Aravalli mountains, Badkali Chowk, Jhirkeshwar temple, Shringeshwar temple (Singar), and the concluding points of the yatra.



**HC to hear Umar's plea in 2020 riots case today**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Delhi high court will on Monday hear the bail petition of former JNU student Umar Khalid in a UAPA case related to the alleged larger conspiracy behind the riots in the city in February 2020. The petition, which assails a recent trial court order refusing to grant bail to Mr Khalid, is scheduled to be heard by a bench of Justices Prathiba M. Singh and Amit Sharma. Mr Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, and several others have been booked under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and provisions of the Indian Penal Code for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots, which had left 53 people dead and over 700 injured. The violence had erupted during the protests against CAA and NRC. Mr Khalid was arrested by the Delhi police in September 2020. On May 28, the trial court had rejected Mr Khalid's plea seeking regular bail for the second time, saying its previous order dismissing his first bail application had attained finality.

**India's heritage not merely history but also science: PM**

■ Continued from Page 1 heritage was ignored in the pursuit of development, the Prime Minister said, "India's vision is development as well as heritage - vikas bhi, virasat bhi." Elaborating on the pride in heritage pledge during the last 10 years, the Prime Minister mentioned unprecedented steps such as the Kashi Viswanath Corridor, Shri Ram Mandir and the modern campus of ancient Nalanda University. "This resolve of India regarding heritage is linked with the feeling of serving the entire humanity. Indian culture talks about us, not just about self," he said.

Noting that the world holds various centres of heritage, the PM threw light on India's ancient eras and said, "India is so ancient that every point of time in the present moment is a reflection of its glorious past." Referring to New Delhi, he said that it is the centre of thousands of years of heritage and one can find heritage and history at every step of the way. He gave the example of the 2000-year-old Iron Pillar, which has been rust-resistant and gives a glimpse of India's metallurgical prowess in the past. "India's heritage is not merely history but also

science," the PM said. Mr Modi noted that India's heritage is witness to the journey of top-notch engineering, as he mentioned the 8th-century Kedarnath temple situated at an altitude of 3,500 meters, which remains a challenging place for infrastructure development today due to incessant snowfall during the winter. He also touched upon the Brihadeeswara temple in the south of India, built by Raja Chola and its marvellous architectural layout and idol. The Prime Minister also mentioned Dholavira and Lothal in Gujarat. Dholavira, famed for its urban planning and water

management systems as ancient as 3,000 BC to 1,500 BC. Similarly, Lothal had amazing planning for the citadel, lower planning and an elaborate network of streets and drainage. The Prime Minister asserted, "India's history and sense of history are older and more elaborate than normal, leading to the need for new perspectives to witness the past with technological developments and new discoveries." Referring to the artefacts returned from abroad, the Prime Minister mentioned that more than 350 heritage items have been brought back in recent times. "This return of

ancient heritage artefacts is a display of global generosity and respect for history," he said, pointing out the growing research and tourism opportunities in the field as technology progresses. The World Heritage Committee meets annually and is responsible for managing all matters related to world heritage and deciding on sites to be inscribed on the World Heritage list. India is hosting the World Heritage Committee meeting for the first time. The Prime Minister also took a walk-through of the various exhibitions showcased on the occasion.



A woman cooks food for her family on Sunday near the banks of the Yamuna river after her house was demolished by the authorities during a drive to remove encroachments in New Delhi.

## SHORT TAKES

### Dhami to offer govt jobs to Agniveers

**Dehradun:** Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said on Sunday the Agniveers of the state who return after serving the country will be accommodated in various departments of the state and a provision for reservation will also be made in this regard. The chief minister said during a programme here that after the Agniveer scheme was brought, he had a meeting with Army officers, former officers, soldiers and others. On June 15, 2022, he had announced on 'X' that his government will accommodate the Agniveers in various departments of the state, including police, and will give them priority, he added. He said that a provision for reservation will also be made for Agniveers. Mr Dhami said that if required, a proposal to enact a law to accommodate Agniveers will also be brought in the Cabinet and placed in the Assembly. — PTI

### Pollution crisis result of policy failure: Cong

**New Delhi:** Accusing the Modi government of "poor policy-making" in dealing with air pollution, the Congress on Sunday demanded that the forthcoming Union Budget must provide a path forward to resourcing and equipping India's local bodies, state governments, and the Centre in tackling this "grave public health crisis". Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said earlier this month, a study revealed that 7.2 per cent of all deaths in India are associated with air pollution — about 34,000 deaths each year in just 10 cities. A new study has evaluated and brought to light the policy chaos that has resulted in this public health crisis, he said in a statement. — PTI

### Odisha budget session on July 25

**Bhubaneswar:** The first session of the 17th Odisha Legislative Assembly promises to be a challenging one for the newly-formed BJP government headed by chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi. CM Majhi, who among others holds the financial portfolio, will present his maiden budget on July 25 and all eyes are focused on this document to find if it has accommodated the saffron party's pre-poll promises. The major pre-poll promises of the BJP included rolling out Subhadra Yojana for women, enhancing paddy minimum support (MSP) to ₹3,100 per quintal and increasing social security pension slabs meant for old-age people, widows and differently-abled persons to Rs 3,000. According to financial experts, the new government needs at around ₹40,000 to ₹50,000 crore to meet its pre-poll promises.

### AICC DISSOLVES ODISHA PRADESH CONGRESS UNIT

**AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, JULY 21**  
The All India Congress Committee (AICC) on Sunday announced the dissolution of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC). In a letter, AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal informed, "The Congress president has approved the proposal of the complete dissolution of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee, including the PCC president and its executive committee." The AICC has also dissolved district mandal Congress committees, frontal organisations, departments and cells with immediate effect. The current district Congress presidents will serve as acting presidents until new district presidents are appointed. In another development, the AICC also appointed three-time MLA Rama Chandra Kadam as the leader of the Congress legislature party (CLP) in Odisha. Earlier, it was speculated that five-time MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati might be appointed as CLP leader. Ashok Das has been appointed deputy leader of CLP, and CS Raazen Ekka appointed Congress chief whip. Now all eyes are on the successor of Sarat Pattanayak as OPCC chief.

## AI bill to protect rights of employees to be tabled in Upper House

# Bills barring ex-judges from politics, deepfake ban in RS

**AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JULY 21**

Twenty three private members' bills have been listed for introduction in the upcoming Rajya Sabha session, including the one seeking prohibition on holders of constitutional posts — like judges — joining a political party post retirement and a few bills on artificial intelligence and deepfake as well as one on amending the citizenship law. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (amendment of articles 124, 148, 319 and 324 and insertion of new articles 220A and 309A), listed by RJD MP A.D. Singh, seeks to bar those retiring from constitutional posts, like judges and former election commissioners, from



NCP MP Praful Patel, Congress MPs Gaurav Gogoi and Kodikunil Suresh and others arrive to attend the all-party meeting ahead of the Budget Session in New Delhi on Sunday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

joining political parties post retirement, a source said. The bill comes against the backdrop of recent controversies, such as one involving Calcutta high court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay, who

resigned from his judicial post on March 5 and within two days joined the BJP. In July, former Madhya Pradesh HC judge Rohit Arya joined the BJP, three months after his retirement. Another bill listed by Mr

Singh seeks amendment in the The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita to include marital rape as a crime. CPI(M) MP V. Sivadasan has listed two bills — one seeking universal basic income and another enactment of right to old age care.

TMC MP Mausam Noor has also listed two bills — one on protecting rights of employees from artificial intelligence (AI) and another seeking criminalisation of "deepfake". Deepfake involves morphing someone's face or other features of their body digitally to make it appear like someone else, typically for malicious purposes.

CPI's P. Sandosh Kumar has listed a bill to create an artificial intelligence technology regulatory authority.

# Days after UP fiat, Ujjain shops told to display ID

₹2K fine for 1st-time offence, ₹5K for 2nd time

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JULY 21**

The local civic body in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, has made it mandatory for the shop owners in the city to display their names and contact numbers outside their establishments.

The shop owners who defy the order will be penalised, the order issued by Ujjain Municipal Corporation said.

According to Ujjain mayor Mukesh Tatwal, a penalty of ₹2,000 will be imposed on the violators for the first offence. It will be increased to ₹5,000 if the violators committed the offence a second time.

"The move is aimed at ensuring safety and transparency. It is not targeted against Muslim shopkeep-

**UJJAIN, THE** hometown of Madhya Pradesh chief minister Mohan Yadav, is home to the famous Mahakaleshwar temple, where one of the 12 Jyotirlingas is worshipped

ers", he added. According to him, the order was passed by the corporation in September 2002 and subsequently sent to the state government for completing certain formalities.

Although all the formalities have been completed, the implementation of the order was delayed due to the decision by the corporation to relax some norms in it.

In the revised order, the norm seeking to display uniform nameplates in size and colour by the shopkeepers was dropped

and the owners of the establishments have been asked to show their name and mobile number outside their shops.

Mr Tatwal said the order was issued on the basis of MP Shop Establishment Act or "Gumasta License", enacted with an objective to serve the interest of customers.

A customer can always approach the shopkeeper if he or she is not satisfied with the item, he added.

Ujjain, the hometown of Madhya Pradesh chief minister Mohan Yadav, is home to the famous Mahakaleshwar temple, where one of the 12 Jyotirlingas is worshipped.

The move comes close on the heels of a similar order issued by Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments in their respective states.

# NDA govt at Centre won't last long: Akhilesh in WB

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JULY 21**

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav predicted on Sunday that the BJP rule at the Centre would not last long.

He was speaking at Shahid Diwas rally, a signature event of the Trinamul Congress to commemorate the killings of 13 Youth Congress workers in police firing in 1993 during the CPI(M) rule when chief minister Mamata Banerjee was in the Congress.

Mr Yadav was invited by the TMC supremo to attend her party's mega gathering at Dharmatala in the city. Landing here in the afternoon, he met Ms Banerjee at her residence in Kalighat first.

Sharing the dais at the TMC rally with Ms Banerjee and her MP nephew Abhishek Banerjee later, Mr Yadav said, "The Central govern-

ment which doesn't care for people will not last long. It will fall shortly. We will get to see its fall very soon. Those will be happy days."

Training guns on the BJP, he alleged, "They believe in negative politics, division and communalism, whereas, we believe in positive politics. The time has come for a change. All of us have to be united to save the Constitution and the country."

The former Uttar Pradesh CM claimed, "There are divisive forces in power who want to divide the country by hatching conspiracies but

they won't succeed. They will be defeated shortly. Bengal defeated the divisive forces. We saw how Didi fought them by traveling with plaster on her injured leg."

Taking a dig at the BJP's situation in his home state, Mr Yadav pointed out, "UP has also joined this fight. As far as UP is concerned, these are the people who spread hatred. They will not succeed with this. What can be expected from those who have just lost power? The people of UP will reduce them to nothing."

Earlier in the day, Mr Yadav met Ms Banerjee at her residence in Kalighat in the southern part of Kolkata.

According to TMC sources, both leaders discussed the current political situation in the country. During the rally, Ms Banerjee thanked Mr Yadav for attending the event.

# Unite and make Maha premier destination for industry: Pawar

**Pune, July 21:** NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar appealed to the people to unite and make Maharashtra a "premier destination" for trade and industry. Speaking at a party rally in neighbouring Pimpri-Chinchwad on Saturday, he recalled how this area on the outskirts of Pune city emerged as an industrial hub due to the initiative taken by late Y.B. Chavan, the first CM of Maharashtra.

Assembly elections are due in Maharashtra in October this year. Pimpri-Chinchwad grew as an automobile hub and then Hinjewadi, Chakan and other areas in the Pune district emerged as IT centres, Mr Pawar noted.

"The development should not stop. We have to come together to make the state a premier destination for trade and industry," he said. — PTI

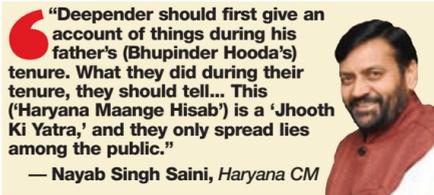
# 'Jhooth ki yatra': Saini slams Cong campaign in Haryana

**BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, JULY 21**

Dubbing Congress' ongoing "Haryana Maange Hisab" campaign as "Jhooth Ki Yatra," chief minister Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday alleged the Opposition party spreads lies and should give an account of its ten-year rule (2005-2014) marked by corruption and nepotism.

