

NEPAL'S NEW PM OLI WINS CONFIDENCE VOTE WORLD



WATER SCARCITY TRIGGERS TENSION IN BARAMULLA J&K



PAWAR CORRUPTION MASTERMIND, SAYS AMIT SHAH NATION

PM ANNOUNCES \$1 MN FOR WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE BACK PAGE



Oppn, BJP allies turn heat on govt over eatery diktat, special package, NEET

ALL-PARTY MEET On Budget session eve, Rajnath calls for discussion within rules

ANIMESH SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

In signs of a stormy start to the Budget session of Parliament commencing Monday, the BJP-led NDA today faced the heat from allies and Opposition alike at an all-party meet, where both joined ranks to raise issues such as UP Government's directive on the Kanwar Yatra route eateries and special category status for Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.

Two of NDA's key allies — HAM's Jitan Ram Manjhi and RLD's Jayant Chaudhary — skipped the meeting where the Congress again demanded Lok Sabha Deputy Speaker's post besides seeking discussions on the NEET-UG paper leak, terror attacks in J&K, Manipur violence and serial train accidents.

As many as 55 leaders from 44 parties attended the meeting, where smaller parties were invited for the first time, said Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju. The opposition TMC skipped the meeting as leaders were away to observe Martyrs Day, marking the killing of 13 Congress



SC TO TAKE UP PLEA AGAINST UP ORDER

New Delhi: The row over UP Government's directive asking eateries on the Kanwar Yatra route to display the names of owners has reached the Supreme Court with the Association for Protection of Civil Rights challenging its validity. The plea seeking quashing of orders by the UP and Uttarakhand governments is listed for hearing before a Bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice SVN Bhatt on