Speaking to the media in Sirsa, Mr Saini addressed the arrest of Congress MLA Surrender Panwar in an illegal mining case by the ED on Saturday. He stated the ED is an independent agency doing its job and takes action against wrongdoings.

When questioned about the Congress' attacks on the BJP through its "Haryana Maange Hisab" campaign led by Deepender Singh Hooda, Mr Saini responded,



"Deepender should first give an account of things during his father's (Bhupinder Hooda's) tenure. What they did during their tenure, they should tell... This ('Haryana Maange Hisab') is a 'Jhooth Ki Yatra,' and they only spread lies among the public."  
— Nayab Singh Saini, Haryana CM

have not forgotten the situation during that period, alleging that the system had crumbled. Farmers faced difficulties selling their produce, and the elderly struggled to receive old-age pensions, he said.

He contrasted this with BJP's ten-year rule, and claimed, "We ensured equitable development." The Congress launched the "Haryana Maange Hisab" campaign July 15, targeting the ruling BJP on issues including unemployment, law and order, and farmers' concerns.

Mr Saini asserted that the Congress should address their 10-year rule, alleging that jobs were sold, and power supply was limited to two-three hours during hot weather. He claimed that people

## Ruling party forms panels to interact with voters at poll booths

# JMM to consult cadre before picking names for Assembly polls in J'khand

**AMRESH SRIVASTAVA NEW DELHI, JULY 21**

Considering a tough challenge from the BJP, the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) is to seek its cadre's opinion before finalising candidates for the upcoming Assembly election in the tribal state.

The party cadre has been asked to suggest names of the suitable candidates including the sitting MLAs, keeping the winnability factor into consideration.

The BJP has been trying to regain its position again in the state, where it lost in 2019, while the JMM has put all efforts to retain power in the state. After the creation of Jharkhand in 2000, no political party has been able to retain power in two consecutive terms so far.

The Assembly election for 81 seats is likely to be held in November-December this year. The party insider said that this time, the JMM is

# BJP plans to reach out to tribals with 'land jihad'

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21**

Rejected by the tribals in Jharkhand in the past Lok Sabha polls, the BJP is reaching out to them, seeking "their issues" for its manifesto.

With the JMM posing a major challenge for the tribal votebank in the poll-bound state, the BJP hopes to wrest power from the JMM-led alliance through its main poll planks of Hindutva, "land jihad" and local issues. As part of its election strategy, the saffron party is likely to release at least 30-40 names of its

candidates soon. Sources said most of these candidates will be for the tribal seats and could include names of senior leaders, including former Union minister Arjun Munda, state unit chief Babul Marandi, national commission for scheduled tribes member Asha Lakra, and Arun Oraon.

The party is aggressively campaigning and highlighting how the JMM-led government has failed to check infiltration, which has resulted in infiltrators usurping resources and jobs meant for locals, mainly tribals.

very particular about picking up the right candidate, and winnability will be its primary criteria. The party is also to take

feedback from its cadres to suggest the names of the right candidates for such seats where it lost to BJP in last election and may

# T'gana CM holds meet, asks MPs to raise state issues in Parl

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21**

Telangana chief minister Revanth Reddy arrived in Delhi ahead of the Budget Session. He is expected to meet Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi to invite them to a farmer loan waiver event to be held in Warrangal.

The Telangana government initiated the first phase of the loan waiver scheme on July 18, with ₹6,098 crore credited to



Revanth Reddy

farmers' bank accounts. This phase covers loans of up to ₹1 lakh. The scheme will be rolled out in three phases, with the second phase targeting loans of up to ₹1.5 lakh by July-end and the final

phase covering loans of up to ₹2 lakh in August.

Mr Reddy also met the party's MPs from the state to discuss Telangana-related matters to be raised in Parliament.

The CM held review meetings related to repairs, inspections, and commission inquiries of the Medigadda Barrage. The review meeting was held at the chief minister's official residence in Delhi, with the state's irrigation minister Uttam Kumar Reddy, state irrigation department secretary

Rahul Bojja, and state irrigation department adviser Adityanath Das.

According to sources, The CM gave several suggestions regarding the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) meeting scheduled to be held in Delhi on Monday, where officials and engineers are set to participate.

Uttam Kumar Reddy held a meeting with officials regarding issues related to the Medigadda, Annaram, and Sundilla barrages which are part of the Kaleshwaram Project.

# Greetings pour in as Cong president Kharge turns 82

Modi, Rajnath, Rahul wish him on his birthday

**New Delhi, July 21:** Several Congress leaders greeted and hailed party chief Mallikarjun Kharge as he turned 82 on Sunday, with the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying that his tireless service and dedication to the people's cause is an inspiration.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also greeted Mr Kharge on his birthday and wished for his long and healthy life. "Birthday wishes to Congress president and the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge Ji. Praying for his long and healthy life," Mr Modi posted on X.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, defence minister Rajnath Singh, Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin, NCP leader Supriya Sule and a host of Congress leaders hailed Mr Kharge while greeting him on his birthday. Himachal Pradesh CM



Mallikarjun Kharge

Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Telangana CM A. Revanth Reddy, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah and deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar also wished Mr Kharge.

Mr Kharge, who became Congress president in October 2022, thanked several leaders who wished him on social media. "A very happy birthday, @kharge ji! Your tireless service and dedication to the people's cause is an inspiration," Mr Gandhi said on X. "Wishing you much love and good health," the former Congress chief added.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also wished Kharge on his birthday.

"His commitment to the Constitution of the country, democracy and principles of social justice is unwavering," Ms Vadra said in a Hindi post on X. "Keeping the ideology of our party intact, he gave fearless leadership in the 2024 elections, and gave courage to every worker to fight in all circumstances," she said.

"I myself saw him holding meeting after meeting in the scorching sun. Ignoring his health, keeping aside personal problems, he did not stop. His tireless hard work is a source of inspiration for all of us," Ms Vadra added. "May God give him a long life, may he be healthy, and may his leadership remain strong," she said.

Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal said, "Your visionary leadership, vast experience and astute guidance has been invaluable for our party. May you have a wonderful year ahead." — PTI

SHORT TAKES

3 dead in landslide on Kedarnath route

**Rudraprayag:** Three devotees died and eight others got injured in a landslide on the Kedarnath Dham trekking route in Uttarakhand's Rudraprayag district on Sunday, officials said. Rudraprayag district disaster management officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said the accident happened at around 7:30 am near Chirbasa area on the Gaurikund-Kedarnath trekking route when the devotees were hit heavy stones and debris falling down from the hill. The SDRF and disaster management teams reached the spot and started a search and rescue operation, he said. Those killed have been identified as Kishore Arun Parate (31), from Maharashtra's Nagpur, Sunil Mahadev Kale (24), a resident of Maharashtra's Jalna district and Anurag Bisht from Rudra-prayag, Rajwar said. As per SDRF sources, so far the bodies of 3 have been recovered from the debris, while 8 others were rescued and immediately rushed to hospital. — PTI

5 killed, 7 injured in 2 J&K road mishaps

**Jammu:** Five, including a father-son duo and a mother-daughter duo, were killed and seven injured in two separate road accidents in J&K's Rajouri and Reasi districts on Sunday, officials said. A taxi carrying eight people and proceeding towards Lam from Thandikassi fell off a hilly road near Chalan village, they said. The driver of the vehicle, Arun Kumar (32), a resident of Lam, was found dead by the rescuers at the spot, while Mohammad Din (65) and his son Mohammad Aslam (40) succumbed to their injuries at the Nowshera Sub-District Hospital and Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH) in Rajouri respectively. Aslam's wife Shahida (40), sons Atif (10) and Raza (5), daughter Asiya (7) and sister Zareena (36) are undergoing treatment at the GMCH and their condition is "serious", the officials said. — PTI

11 killed due to rain incidents across UP

**Lucknow:** Eleven were killed in rain-related incidents across UP in a 24-hour period ending Saturday evening, relief department officials said. As per relief department, from 6:30 pm on Friday to 6:30 pm on Saturday, five drowned and five others were killed after being hit by lightning. One person in Ghazipur district was killed after snake bite. Uttar Pradesh recorded an average of 7.3 mm rainfall in the 24-hour period. Of the 75 districts, 19 recorded excess rainfall, with Hamirpur recording a maximum rainfall of 163.2 mm. The department has also alerted local administration in Gorakhpur, Siddharth Nagar and Gonda districts where rivers have been flowing near the danger level mark. "We are coordinating with local administration to mitigate any kind of damage," state relief commissioner G.S. Naveen Kumar said. — PTI

Eco Survey will be tabled today

**Continued from Page 1**  
class and salaried people, significant allocations for education, health, R&D and a higher capex to push growth across the country. Besides, the Centre is also expected to follow the fiscal glide path of cutting the fiscal deficit to 4.5 per cent by FY26 in line with the government's roadmap on economic growth.  
The Economic Survey is prepared by the chief economic advisor (CEA) to the government. The CEA, along with a team of experts, compiles and analyses economic data from various sources, including government reports, surveys and international agencies. After presenting the economic review in both Houses of Parliament on Monday, the finance minister will also present her seventh Budget on Tuesday, the third-highest after Former Prime Minister Morarji Desai and Congress leader P. Chidambaram.  
Morarji Desai holds the record for presenting the most Union Budgets with a total of 10 Budgets during his tenure as finance minister under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and later under Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, while Mr Chidambaram presented the Budget on nine occasions.  
Ms Sitharaman, who will turn 65 next month, was appointed as India's first full-time woman Union finance minister in 2019 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi won a decisive second term. Since then, she has presented six straight budgets, including an interim one in February this year. The full Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal (April 2024-March 2025) will be her seventh straight Union Budget, bettering Morarji Desai's record of five consecutive full budgets and one interim budget between 1959 and 1964.

State have no locus standi: Centre ■ BJP hits out at WB CM 'To offer shelter to those fleeing unrest': Didi on Bangla situation

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JULY 21**

Triggering a major controversy, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday offered to provide shelter to the Bangladeshi nationals, running away from their homeland amid unrest, in the state. Her offer earned her a strong attack from the BJP immediately. "I should not be speaking on the affairs of Bangladesh since that is a sovereign nation and what ever needs to be said on the issue is a subject matter of the Centre. But I can tell you this, if helpless people come knocking on the doors of Bengal, we will surely provide them shelter," Ms Banerjee said at the "Martyrs Day" rally of the TMC in Kolkata.



**I should not be speaking on the affairs of Bangladesh since that is a sovereign nation... But I can tell you this, if helpless people come knocking on the doors of Bengal, we will surely provide them shelter**  
— Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal chief minister

"That's because there is a United Nations Resolution to accommodate refugees in regions adjacent to those under turmoil," the Bengal CM added while drawing an example from Assamese people who were allowed to live in Alipurdwars area of north Bengal for a considerable period during the Boros strife in the north-eastern state.  
The Centre reacted to Ms Banerjee's statement, saying the states have no locus

standi on such matters. "These are matters which are handled by the Union government. A state government has no locus standi on the issue and as such their comments are totally misplaced," said sources in the government.  
Lashing out at the CM, BJP IT cell chief Amit Malviya posted on X-handle, "Mamata Banerjee on Odd days - We will not allow Hindu refugees, who came to India to escape religious persecution, to apply for citizenship under CAA and get their legitimate rights. If they insist, we will ask illegal Rohingyas, who vote for the TMC, to burn trains, block roads and kill people. Even days — Bangladeshis are welcome to India."  
He wondered, "Who gave Mamata Banerjee the authority to welcome anyone in India? The states have no locus standi. This is part of INDIA bloc's evil plan to settle illegal Bangladeshis to Jharkhand so that they can win elections."  
Earlier, the CM, while addressing her party's signature event, doubted the BJP's chance of survival in power at the Centre before coming down heavily on the NDA partners.



A bus moves on a waterlogged road after heavy rains at Parel in Mumbai on Sunday. — PTI

36 flights cancelled ■ Be on high alert: CM Waterlogging in many areas as heavy rains lash Mumbai

**Mumbai, July 21:** Heavy rains pounded Mumbai and its suburbs on Sunday, disrupting flight operations and inundating roads in many parts of the city, officials said.  
As many 36 flights were cancelled at the Mumbai airport, which also forced the facility operator to suspend runway operations twice within almost one hour, albeit for a brief period, sources said.  
At least 15 flights were diverted to the nearby airports, mainly Ahmedabad, till 4 pm.  
As intermittent heavy spells of rain hit the city, runway operations were suspended at 12.12 pm for eight minutes and from 1 pm to 1.15 pm, the source said. Flights of IndiGo, Air India, Vistara and Akasa were diverted, it was stated.

As per Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, the city received 82 mm of rain, the eastern suburbs 96 mm, and the western suburbs got 90 mm till 4 pm.  
Suburban train services were operating normally on both the Western and Central Railway routes. However, trains were delayed by 15 to 20 minutes on the Harbour Line due to waterlogging near Mankhurd, Panvel and Kurla stations.  
A few buses were diverted because of flooding in many parts of the city.  
A traffic police official said Andheri Subway in DN Nagar was closed, and the southbound traffic was diverted via Gokhale Bridge and northbound traffic via Thackeray Bridge.

Similarly, the Khar subway was closed. The traffic was diverted via Linking Road, and the Maharashtra Nagar subway in Trombay was shut due to flooding in the area, he said.  
Several vehicles were stranded on inundated roads in Wadala and Matunga in central Mumbai, the official said.  
Meanwhile, chief minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday asked officials to be on high alert in light of heavy rains in several parts of Maharashtra.  
The State Disaster Response Force, the local administration, civic bodies, police, etc, should take regular updates on the weather from the IMD and plan accordingly to provide relief to citizens, he said. — PTI

Nipah case in Kerala; Centre issues advisory, to send team 'Implement strict quarantine, isolation for suspects'

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21**

A case of Nipah virus has been detected in Mallapuram district of Kerala. The Centre has advised to implement immediate public health measures to contain the disease and a joint outbreak response team will also assist the state.  
"A 14-year-old boy from the district exhibited acute encephalitis syndrome and was admitted to a healthcare facility in Perinthalmanna before being transferred to a higher health centre in Kozhikode."  
"He succumbed to the disease and samples were sent to the Pune-based National Institute of Virology, which confirmed Nipah virus infection."

**A 14-YEAR-OLD boy from the district exhibited acute encephalitis syndrome and was admitted to a healthcare facility in Perinthalmanna before being transferred to a higher health centre in Kozhikode**  
The Union health ministry said on Sunday. Kerala has also been advised to start tracing people who have come in contact with the patient in the last 12 days and implement strict quarantine for them, and isolation for suspects.  
Fruit bats are the usual reservoir of the virus, and humans can become infected by accidentally consuming bat-contaminated fruits.  
Outbreaks of the Nipah

virus disease (NiVD) have been reported in Kerala in the past, with the last occurring in 2023 in Kozhikode district, the ministry said.  
The ministry has advised the state to immediately implement public health measures such as an active case search in the boy's family and his neighbourhood and in areas with similar topography to the place where the case was detected.  
The multi-member joint outbreak response team from the "One Health" mission of the health ministry will be deployed to support the state in investigating the case, identifying epidemiological linkages, and providing technical assistance, the health ministry statement said.

SC to hear today PIL over poll bond probe

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 21**

The Supreme Court is slated to hear on Monday public interest litigations (PIL) seeking a court-monitored investigation into the electoral bonds scheme.  
A bench, comprising Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud and Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, is likely to hear the PILs filed by NGOs — Common Cause and the Centre for Public Interest Litigation.  
The PILs have alleged an "apparent quid pro quo" between political parties, corporations and Central investigative agencies.  
Dubbing the electoral bonds scheme a "scam", the pleas sought a direction to authorities to investigate the source of funding of "shell compa-

nies and loss-making companies that made donations to various political parties, as has been disclosed by the data released by the Election Commission".  
The plea has also sought a direction to the authorities to recover the money donated by companies as part of "quid pro quo arrangements where these are found to be the proceeds of crime".  
On February 15, a five-judge Constitution bench had scrapped the electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding introduced by the BJP government.  
The SC had also directed the State Bank of India (SBI), the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to share the data with the EC, which the latter made public.

2 MP women half-buried for stir over construction

**AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, JULY 21**

Two women in a Madhya Pradesh village were partially buried under moomur, a reddish soil, for protesting road construction on a "disputed land", the police said on Sunday.  
As the Opposition Congress targeted the BJP-ruled state government, raising questions over the law and order situation in MP after the incident, CM Mohan Yadav said women's safety has been a top priority of his government.  
The police took swift action and arrested one of the three accused, the CM said.  
The incident, which police called the fallout of a family dispute, took place in the village of Hinota Jorot in Rewa district.  
A video showing the two women almost buried to their torsos under a heap of moomur surfaced on social media, prompting the police to act.  
According to the police, the two women were protesting the construction of a road on a "disputed land" when some assailants emptied the moomur-laden truck on them, burying them partially under a heap of reddish soil.  
The two women claimed that the land belonged to them.  
Later, their family members rushed to the spot and took them out by digging out the soil around them. One of the two women fell unconscious, the police said.

DG BSF reviews readiness of troops at Jammu border

**Jammu, July 21:** BSF director-general Nitin Agrawal on Sunday reviewed the operational readiness of the troops deployed along the International Border in Jammu sector, an official of the force said.  
Mr Agrawal arrived here on a two-day visit on Saturday to assess the security situation along the International Border and attended a joint security review meeting along with special director-general BSF, Western Command, Y.B. Khurana and inspector general, BSF, Jammu frontier, D.K. Boora.

The joint security review meeting at the police headquarters, chaired by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi and attended by heads of other paramilitary forces and intelligence agencies, was convened to review the security situation in the wake of recent spike in terror activities and cross-border infiltration.  
The BSF chief also called on Jammu and Kashmir lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha, who held a separate meeting with senior officers on counter-terrorism operations. — PTI

'PM to attend 25th anniv of Kargil Vijay Diwas on July 26 in Ladakh'

**Leh/Jammu, July 21:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be in Ladakh on July 26 to attend the 25th anniversary of the Kargil Vijay Diwas, an official said on Sunday, as lieutenant-governor Brig. B.D. Mishra (Retd) reviewed arrangements for the visit.  
The grand celebrations to mark the "Rajat Jyanti" of India's victory over Pakistan in the 1999 war are scheduled to be conducted at Drass in Kargil district

from July 24 to 26. Brig. Mishra held a meeting at the L-G's secretariat to discuss the arrangements for the PM's visit to the Kargil War Memorial at Drass, an official spokesman said.  
The Lt Governor informed the meeting that Mr Modi would be visiting the memorial on July 26 and attend the 25th anniversary of the Kargil Vijay Diwas. The meeting discussed security and reception at the Drass helipad and other arrangements. — PTI

Opp. and NDA allies raise Kanwar order, protest over Neet paper leak

**Continued from Page 1**  
Rajnath Singh, Mr Rijiju, Union health minister and BJP president J.P. Nadda, law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and MoS parliamentary affairs L. Murugan attended the meeting.  
Chairing the meeting, Mr Rajnath Singh mentioned the Opposition's protests at the time of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech during the last session and said such incidents should not happen in Parliament.  
Mr Rijiju sought cooperation from all parties for the smooth running of the two Houses and the passing of bills, to which Congress' Gaurav Gogoi said the Opposition should also be allowed to raise issues in Parliament.  
"As we prepare for the Budget Session, it's clear that running Parliament smoothly is a collective responsibility. Our combined efforts and dedication will ensure that we address the nation's needs effectively. Looking forward to a constructive session and meaningful discussions!" said Mr Rijiju. He further stated that the government is always ready to discuss on the floor of the House any issue as permitted under the rules of

procedure and conduct of business by the respective presiding officers.  
The Congress, represented by Jairam Ramesh, Mr Gogi, Pramod Tiwari and K. Suresh, sought the Lok Sabha deputy Speaker's post for the Opposition. Mr Ramesh later said that at the meeting, there was a common demand to reopen the Central Hall for the MPs.  
The UP government's controversial directive to easteries on the "kanwariya" route to display the owners' names figured prominently in the discussion.  
"These steps have been taken for the first time in view of the Kanwar Yatra. It needs amendment. The UP government needs to take it back," said NCP MP Praful Patel after attending the all-party meeting.  
AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi, Samajwadi Party's Ram Gopal Yadav and AAP's Sanjay Singh also opposed the move, along with other Opposition members.  
Though the RLD chief did not attend the meeting, he made it clear from outside that his party was against the BJP-led UP government's "discriminatory order".  
"It doesn't appear to be a well-thought-out and well-

reasoned decision. Any decision shouldn't cause harm to the sense of well-being of the community and harmony in the community. All those who go on the Kanwar Yatra and the people who serve them are the same. This tradition has been there right from the beginning and Kanwar yatra don't check people's religion before accepting service. This thing of identifying people and pointing them out... I couldn't get that..." said Mr Chaudhary at an event in UP.  
"We said that if any government passes an order against the Constitution, then the government of India should take note of it. Issuing such an order is a violation of Article 17. They are promoting untouchability. It is against the right to life, you are against livelihood... This is just a sign of hatred. There is open discrimination against Muslims," said Mr Owaisi.  
"The order regarding nameplates on shops (on Kanwar Yatra routes) is an attempt to close the business of dalits, backward tribals and others. These (BJP) are the people who believe in discrimination..." said Mr Singh.  
The AAP MP added that the Opposition also raised

the issue of misuse of agencies like CBI and ED by the Union government. "In the all-party meeting, many issues were raised, especially the misuse of investigation agencies against Opposition leaders, the biggest victim of which is the AAP. I also raised the issue of Delhi and Punjab and the expectation from the budget..." Mr Singh added.  
The Opposition leaders also raised the issue of Neet paper leaks and Manipur violence and made it clear that these topics will continue to dominate the coming session, which will see 16 sittings spread over 22 days.  
The JD(U) sought special status for Bihar, while the YSR Congress camp sought special status for Andhra Pradesh. YSRCP MP Vijaysai Reddy raised the issue of funds for Andhra from the Central pool.  
In a post on X, Mr Ramesh wrote, "In today's all-party meeting of floor leaders chaired by defence minister Rajnath Singh, the JD(U) leader demanded special category status for Bihar. The YSRCP leader demanded special category status for Andhra Pradesh. Strangely, the TDP leader kept quiet on the matter."

Shah targets Sharad, Uddhav

**Continued from Page 1**  
who support the (banned Islamist outfit) PFI. Mr Thackeray should be ashamed of sitting with these people."  
Mr Shah also slammed Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi saying that the latter's arrogance will be crushed after the Congress' defeat in the ensuing Assembly polls. "Mr Gandhi's arrogance will be crushed after we win the forthcoming Assembly polls in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana," he added. "If we combine the seats won by the Congress in the past three Lok Sabha elections, even then we cannot breach the 240-seat mark. In this general election, the people of India have given Prime Minister Narendra Modi their stamp of approval. The BJP has stood victorious for the third

time," Shah said.  
This was Mr Shah's first visit to Maharashtra after the BJP suffered a severe setback in the Lok Sabha elections, where the party's tally plummeted to nine from the 23 seats it had won in 2019. The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — comprising the Shiv Sena (UBT), the NCP (SP) and the Congress — won 30 out of 48 seats in the state.  
Meanwhile, the NCP (SP) has hit back at Mr Shah, saying the BJP has legitimised corruption by incorporating tainted leaders into the saffron party. "They accuse political leaders of corruption and then once those they accuse join the BJP, they are all given a clean chit. This is the BJP's washing machine process of legitimising corruption," party spokesperson Clyde Crasto said.

## THE ASIAN AGE

22 JULY 2024

### World gets a terrible taste of 'Cybergeddon'

The world, or at least those parts of it driven by the Windows operating system in computers, had a taste of 'Cybergeddon' on Friday and it was not nice. In fact, it was chaotic with patients in critical care in hospitals deprived of machine support to mitigate their condition while millions of flyers had their day disrupted as airports suffered the worst of the chaos.

Bankers could not service their clients in time even as stock markets suffered from the global outage bringing an overdose of scary moments to investors, traders and admin. It reflects the hyperconnected world we live in where an outage caused by a simple string of code in a cybersecurity program could have such dire consequences as to bring the world to its knees, for one day at least.

If the good guys protecting computer systems could wreak such havoc with a faulty program, just imagine what mischief makers, cyber hackers and the downright criminally minded can do. Worse, imagine what lessons artificial intelligence malevolently employed may hold out if ever we trust the machines to run all our lives.

Who pays for all the damage and the disruptions caused is a good question. Obviously not the Bill Gates legacy company running Windows for the world from a base in Redmond, California, with an Indian tech czar as its chief now. At least affected Indian flyers were protected by the government diktat to airlines to treat them with sympathy.

Those who had their holidays ruined by cancelled flights can expect no compensation from Microsoft. Their case is the lesser because for the patient whose life support or intensive care medication was dislocated or interrupted in a hospital system running on a major operating system that is the very heart of computers, it might have been a life-or-death issue.

The 'Blue Screen of Death' was not just a bogey on the Friday that it chose to rear its head on millions of screens. Indeed, it was Cybergeddon of the type that the world always feared might strike it and it appears mankind does not have to wait long for some cyber bully to hold it to ransom while we depend so much on software running computer programs to tend to our daily schedule at work and play, on the commute, in taking a flight, in picking up the day's milk packet and grocery essentials from outside the door and for making a payment or buying something online.

CrowdStrike could not have chosen a more appropriate name as the cybersecurity platform loaded a faulty update because its internal quality control failed at some point. Crowds all over the world were struck by a simple untested update that was sent out by the \$100 billion company on Thursday.

It is a saving grace that not a single death anywhere has been linked as yet to the disruption. But the more the world gets networked, the greater the danger of such an outage causing a big disaster. What the two days of disruption have done is to signal a warning on what may happen if we depend only on networked computers to run all our lives. And then there is the threat of what evil AI can do if it is not reined in and we still do not know yet how to do it.

### Disturbing signals from UPSC

The resignation of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) chairman Manoj Soni on "personal grounds" in the backdrop of the allegation that a candidate had faked her documents, including her name and Aadhaar card, to get into the Indian Administrative Service cannot signal an end to the raising of thorny questions on the functioning of the constitutional institution but is just the beginning. Although, that Mr Soni resigned in June this year but the news came out only now is no reason why the two events should not be linked.

It is a fact that UPSC has lodged a complaint with the police regarding the fudging of documents by an officer of the 2022 batch of the Maharashtra cadre to avail more chances to write the civil service examination than that for which she was eligible. It is quite disturbing that the Commission looked into the verification process in a serious manner only after the IAS probationer in question started making news for all the wrong reasons, like fixing her name board on her private car and demanding undeserved facilities in office. The system would have never raised a doubt about her eligibility to be there in the first place had she acted in an unassuming fashion.

The UPSC selects people who will play a leadership role in the country's bureaucracy through the civil service examination. Around 1,000 are hand-picked for the purpose every year. Although several competitive examinations in the country have come into disrepute after their integrity was compromised, the civil service examination, thanks mainly to the professional and transparent way in which it has been conducted over the decades, has been able to keep its shine intact. The latest episode, however, has changed all that.

The UPSC must now launch a process of verification of the documents of all successful candidates, starting with the immediately previous years. Should the exercise reveal even a single instance of fraud, it should initiate action. It must do whatever it takes to assure the people that only the eligible get to serve them.

#### THE ASIAN AGE

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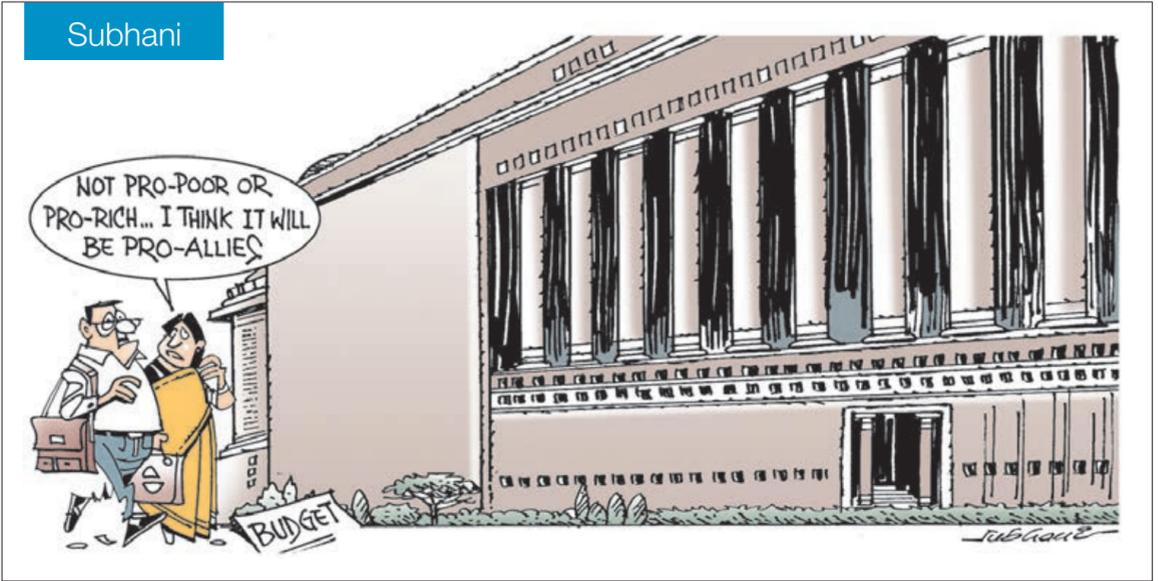
THE ASIAN AGE office is located at:  
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for:

Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.

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

RNI Registration number: 57290/94



## A Telugu in US knocks on White House's door



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

At a time when Bollywood movies were still showing actors cavorting and singing on the streets of Switzerland and spending an *Evening in Paris*, Telugu cinema had an *America Abbayi* crossing the Atlantic. The doyen of Telugu cinema, D. Madhusudan Rao, who in the 1970s pioneered the shift of the industry from Chennai to Hyderabad, produced *America Abbayi* (*American Boy*), the tale of a Telugu boy in the United States. The characters in the movie were not going overseas to dance and shop, like they do in so many Hindi movies, but just to live their normal professional life. The plot is not, in any case, the point. What is interesting about the movie was that it was filmed on locations across "Middle America", not the big cities along the two coasts but in places like Chicago, and in Michigan, Illinois and Ohio — and one of the principal characters was a medical doctor. The movie showed how normal the social connect between the Telugus and Middle America had become by then.

The first wave of Indian professionals migrating to the United States after the US Congress liberalised immigration policy in 1965, allowing Indian medical doctors and engineers to secure employment in the United States, comprised a large number of Telugus. Guntur Medical College very quickly became home to a large number of doctors migrating to the US. Not surprisingly, therefore, producer Madhusudan Rao and director Singeetam Srinivas Rao, known for their many box office hits, made a doctor the mother of *America Abbayi*.

The Telugus in America

have come a long way. A Telugu "ammy" (girl) is knocking on the doors of the White House. If Donald Trump wins his second term in November this year, and if he does not change the US Constitution to enable him to seek a third term, then his vice-president, J.D. Vance will, in all probability, get a shot at becoming the President of the United States in 2028. Usha Chilukuri will then be the first Indian-American, and Telugu, First Lady.

Usha's father studied at IIT Madras and her paternal grandfather, C. Rama Sastry, was a member of IIT Madras "founder faculty". Usha Chilukuri was born and raised in the United States but has relatives, including a 96-year-old grand-aunt, living in Andhra Pradesh. While Gujaratis and Punjabis dominated the early post-Independence Indian migration to the US, the Telugus rapidly caught up. After the first wave of the 1960s, the second wave came in the 1990s, thanks to the Y2K boom. Over the past two decades, there has been a virtual stampede of US-bound Telugus.

According to US Census Bureau data, the Telugu-speaking population in America has rapidly increased from 320,000 in 2016 to 1.23 million in 2024. It has been reported that at last count California state was home to the largest Telugu-speaking community of over 200,000, with Texas (150,000) and New Jersey (110,000) at second and third places. Illinois, mainly Chicago, is home to 83,000 Telugus followed by Virginia (78,000) and Georgia (52,000). Telugu is the 11th most spoken language in a country that reports 350 spoken languages.

An awareness of this dynamic and trend prompt-

ed the Manmohan Singh government to allow the United States to open a consulate in Hyderabad, then capital of the erstwhile united state of Andhra Pradesh. Consular data showed that the largest number of visas being issued in southern India went to Telugus, who had to apply through the Chennai consulate. Thanks to the support received from chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy both the Prime Minister's Office and the ministry of external affairs were able to prevail on the home ministry to permit the location of the US consulate in Hyderabad rather than Bengaluru. The file work was done in time for President George W. Bush to make the official announcement during his visit to Hyderabad in 2006. The Hyderabad consulate has reportedly become one of the biggest US consulates in Asia.

While the bifurcation of the state has led to the creation of separate associations of American Telugus from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the original Telugu Association of North America (TANA) remains one of the oldest such associations of Indian-Americans in the US. Founded in 1977, TANA has long hosted celebrities from the region visiting the US and now boasts of a wide range of cultural and welfare activities both in the US and in India. Quite apart from their numbers, Telugus have also made a mark in American life. From computer scientists like Rajagopal "Raj" Reddy, of Carnegie Mellon and winner of the Turing Award, to business gurus like C.K. Prahalad and corporate

leaders like Satya Nadella of Microsoft, Telugus have also made a mark on the American academic and corporate arenas. While Usha Chilukuri acquires her present high-profile status as the wife of a famous politician, she also represents the large and growing community of high-achieving Telugus in the US.

The India-US bilateral relationship is, therefore, being increasingly defined by the weight of the Indian diaspora in American academic, economic, political and cultural life. However, it would be wrong for anyone to assume that stronger people-to-people connect can in itself alter state-to-state relations. The former can certainly help both as a ballast to the relationship and as a counterweight to political and business lobbies that may have other priorities. But sometimes it can also contribute to tricky political situations. We see that in the case of the United States, where the political activism of various Indian-American and non-resident Indian groups has been both a source of support and of problems in the bilateral relationship.

The most recent example is that of the political activism of pro-Khalistan groups. The Indian attempt to deal with this problem has contributed to a seriously tricky situation and we have not heard the last word on the matter. Less explosive but equally controversial have been the political activism of an assortment of Indian-American groups ranging from activists among Dalits, Hindutva groups, left-wing outfits and civil liberties advocates. The growing numbers and rising profile of Indian Americans is cutting both ways. They help build the relationship between the United States and India but are also testing the limits.

The writer is an author, a former newspaper editor and adviser to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. He has recently edited *The Importance of Shinzo Abe: India, Japan and the Indo-Pacific*.

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### LETTERS CULT OF MASTER

This is in response to Mr Pavan K. Varma's article titled "Indian *shaadis* are lavish, why roast just Ambanis?" (July 21). Far from roasting the Ambanis, the mainstream media and ordinary Indians remained absolutely mesmerised while reporting and relishing the extravaganza over the last seven months! Hardly surprising, after all, monarchy may be dead, but the feudal order of the master (various masters, such as parents, the boss, the government, god and so on) is not! We all feel the need to please them and praise them to justify it. By the same token, they, too, must publicly splurge in such a vulgar fashion to retain that status.

Kajal Chatterjee  
Kolkata

### SENTIMENTAL INDIANS

IF ONLY the extreme fastidiousness displayed in the dietary intake and cleanliness were displayed in other aspects of day-to-day living, it would be a great world. Some abhor violence against the animal kingdom but have no compunction in unleashing violence on fellow humans. Violence first exists in the mind. No religion preaches hate. Humans, however, find ways to justify hate and that, too, in the name of whichever god they may follow. Our religious sentiments are too easily hurt over trifles but almost never over important matters!

Anthony Henriques  
Mumbai

### PARDON OPP. MEN

OVER FOUR YEARS after a court in UP sentenced former BJP MLA Uday Bhan Karwariya to life imprisonment for the 1996 murder of an SP MLA, the state government has ordered his premature release, with governor Anandiben Patel approving his mercy petition. But similar mercy petitions should also be granted to Opposition leaders facing life imprisonment.

Sankar Paul  
Chakdaha, West Bengal

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Kajal Chatterjee (July 20). Email: [asianage.letters@gmail.com](mailto:asianage.letters@gmail.com).

Kishwar Desai  
London Diary



### Labour govt leads to optimism in UK; flaunt 'dog togs' before penny drops

After Labour came to power, the weather is warming up and people are already becoming optimistic. Even if we smile it must be due to Sir Keir Starmer. That is really worrying because one wonders when the calamities are going to hit us. Surely things can't remain happy and positive? Is this just the honeymoon period we ask each other... but then we think — let's just enjoy it while it lasts!

Even the pomp and ceremony of the state opening of Parliament last week seemed to be imbued with a freshness and we barely criticised it. Millions watched on TV as King Charles arrived from nearby Buckingham Palace in his horse carriage. Lords and ladies were already seated in the chamber. The diplomatic corps attended as did the judges from the Supreme Court. It was very crowded. The Anglican bishops — 26 of whom are members of the House of Lords — all made it a point to turn up for this occasion.

The Kings Speech is of course written by the Prime Minister — and it outlined the policies the new government will pursue. Oddly enough most policies were well received — what's going on?

This pleasant weather may not last — but right now the country is looking forward to a revival of fortunes, and there are great expectations from the new government.

Therefore pubs are crowded again and everyone is out for a drink. Thinking of a drink, there is a new fashion in London to buy wine

in cardboard boxes rather than bottles. One advantage is you get more than one bottle's worth in a box. But it is also ecologically smart. If everyone was to switch from glass bottles to paper, you would avoid emitting 750 million tons of carbon dioxide. Let us drink to that.

But the real fashion is "dog togs"... I never thought our pet "rescued" Labrador (who actually belongs to my daughter) needed clothes apart from her naturally sleek fur, but since dogs are becoming a much desired fashion accessory for celebrities, a whole new industry is coming up around canines. You can get them cashmere coats or rubber coats or designer toys. And then there are poo scoop bags you can get for around a 500 pounds a woof. Prada, Gucci, Christian Louboutin have all jumped onto the doggie bandwagon — and I guess if (as knowledgeable media reports claim) that dogs are an extension of your personality — then you would want your pooch to have every bit of grooming and glamour that you may indulge in. And so while a hooded coat for your darling pet from Prada costs close to 600 pounds and Gucci canvas pet carriers are more than 2,000 pounds (but thankfully these match your outfit), why not?

This is of course an essential for dogs who are already dripping diamonds onto celebrity events — and are used to being on the red carpet. Those of us who own a dog like mine — who mostly sleeps and is difficult to carry onto a red carpet

while I struggle with a saree — would need to spend thousands of pounds on their overall grooming as well as a trainer who teaches them how to pose and preen when on camera — and how to give the mandatory sound bite (hopefully the non-violent kind).

Given all this, it's a great business to be in and fashion designers in this line are looking at an industry worth more than seven billion dollars by 2032. Himmmmmm... where's my ruby encrusted Gucci dog leash? I think the pooch just chewed it.

As someone who is a crime writer myself — I am always intrigued by new trends in the genre — and was thrilled to see that an AI character has made its debut. No, it's not a crime novel written by AI — but it stars an AI sleuth. In *The Blink of an Eye* written by debut novelist Jo Callaghan has just won the Theakston Old Peculier crime novel of the year award. It features a police detective who is helped by her partner named AIDE — Artificially Intelligent Detective Entity. This is not actually as far-fetched as it may sound — because AI has the ability to quickly collate information — after quickly scouring the possibilities. And because it has human capacities — it can also be a great companion in the lonely world of sleuthing!

Usually we are concerned that AI is about to take over the world and our jobs — but it can also be a great help for analysing and cracking tough cases.

Though the hard forensics will have to be done through human endeavour, of course. The book has been called a "boundary-pushing take on the police procedural genre, told with heart and humour".

Most of us have seen Imelda Staunton playing down-to-earth gritty roles — and so we were blown away by her graceful portrayal as the Queen in the Netflix series *The Crown*. And now we get to see her in yet another avatar — in the stage play and musical *Hello, Dolly!* which is getting excellent reviews, and has a limited run at the Palladium.

Yes, it's an old fashioned musical about a middle aged widow, Dolly Levi, looking for love once more — and finds herself trying to woo (or maybe "entrap" might be a better word) — a millionaire, Horace Vandergelder. Based on a play written 90 years ago (Thornton Wilder's *The Merchant of Yonkers*) — it cannot be wildly feminist — but it is all about new beginnings, despite heartbreaks.

So there is an optimistic core to Staunton's portrayal of Dolly — as we roll through the songs and the romcom narrative.

In all — this is feel-good entertainment. Fitting in with the national mood.

Kishwar Desai is an award winning author and columnist. She is also the Chair of the Partition Museums in Amritsar and Delhi.



SHORT TAKES

14 INDIANS IN CAMBODIA CYBER SCAM RESCUED

Singapore, July 21: Fourteen Indian citizens trapped in a cybercrime scam in Cambodia have been rescued and efforts are on to repatriate them, the Indian embassy has said. The Indian embassy in Cambodia in collaboration with the authorities got the 14 Indian citizens released and they are being looked after by the Cambodian side, the embassy said in a post on X. The embassy said it has facilitated the rescue and repatriation of over 650 Indian citizens who had fallen victim to fraudulent job offers.

SK PROSECUTORS QUIZ FIRST LADY ON LUXURY BAG

Seoul, July 21: South Korean prosecutors questioned President Yoon Suk Yeol's wife over allegations of receiving a luxury handbag as a gift and of stock manipulation. First Lady Kim Keon Hee was summoned to a government security building on Saturday and her questioning lasted for about 12 hours. Kim's lawyer said that she responded to the questioning in a "sincere manner and told the truth." A secretly recorded video surfaced several months ago that purportedly showed Kim receiving a Dior handbag in 2022.

12-YEAR-OLD GIRL CHOKES COUSIN, 8, OVER IPHONE

Humboldt, July 21: A 12-year-old girl in Tennessee has been charged with murder, accused of smothering her 8-year-old cousin as the younger girl slept. A relative said they had been arguing over an iPhone. A security camera recorded the killing, inside the bedroom they shared on July 15 in Humboldt, Tennessee, the county prosecutor said. The recording shows the older child using bedding to suffocate her cousin as the younger girl slept in the top bunk, Gibson District Attorney Frederick Agee's statement said.

GREEK BORDER GUARD SHOT IN ABDOMEN

Thessaloniki, July 21: A Greek border guard was shot in the abdomen on Saturday while patrolling an area of the Greek-Turkish border where undocumented migrants seek to enter the European Union, Greek police said. The injuries are not life-threatening. Four Greek border guard officers were on duty along the Evros River, the land border with Turkey, shortly after 6 pm Saturday, when three or four shots rang out from the Turkish side, police said. A bullet hit one of the border guards in the lower abdomen.

NK FLIES MORE BALLOONS LIKELY CARRYING TRASH

Seoul, July 21: North Korea launched more balloons likely carrying rubbish toward South Korea on Sunday, two days after the South restarted blaring anti-Pyongyang propaganda broadcasts across the border in retaliation for the North's repeated balloon campaigns, Seoul officials said. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the North Korean balloons were flying north of Seoul, the South Korean capital, after crossing the border. It said the South Korean public should be alert for falling objects and report to police and military authorities.

OIL TANKER THAT COLLIDED WITH VESSEL DETAINED

Kuala Lumpur, July 21: Malaysia has detained a large oil tanker that collided with another vessel off its coast and fled the scene, the Coast Guard said on Sunday. The Sao Tome and Principe-flagged *Ceres I* tanker had collided with the Singapore-flagged *Hafnia Nile* two days ago, causing both ships to catch fire. The *Ceres I* then illegally left the location of the collision and turned off its tracking system, it added. A maritime air and sea search was immediately activated by Malaysian authorities.

B'desh top court scraps job quotas behind stir

Dhaka, July 21: Bangladesh's Supreme Court on Sunday scrapped most of the quotas on government jobs that had sparked nationwide protests by students that have killed at least 114 people in recent days. Dismissing a lower court order, the Supreme Court's Appellate Division directed that 93% of government jobs in the South Asian Country should be open to candidates on merit, Bangladesh Attorney General A.M. Amin Uddin told Reuters. "Students have clearly said they are in no way part of the violence and arson that have taken place in Bangladesh since Monday," he said. "I am hoping normalcy will return after today's ruling and people with ulterior motives will stop instigating people," Amin Uddin said. "I will ask the government to find out the culprits behind the violence and take strict action against them."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government had scrapped the quota system in 2018, but the lower court reinstated it last month, pegging total quotas at 56%, sparking the protests and an ensuing government crackdown. Internet and text message services in Bangladesh have been suspended since Thursday, cutting off

the nation of nearly 170 million people as security forces cracked down on protesters who defied a ban on public gatherings. Soldiers have been patrolling the streets of capital Dhaka, where army check points have been set up, after the government ordered a curfew late on Friday. Streets near the Supreme Court were quiet immediately after the decision, a Reuters witness said. A military tank was stationed outside the court's gate, television footage showed. Local media had reported scattered clashes earlier in the day between

AT NEO-FASCIST EVENT, ATTACK ON ITALY REPORTER

Rome, July 21: Italian politicians, including Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, expressed outrage on Sunday after a journalist was beaten up in the northern city of Turin by suspected neo-fascists. On Saturday night, the reporter for *La Stampa* daily came upon by chance a party being held by the neo-fascist fringe group *CasaPound*, involving smoke bombs and fireworks. He started filming with his phone. According to his footage and an account by the newspaper, a group of men came up to him and asked "Are you one of us?", before they set upon him, causing him to require hospital treatment. Meloni, the leader of the far-right Brothers of Italy party, offered her solidarity with the journalist, Andrea Joly, over the "unacceptable attack". It was "an act of violence that I strongly condemn and for which I hope those responsible will be identified as quickly as possible", she said in a statement. Elly Schlein, leader of the centre-left opposition Democratic Party, too offered her solidarity with the journalist, Joly, and condemned a "climate of impunity". "What else are we waiting for before neo-fascist organisations are dissolved, as the constitution says?" she asked. The attack was one of two incidents of random violence that made headlines this weekend in Italy, after a shocking video emerged of two gay men being beaten up by three men and a woman in Rome. That attack also drew condemnation from across the political spectrum. —AFP

Don't go to B'desh, US tells its citizens

Washington, July 21: The United States has recommended that its citizens do not travel to Bangladesh and allowed the voluntary departure of its non-emergency government employees and family members in view of the ongoing civil unrest in the South Asian country. The development comes just a day after the US issued a new travel advisory for Bangladesh, urging Americans to reconsider

their travel to the strife-torn country. The US department of state raised the Travel Advisory Level for Bangladesh to Level 4 — 'Do Not Travel'. "Do not travel to Bangladesh due to civil unrest, crime, and terrorism," the state department said, adding, "The department allowed for the voluntary departure of non-emergency US government employees and family members." —PTI

protesters and security forces. Overseas phone calls failed to connect while websites of Bangladesh-based media organisations did not update and their social media accounts remained inactive. The government extended the curfew as authorities braced for the Supreme Court hearing on the job quotas. The curfew until 3 pm on Sunday was to resume for an "uncertain time" after a two-hour break for people to gather supplies. Reuters could not immediately determine what would happen to the curfew after the ruling. —Reuters



A fire erupts at an oil storage facility following Israeli strikes in Yemen's Houthi-held port city of Hodeida, on Sunday. —AFP

Israel strikes Yemen, Gaza, Lebanon foes

Gaza Strip, July 21: The Middle East was reeling on Sunday from deadly violence with Israel bombing Gaza, Lebanon and Yemen in quick succession in response to attacks from Iran-backed militant groups. Despite Washington's top diplomat asserting a deal is near the "goal line" to end more than nine months of devastating war between Israel and Gaza rulers Hamas, the Israeli military said it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen, as it pressed on with its offensive in the besieged Palestinian territory. Dozens have been killed since Saturday across the Gaza Strip, the civil defence agency said, including in strikes on homes in the central Nuseirat and Bureij areas and displaced people near southern Khan Yunis. Residents said a major operation was underway in the Saudi district of Rafah in the south, reporting heavy artillery and clashes. The deadly

strikes in Gaza came hours after Hezbollah and its ally Hamas said they fired at Israeli positions from south Lebanon, while Yemen's Houthi rebels vowed to respond to Israeli warplanes hitting a key port. —AFP

DRAFT NOTICES SENT IN ISRAEL TO ULTRA-ORTHODOX

Jerusalem, July 21: The Israeli military issued call-up notices to 1,000 members of the ultra-Orthodox community on Sunday. It could further inflame tensions between religious and secular Israelis. The Supreme Court ruled last month that the defence ministry could no longer grant blanket exemptions to Jewish seminarians from the conscript military. That arrangement had been in place since around the time of Israel's establishment in 1948. —Reuters

Trump says he 'took bullet for democracy'

Gunman in Trump attack had flown drone over rally site

Washington, July 21: Former US president Donald Trump in his first campaign rally since surviving an assassination attempt has dismissed concerns raised by critics that he is a threat to democracy, telling a large crowd in Michigan that he "took a bullet for democracy." The gunman in the attempted assassination of Trump is believed to have flown a drone around the Pennsylvania rally site ahead of time in an apparent attempt to scope out the site before the event, a law enforcement official said on Saturday. The drone has been recovered by the FBI, which is leading the investigation into last Saturday's shooting at the rally by 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks. Crooks fired multiple rounds from the roof of a building adjacent to the Butler Farm Show grounds, where Trump was speaking, before being fatally shot by a Secret Service counter sniper. In the rally in Michigan on Saturday, Trump, who is the Republican presidential nominee for the November 5 elections, was joined by his running mate J.D. Vance. More than 12,000 people piled into the Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids to see him and his running mate. "They keep saying he's a threat to democracy. I'm saying, 'What the hell did I do to democracy?' Last week I took a bullet for democracy," Trump said, referencing an oft-used Democrat talking point. "What did I do against democracy? Crazy." Trump, 78, said amidst applause from thousands of his



Former US president and 2024 presidential nominee Donald Trump (R) with US Senator and vice presidential nominee J.D. Vance attend their first campaign rally together in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Friday. —AFP

U.S. HOMELAND CHIEF FLAYS ATTACKS ON WOMEN SECRET SERVICE AGENTS

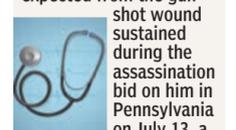
Washington, July 21: The US homeland security chief hit back on Saturday at misogynistic attacks on the women Secret Service agents who threw themselves into the line of fire to protect Donald Trump from a would-be assassin. "These assertions are baseless and insulting," Alejandro Mayorkas said in a statement after some

of the US political right accused the Secret Service of "woke" hiring practices they say nearly had the former president killed. Mayorkas praised the "highly skilled and trained" women serving in law enforcement across the country for risking "their lives on the front lines for the safety and security of others." —AFP

BEAUTIFUL NOTE FROM XI: TRUMP

FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT Donald Trump has said that Chinese President Xi Jinping wrote him a beautiful note after the Republican presidential nominee suffered a gunshot wound to his ear during an assassination attempt. Trump said this at an election rally on Saturday in Grand Rapids, Michigan, exactly a week after a young shooter tried to assassinate him by hitting a bullet in his head. REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL nominee Donald Trump is recovering as expected from the gunshot wound sustained during the assassination bid on him in Pennsylvania on July 13, a former physician to Trump has said in a memorandum.

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden, who tested positive for Covid-19 last week, has been "tolerating" treatment well and continuing his presidential duties, according to the White House physician. In a memorandum to White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre on Saturday, Dr Kevin C. O'Connor, the physician to the president, said genomic sequencing has determined that Biden has been afflicted by the KP.2.3 variant that accounts for around 33.3 per cent of new infections in the United States.



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Jets prevented US bombers near Barents Sea: Moscow

Moscow, Kyiv, July 21: Russia's defence ministry said on Sunday that Russian warplanes prevented two US strategic bombers from violating the state border over the Barents Sea. After having detected an air target approaching the Russian borders, the military scrambled MiG-29 and MiG-31 fighter jets, the ministry said in a statement. The MiGs identified the planes as two United States B-52H strategic bombers. Ukraine needs long-range weapons to protect its cities and troops on the frontline from Russian bombs and drones, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday after a massive overnight drone and missile attack.



Dmitry Peskov

Russia launched its fifth drone attack on Kyiv in two weeks overnight, with Ukraine's air defence systems destroying all the air weapons before they reached the country's capital Kyiv, Ukraine's military added. "As the Russian fighter jets approached, the American strategic

bombers adjusted their flight course... and subsequently turned away from the state border of the Russian Federation," the ministry said. The Russian warplanes carried out the flight in compliance with international rules on the use of airspace over neutral waters, it added. The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment outside of regular hours. Russia has reported similar incidents before when its planes have confronted military aircraft from North Atlantic Treaty Organisation countries flying close to its border at a time of acute tension over the war in Ukraine. —Reuters

Nepal PM wins vote of trust

Kathmandu, July 21: Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli won a crucial floor test in Parliament on Sunday with more than two-thirds of lawmakers voting in his favour, nearly a week after he was sworn in to lead a coalition government in the Himalayan nation. Oli secured 188 votes in favour of the Vote of Confidence motion tabled by him while 74 votes were cast against him. Out of a total of 263 members of the House of Representa-

tives who were present, one member abstained. Oli, 72, required 138 votes to pass the floor test in the lower house of Parliament. "I declare that the motion of the vote of confidence tabled by Prime Minister Oli has been endorsed with a majority," announced Speaker Devraj Ghimire. According to Nepal's Constitution, Oli needed to secure a vote of confidence from Parliament within 30 days of appointment. —PTI

PLEA AGAINST OLI BEING MADE PM REACHES CONSTITUTIONAL BENCH

Kathmandu, July 21: Nepal's Supreme Court on Sunday forwarded a petition challenging K.P. Sharma Oli's appointment as the country's prime minister to a constitutional bench, citing the need for a serious constitutional interpretation. Three advocates — Deepak Adhikari, Khagendra Prasad Chapagain and

Shailendra Kumar Gupta — filed the petition at the apex court, arguing that Oli's appointment was unconstitutional and sought a mandamus order to annul it. A single bench of Justice Bal Krishna Dhakal on Sunday forwarded the case to the Supreme Court's constitutional bench. —PTI

FOOD | FUNDA Constant eating out behind obesity, health problems, says NYT's Pete Wells

Restaurant critic's departure reveals job hazards

New York, July 21: Restaurant critics appear to have the best job in journalism, enjoying meals a few nights a week on someone else's dime. But *New York Times* restaurant critic Pete Wells had painted a more complicated picture. In a recent column, Wells announced he's leaving the beat because the constant eating has led to obesity and other health problems. "Intellectually, it was still really stimulating, but my body started to rebel

and say, 'Enough is enough,'" Wells told *The Associated Press*. "I just had to come face to face with the reality that I can't metabolise food the way I used to, I can't metabolise alcohol the way I used to and I just don't need to eat as much as I did even 10 years ago." To write a review, critics usually make two or three visits to a restaurant and bring a handful of dining companions so they can taste as many dishes as possible. If the restaurant has a special focus on wine

or cocktails or desserts, they try those, too. "You have to sample the full range of the menu," said Ligaya Figueras, senior food editor and lead dining critic for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. "If I really felt like a salad today, I can't just have the salad." Special features, like lists of the best places to get pizzas or hamburgers, may have critics eating the same fare for weeks. MacKenzie Chung Fegan, a restaurant critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*,

sampled Peking duck all over the city for a story about a restaurant that specialised in the dish. "There was a two-week period where I was eating more duck than anyone's doctor would advise," Fegan said. In a 2020 study published in the *Journal of Nutrition*, researchers at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University found that 50 per cent of meals at full-service US restaurants — and 70 per cent of those at fast-food restaurants —



File photo of people having lunch at Katz's Delicatessen in New York. —AP

USE DOMESTIC COAL, PAK TO CHINESE PLANTS

Islamabad, July 21: Pakistan this month will ask Chinese power plants operating in the country to shift to using coal from Pakistan's Thar region rather than imported coal. Islamabad may also begin talks on re-profiling Pakistan's energy sector debt during the visit to Beijing, Awais Leghari, head of the energy ministry's power division, said. He will be part of the delegation to discuss structural reforms to the power sector suggested by the IMF. —Reuters

## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	80,604.65	-0.91
Nifty 50	24,530.90	-1.09
S&P 500*	5,505.00	-0.71
Dollar (₹)	83.65	0.07
Pound Sterling (₹)	108.67	0.32
Euro (₹)	91.45	-0.38
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	73,016.26	0.04
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	84.33	2.06
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.965	-0.001
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.243	0.02

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Foreign investors infuse ₹30,722 cr this month

Foreign investors injected ₹30,722 crore into Indian equities so far this month, driven by hopes of continued policy reforms, sustained economic growth and a better-than-expected earnings season. This came following an inflow of ₹26,565 crore in equities in the entire June driven by political stability and the sharp rebound in markets. Apart from equities, FPIs invested ₹13,573 crore in the debt market during the period under review.



## EESL to sell LEDs, ACs, fans through new retail stores

Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) will soon introduce retail franchise shops called 'Urja Dakshata Dukan' which will offer affordable energy-efficient products like LED lights, ACs and fans to consumers, a senior official said. The first batch of outlets is expected to open in Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Telangana, the official said. Buyers can also purchase the products online in its web portal EESLMART.IN.

## Vedanta secures 2 critical mineral blocks in K'taka

Vedanta on Sunday said that it has bagged two critical mineral blocks which were put on sale. The blocks are in Karnataka and Bihar, the company said. "The company has been declared as preferred bidder for the Gollarahatti-Mallenaahalli Nickel Chromium and PGE Block and Genjana Nickel, Chromium and PGE Block," it said. The exploration for any mineral deposit involves four stages, the company said.

## EPFO in May adds 19.5 lakh new members

Retirement fund body EPFO has recorded the highest net addition of 19.50 lakh members in May 2024, the Labour Ministry said. The addition during the month is the highest since the first payroll data was issued in April 2018, the ministry said in a statement. The ministry stated that year-over-year analysis showed a 19.62 per cent growth in net member additions compared to May 2023.

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

## Budget, global cues to drive stock markets

New Delhi, July 21: The outcome of the Union Budget, quarterly earnings from corporates and global trends are the major factors to drive stock market sentiments this week, the analysts said.

Besides, the trading activity of foreign investors, the rupee-dollar trend and the movement of global oil benchmark Brent crude are also crucial aspects to watch out for.

"The upcoming Union Budget on July 23, 2024, has become the next focal point for the market, with high expectations for growth-oriented policies. Several factors will influence the market direction, including Q1 fiscal year 2025 earnings, domestic and global economic data, and broader global market trends."

"Market sentiment will be closely monitored by observing foreign institutional investors (FIIs) and domestic institutional investor (DII) activity and crude oil prices," said Praveesh Gour, senior technical analyst, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

Among blue-chip firms Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, DLF, Tech Mahindra and Nestle will announce their earnings during the week.

"The market direction will be determined by the upcoming Budget outcome," Vinod Nair, head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The Union Budget will provide the next set of



● **THE UPCOMING** Union Budget on July 23, 2024, has become the next focal point for the market, with high expectations for growth-oriented policies. Several factors will influence the market direction, including Q1 fiscal year 2025 earnings.

directions to the market, Siddhartha Khemka, head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

"Earnings season will also pick up pace, which will result in stock-specific actions," Khemka added.

HDFC Bank will remain in focus on Monday after the company's consolidated net profit grew 33.17 per cent to ₹16,474.85 crore in the June 2024 quarter.

Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 85.31 points or 0.10 per cent, and the Nifty went up marginally by 28.75 points or 0.11 per cent.

The 30-share BSE Sensex hit its new high of 81,587.76 on Friday, and the NSE Nifty too reached its fresh record peak of 24,854.80 on the same day. —PTI

## FOOD PROCESSING, TAPPING GLOBAL MARKETS PRIORITY, SAYS PASWAN

New Delhi, July 21: Union food processing minister Chirag Paswan feels that his ministry deserves a good budget allocation for setting up of processing units across the country which will help in providing job opportunities to local people and also boost farmers' income.

Without disclosing contents of his ministry's request from the finance minister, Paswan said his ministry has sent the Budget wish list to the finance ministry and was not sure of how much of that will be accepted in this budget, considering the limitations. But, he was hopeful that the wishlist would be accepted in the subsequent years.

The minister also outlined his top three priorities - setting up of food processing units, taking Indian brands to global markets and clearing various misconceptions regarding processed foods.

Paswan highlighted that proposals for setting up of processing units are coming from all states and agro-based ones. There is a need to promote the sector, he added.

Paswan said food processing is all about value addition and not loss of value and hence clearing misconceptions would be one of his top priorities.

Food processing sector attracted nearly \$7 billion worth of FDI in the last 10 years. —PTI

## No coal shortage for power, says Kishan

Demand to be met by increased productivity of Coal India

Kolkata, July 21: Union minister G Kishan Reddy said there is "no shortage" of coal for the power sector and the Centre will ensure adequate supply of the dry fuel to meet demand.

The long-term demand will be met by increased productivity of Coal India and commercial mines, he said.

"We are supplying coal to all thermal power plants. We have requested plants based on imported coal to switch their technology to utilise domestic fuel. There is no shortage of coal in the country," Reddy, the minister for coal and mines, said.

Coal production usually faces hindrances during the monsoon season.

Some technical issues related to commercial mines were being addressed, he said without divulging the details.

Speaking on the power



● **THE MINISTRY** of coal has allocated or auctioned 161 mines with a peak-rated capacity of 575 million tonnes. Of these, 58 have received mine opening permission, and 54 are operational.

ministry's advisory related to four per cent imported coal blending for domestic thermal plants, the minister said, Coal India is successfully ramping up production but the blending is advised to "mitigate the risk of blackout due to sudden rise in electricity demand".

Earlier, the nominated authority of the coal ministry held a meeting to review the status of both operational and non-operational captive and commercial coal mines.

During the meeting, the authority stressed on the

need for operationalising coal blocks that are in advanced stages of development.

The ministry of coal has allocated or auctioned 161 mines with a peak-rated capacity of 575 million tonnes. Of these, 58 have received mine opening permission, and 54 are operational.

Last year, these mines produced 147 million tonnes, constituting 15 per cent of the country's total coal production.

In a review meeting held in early June, Reddy stressed on exploration of

more blocks for auctions. The government had relaxed technical eligibility for coal block auctions to attract more participants. It has recently concluded the 10th round of coal block auctions.

The union minister had urged all stakeholders to work diligently to achieve at least 175 million tonnes of production from captive and commercial coal blocks this year, representing a 19 per cent growth.

As of June 30, 54 captive and commercial coal mines are under production, with 32 allocated to the power sector, 12 to the non-regulated sector and 10 for the sale of coal.

The current production from these mines stands at 39.53 million tonnes, registering a strong 35 per cent year-on-year growth.

An additional 11 mines are expected to start production in FY'25. —PTI

## Budget to focus on rural schemes

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, JULY 21

In order to spend more on rural schemes, the government is expected to increase revenue expenditure estimate for FY25 by about ₹75,000 crore over the interim budget estimate.

However, it may retain the capital expenditure estimate, finds Care Ratings.

The revenue expenditure of FY25 is likely to be ₹37.3 lakh crore, about

₹75,000 crore higher than the interim budget's estimate. Thus, revenue expenditure may grow by 6.8 per cent in FY25, higher than the 4.6 per cent growth budgeted in the interim budget.

Private consumption growth remained subdued, rising by only 4 per cent in FY24. This was the slowest rate in the last two decades.

Amid weather-related vagaries impacting agri-

● **PLI ALLOCATION** for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, leather footwear and toys can be enhanced along with the inclusion of additional sectors.

cultural output last year, supporting rural demand via higher allocation for revenue expenditure would be crucial.

As a support to the bot-

tom of income pyramid, especially in the rural sector, the government is expected to focus on welfare schemes with higher allocation towards agriculture, job creation, rural housing, and other labour intensive industries, mainly in MSME segment.

PLI allocation for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, leather footwear and toys can be enhanced along with the inclusion of additional sectors.

## IOC plans EVs, hydrogen projects

New Delhi, July 21: Indian Oil Corporation is combining growth in traditional oil refining and fuel marketing with clean energy avenues like green hydrogen and EV charging, its chairman said.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) posted a record net profit of ₹39,619 crore (\$4.7 billion) on a revenue of ₹8.66 lakh crore (\$104.6 billion) in 2023-24 (April 2023 to March 2024) fiscal.

The company will con-

tinue to invest in fossil fuels and new energy avenues to have a balanced portfolio to become net-zero carbon emission, company chairman Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said in its annual report.

It will expand oil refining capacity, and invest in petrochemical units that will convert crude oil into value-added chemicals directly, while also increasing its focus on gas, bio-fuels and clean mobility.

● **IT WILL** expand oil refining capacity, and invest in petrochemical units that will convert crude oil into value-added chemicals directly.

"With India's economy on the rise, the energy needs of the country are growing exponentially. We have been stepping up the pace and expanding our capabilities. We aim to

become the nation's lead energiser, fulfilling 12.5 per cent (1/8th) of India's energy needs by 2050," he said.

IOC will "make significant capital investment in both brownfield and greenfield expansions to ensure uninterrupted energy," Vaidya said.

"Petrochemical integration will also be a key focus area that will greatly enrich our value chain," he added. —PTI

## IT body urges HCL to not link WFH, leaves

New Delhi, July 21: IT workers' union NITES has criticised a recent move by HCL Technologies to link employee leaves with office attendance, terming it "unfair", and has asked the tech company to reconsider the policy.

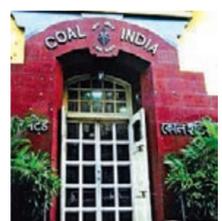
Nascent information technology employees senate (NITES) said the policy, which purportedly mandates that employees must work from the office at least three days a week and at least 12 days a month to be eligible for leaves, is "unfair".

"Such a policy is not only unfair but also goes against the principles of a

healthy work-life balance," NITES president Harpreet Singh Saluja said.

According to the NITES statement, under the Indian labour laws, particularly the Shops and Establishments Act, any modification in leave policy should be made in consultation with employees.

"In the post-pandemic era, flexible working arrangements have become the norm, and imposing such rigid requirements is a step backward," NITES said, asking HCL Technologies to reconsider the policy and ensure that employee welfare is prioritised. —PTI



## STATE MINER CIL ADDS GRAPHITE TO PORTFOLIO

Kolkata, July 21: Graphite is the first mineral Coal India Limited (CIL) will diversify its operations beyond coal, following an order from the ministry of mines granting the company a composite license for the prospecting and the mining.

This license pertains to the Khattali Chhoti Graphite Block in Alirajpur, Madhya Pradesh.

"This is the first mineral other than coal for us," Debashish Nanda, director of Business Development at Coal India, said.

CIL is required to pay a mining premium of 150.05 per cent of the value of minerals dispatched to the state government.

Coal India said the timeline is one year for the grant of the composite license and three years for the execution of the mining lease deed, the miner informed the sources.

Currently, the project is in a very preliminary phase, necessitating further exploration.

In alignment with the government's Atmanirbharta vision, Coal India has formed a special team to focus on other critical minerals both globally and within India.

Graphite, which has multiple applications including use in batteries, is a key area of focus amid the ongoing EV revolution in India.

Nanda mentioned that it is too early to estimate the capital expenditure for the project. However, Coal India will leverage its coal mining expertise from its subsidiary central mine planning and design institute limited (CMPDI) during the initial phase. —PTI

## AI, analytics to aid auditing: CAG

New Delhi, July 21: Comptroller and auditor general of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu has said AI has arrived and the supreme audit institution (SAI) is taking advantage of new technologies in improving the quality of public expenditure.

"As it develops, we will develop ourselves accordingly. Whatever challenges are there we will try and overcome. We will follow global experiences and practices related to this and share our own to them," Murmu said.

Recently, he said, "We have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi for leveraging AI and other emerging tech-



nologies for the advancement of audit practices."

With the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and data analytics, traditional methodologies are being redefined, offering unprecedented opportunities for innovation and efficiency, he said.

AI has emerged as a catalyst for change in the field of audit, offering a plethora of opportunities to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and insight,

he said.

By harnessing AI-driven algorithms and predictive analytics, auditors can analyse vast volumes of data with unparalleled speed and precision, enabling them to uncover patterns, anomalies, and potential risks with greater accuracy, Murmu added.

As part of a capacity building initiative, he said, the international centre for audit of local governance (ICAL) has been set up with the objective to train auditors of local bodies both rural and urban.

The ICAL is envisioned as a collaborative platform uniting policymakers, administrators, and auditors involved in local governments. —PTI

## BIG | GROWTH

Other sectors showing job growth include education, medical research

## Demand for AI, ML engineers on rise

Mumbai, July 21: Demand for artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) engineers has seen a significant increase since 2022, a report has said.

The demand for such roles surged 433 per cent, reflecting the growing reliance on AI and ML technologies across various sectors, it said.

This is closely followed by business process outsourcing (BPO) executives, which saw a 314 per cent increase in demand, underscoring the continued expansion of the outsourcing and customer

service industries, the Indeed report stated.

These two roles, though vastly different in skill requirements, are driving significant employment growth at both ends of skill spectrum, it said.

It is based on demand data on various professions and industries on job platform Indeed from January 2022 to June 2024.

The report further said AI/ML engineers represent highly specialised, technical positions, while BPO executives are indicative of demand for more generalised, customer-oriented roles.



● **THE TRENDS** offer valuable insights for jobseekers and employers alike, illustrating how both high-tech and service-oriented roles are essential to the evolving job landscape.

Meanwhile, the report revealed that receptionists, travel consultants, and electricians also feature prominently on the list, showcasing a diverse range of in-demand roles.

Job postings for receptionists have increased 310 per cent, while travel consultants have experienced

a 285 per cent rise, suggesting a resurgence in the travel and tourism sector, the report stated.

On the sectoral front, the report found that the sanitation and construction industries are also experiencing the highest growth, with job postings increasing 160 per cent and 121

per cent, respectively. Electricians are in demand with a 258 per cent increase in job postings.

Other sectors showing significant job growth include education, and medical research, reflecting rising needs in health-care and educational services, it said.

"These trends offer valuable insights for jobseekers and employers alike, illustrating how both high-tech and service-oriented roles are essential to the evolving job landscape," Indeed India head of Sales Sashi Kumar said. —PTI

## SHORT TAKES

### BCCI to provide ₹8.5cr for Games

**New Delhi:** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Sunday announced financial assistance to the Paris Olympics-bound Indian athletes, contributing ₹8.5 crore to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for their campaign. The Paris Games will begin from July 26. "I am proud to announce that the @BCCI will be supporting our incredible athletes representing #India at the 2024 Paris Olympics. We are providing INR 8.5 Crores to the IOA for the campaign," BCCI secretary Jay Shah wrote on his 'X' account. "To our entire contingent, we wish you the very best. Make India proud! Jai Hind!" As many as 117 athletes will represent India at the Paris Olympics. There will also be 140-strong support staff, making it a 257-member contingent. — PTI

### Yuki bags doubles title in Switzerland

**Gstaad, Switzerland:** India's Yuki Bhambri and his French partner Albano Olivetti clinched the men's doubles title at the Swiss Open ATP Tour tennis tournament with a hard-fought win over Ugo Humbert and Fabrice Martin in the final here on Sunday. The pair of Bhambri and Olivetti, seeded third in the ATP 250 clay court tournament beat their French opponents 3-6, 6-3, 10-6 to win the title. The final match lasted one hour and six minutes with both pairs refusing to give an inch to the other before the Indo-French duo of Bhambri and Olivetti emerging winner in the end. This was the third ATP doubles title for the 32-year-old Bhambri and second while partnering with Olivetti. He won his maiden ATP title at the 2023 Mallorca Championships with Lloyd Harris. He won his second title at the BMW Open in April this year with Olivetti. Bhambri reached the top 50 in the doubles rankings on June 24 and this win will improve his position further. — PTI

### Maini wins first F2 sprint race

**Budapest:** India's Kush Maini won his maiden Formula 2 Sprint Race at the Hungarian Grand Prix after initial winner Richard Verschoor's was disqualified due to a technical infringement. Following the top of podium finish, the 23-year-old India racing driver added 10 points to his season tally. With the win at the Hungaroring on Saturday, Maini surpassed Mercedes junior driver Kimi Antonelli in the Formula 2 Drivers Standings to P8 with 66 points under his belt. Placed ninth on the starting grid in round 9 of the F2 Championship, Maini had his work cut out after a tough start on the hard compound tyre, which saw him lose a position on the opening lap to the Prema racing driver Antonelli. Despite the setback in the opening lap, Maini kept his composure and steadily closed the gap on his rivals, finally bearing fruit on lap 17, when he showcased his acumen and ability to perform under pressure, regaining P2. The final 11 laps saw him not only fiercely defending his position, but also constantly challenging Verschoor — demonstrating his prowess in handling the demanding Hungaroring circuit. — PTI

### Registration opens for half marathon

**New Delhi:** The 19th edition of the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon was launched in the capital city on Thursday with the registrations now open. A World Athletics Gold Label Race event is set to be held on October 20. Organised by Procam International, the Delhi Half Marathon carries a prize money of \$260,000. Registrations for all physical race categories — Half Marathon, Open 10K, Great Delhi Run (4.5 km), Senior Citizens' Run (2.5 km), and Champions with Disability Run (2.5 km) started on Friday and will stay open until September 20, or until all spots are filled, whichever comes first. People from around the globe can also join the Delhi Half Marathon and participate virtually. The virtual race options include a Half Marathon, an Open 10K, and the Great Delhi Run (5 km). The registrations will remain open until October 11. The registrations for the physical and virtual races of the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon have commenced at <https://vedantadelhihalfmarathon.procam.in>.

# READY TO FIRE

## Paris Olympics supremo set to host sporting extravaganza

**Paris, July 21:** Paris Olympics supremo Tony Estanguet said Sunday that the city was "ready" for the Games as he played down complaints from some residents and businesses about the impact of the event.

"We are ready as we head into the final phase," Estanguet told a press conference in Paris, five days from the opening parade next Friday.

He added: "For as long as the closing ceremony hasn't finished, we need to remain vigilant. But today we are exactly where we would have dreamed of being a few years ago."

Finishing touches are being applied to the venues across the City of Light and thousands of athletes and officials are pouring in, while the weather has also brightened up after months of rain.

In a further boost for organisers, the water quality of the river Seine — which is set to be used for outdoor Olympic swimming events — has also improved dramatically since the start of July.

"All the indicators for the Seine are positive at this stage," Estanguet added.

The river is set to host the opening ceremony next Friday which will see 6,000-7,000 athletes sail down it on 85 barges and boats.

It will be the first time a Summer Olympics has opened outside the main athletics stadium, with up to 300,000 ticketed spectators set to watch from stands and on the river banks and another 200,000 expected to watch from the overlooking apartments.

Around 4,000 tickets are still available, Estanguet said.

### 'DISRUPTION'

The vast security operation required for the opening ceremony is causing some friction, however, with large parts of central Paris along the banks of the river and around Olympic venues off-limits for most people.

Trade groups representing Paris shops, restaurants, bars and clubs complained on Friday that they were facing an "unprecedented slump in business and footfall", blaming in part the "heavy security measures". "We can't do it without some disruption. We can't do it without some restrictions," Estanguet said. "We tried to anticipate these restrictions and we communicated them a long time in advance."

### SECURITY

Around 45,000 members of the French security forces are set to be on duty on Friday when the Olympics kick off.

"Security was the number one priority for Paris 2024," Estanguet said. — AFP



Press agency photographer Christina Assi (left) holds the Olympic torch at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Vincennes, outside Paris, on Sunday. Assi was struck by a tank shell on October 13, 2023 while reporting clashes between the Israeli army and armed groups in southern Lebanon. — AP

## Coach says Neeraj is fit ahead of Paris Games

**New Delhi, July 21:** The adductor niggle that has troubled Neeraj Chopra in the past couple of months "is fine" now and the reigning Olympic champion has entered the high intensity phase of his Paris preparations, his German coach Klaus Bartonietz said, dismissing concerns surrounding the Indian star's fitness.

The 26-year-old Chopra, who scripted history by winning the javelin throw gold at the Tokyo Olympics, is once again the country's best bet for a top podium finish in the Paris Games beginning on July 26.

But his season has been far from perfect in terms of fitness. Bartonietz, however, insisted that things are back on track. "Everything is according to plan. At the moment, no issue with that (adductor niggle), it's fine, it looks good, hoping to remain like that till the Olympics," the coach, who has been with Chopra for close to five years, said from Antalya, Turkey, where they are currently based for training.

"It's just over two weeks left in the Olympics, so the intensity of training is high. He is having full throwing sessions."

Chopra withdrew from Ostrava Golden Spike on May 28 as a precautionary measure after he felt "something" in his adductor (group of muscles located on inner thighs).



He made a strong comeback by winning gold at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland on June 18 with a throw of 85.97m.

He opted out of the Paris Diamond League on July 7, insisting that the event was never a part of his competition calendar this year.

Chopra's competition day is just two weeks away with the qualification round scheduled on August 6.

Asked about the training routine of Chopra, Bartonietz said, "We have sessions of sprinting, jumping or throwing or weightlifting alternately for activation in the morning. Two sessions, one in morning and one in evening, two to two-and-a-half-hour long each."

Bartonietz said the approach is nearly the same as the one adopted before the Tokyo Olympics.

Chopra has maintained that he is focusing more

### 'TAINTED' PHYSIO PRESENCE SPARKS ROW IN INDIAN ARCHERY TEAM

**Paris, July 21:** A day after its Korean chief coach Baek Woong Ki was forced to leave following denial of Olympic accreditation, India's archery contingent found itself at the centre of another controversy as it was alleged that a "tainted" physio was accommodated at his expense.

The contingent will be without Woong Ki and Dronacharya award-winning High Performance Director Sanjeeva Singh as both of them could not find a place in the contingent's support staff.

A top Archery Association of India (AAI) official revealed that instead, physio Arvind Yadav has been included despite the fact that he faced allegations of making an "inappropriate approach" to a Canadian teenager during the Youth World Championships in Limerick, Ireland in November last year.

India had won a historic haul of six gold, one silver and four bronze medals at that event.

"As per the complaint from the World Archery competition manager Thomas Aubert, Yadav had made an inappropriate approach to a Canadian teenager on social media," the official said.

"The Canadian coach reported this to the WA, who in turn raised the complaint with AAI. Federation called an ethics committee meeting and dismissed the matter saying the 'inappropriate approach' to the Canadian archer was a 'normal hi, hello'," he revealed.

Yadav, when reached out, rejected the charge altogether: "It's a conspiracy to malign me. Nothing of this sort has happened. Why didn't AAI take action against me then? Also, the archers could have objected to my appointment," Yadav said.

The source claimed that Yadav is very close to the body's secretary general Virendra Sachdeva. "Whenever there is a top competition he makes such a back-door entry. He was there in Rio Olympics too," he said. — PTI

● **Physio Arvind Yadav has been included despite the fact that he faced allegations of making an "inappropriate approach" to a Canadian teenager during the Youth World Championships in Limerick, Ireland in November last year.**

## Horschel leads after penultimate round

**Troon (United Kingdom), July 21:** American Billy Horschel leads the British Open at four under par heading into Sunday's final round after torrential rain and a swirling wind at Royal Troon blew the challenge for the Claret Jug wide open.

Horschel leads by one from a group of six, featuring USPGA Championship winner Xander Schauffele, English duo Justin Rose and Daniel Brown, South Africa's Thriston Lawrence and Americans Sam Burns and Russell Henley.

World number one Scottie Scheffler is just one shot further back at two under after battling to an even par round of 71.

A total of 12 players are within four shots of the lead for what promises to be a fascinating final round.

Overnight leader Shane

Lowry had a day to forget as the 2019 champion crumbled in the sodden conditions to collapse from eight under par after seven holes to one under by the end of his round.

Horschel was one of the big movers in a round that had allowed for lower scoring earlier in the day before the wind and rain picked up.

Starting at two under, Horschel produced a sublime four-under 32 on the front nine thanks to birdies at four, six, seven and nine.

A bogey followed at 11 before another dropped shot at the last but he remains in prime position to land his first major.

"I've worked my entire life to be in this position," said world number 62 Horschel.

"I know what it means to my legacy in the game of golf and what I want to do and accomplish."



Shubhankar Sharma of India during his final round of the British Open Golf Championships at Royal Troon golf club in Troon, Scotland, on Sunday. — AP

Brown, ranked 272 in the world, had been set to lead heading into the final round until dropping three shots in his last two holes. But he and Rose remain in the hunt to become the first English winner since Nick Faldo in 1992.

"I'm a little bit disappointed with how the last two holes went because I did so well so get to where I got to, and yeah, it's a bit nasty to finish like that," said Brown.

Lowry began the day with a two-shot lead and extended that to three with a birdie at the par-five fourth.

However, the Irishman's round began to come off the rails with a double bogey at the 130-yard Postage Stamp eighth.

Worse was to come as five bogeys in eight holes on the back nine dropped Lowry back into ninth.

Fresh from his maiden major win at the USPGA, Schauffele is eyeing another.

The world number three moved to five under at one stage before bogeys at 11 and 18 knocked him back to three under after a round of 69. — AFP

## WOMEN'S ASIA CUP

# Harman, Richa win it for India

**Dambulla, July 21:** Contrasting fifties from skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh were complemented nicely by the bowlers as India notched up a massive 78-run win over UAE in their second match of the ongoing women's Asia Cup T20 tournament here on Sunday.

Invited to bat, Kaur played the anchor's role to perfection with a 47-ball 66, while Ghosh produced late charge with an unbeaten 29-ball-64 to power defending champions India to 201 for five, their first-ever 200-plus score in T20is.

The bowlers, led by Deepti Sharma (2/23), then produced a clinical show to limit UAE to 123 for 7 as India put one foot in the semifinals.

With two wins in as many games, India occupy the top spot in Group 'A' with four points and have a Net Run Rate of +3.298.

India will play their third and final group game against Nepal on Tuesday.

Chasing the daunting total, opener Esha Rohit Oza scored a 36-ball 38 (5x4, 1x6) but UAE never were in the chase as they kept losing wickets at regular intervals.

Pace duo of Renuka Singh (1/30) and Pooja Vastrakar (1/27) dismissed Theertha Satish (4) and Rimitha Rajith (7) as UAE slipped to 24 for 2 in 5.2 overs.

Deepti then struck in

### BRIEF SCORES

India 201/5 in 20 overs (Harmanpreet Kaur 66, Richa Ghosh 64 not out, Shafali Verma 37; Kavisha Egodage 2/36) bt UAE 123/7 in 20 overs (Kavisha Egodage 40 not out, Esha Oza 38; Deepti Sharma 2/23).

her third ball, removing Samaira Dhanidharka (5) but Oza and Kavisha Egodage (40 not out) played some entertaining shots to score 20 runs in next three overs.

However, Tanuja Kanwar (1/14), who had replaced an injured Shreyanka Patil in the playing XI, had Oza stumped, while Radha Yadav (1/29) got rid of Khushi Sharma (10) as UAE fell to 95 for five in the 16th over.

Heena Hotchandani then became Deepti's second victim and Rithika was run out in the last ball as UAE finished far away from India's total.

Earlier, while the 35-year-old Harmanpreet blasted seven fours and a six during her innings, Ghosh slammed as many as 12 boundaries and a maximum, including five consecutive hits to the fence in the final over of the innings bowled by Hotchandani.

Kaur stitched two crucial partnerships, adding 54 off 39 balls with Jemimah Rodrigues and 75 off 45 balls with Ghosh to put India in a commanding position. — PTI



Richa Ghosh of India raises her bat after scoring a fifty against the UAE during their Women's T20 Asia Cup match at the Rangiri Dambulla International Cricket Stadium in Dambulla, Sri Lanka, on Sunday. — PTI

## Paes & Amritraj in Hall of Fame

**Newport (USA), July 21:** Legendary Indian tennis players, Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj, the heroes of many a historic triumph transcending generations, on Sunday became the first two exponents of the sport from Asia to be inducted into the International Hall of Fame.

Paes, 51, whose list of achievements include the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games men's singles bronze, eight men's doubles and 10 mixed doubles grand slam crowns besides several famed Davis Cup victories, was given the rare honour in the 'Player Category'.

Vijay Amritraj, 70, reached the men's singles quarterfinals at the Wimbledon and US Open twice each besides guiding India to the Davis Cup finals twice — in 1974 and 1987. At his peak, he was ranked No.18 in the world in singles and No. 23 in doubles.

He along with Richard Evans was inducted into the Hall of fame in the 'Contributor Category'.

"Paes was inducted in the Player Category, while Amritraj and Evans were recognised as a part of the Contributor Category: honoring visionary leaders, pioneers, or individuals who have made a consummate impact on the sport."

Paes spent 37 weeks at No. 1 in the world rankings in doubles, and won 54 doubles titles on tour. He is one of only three men in tennis history to capture a career Grand Slam in both disciplines. Paes, who hails from Kolkata, competed in seven straight Olympic Games between Barcelona, 1992 to Rio, 2016, the most in tennis history. — PTI

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. And Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C - 9, Sector - III, Noida - 201301. Editor - Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 57290/94 Price in Nepal - Nep. Rs. 20.00 per copy.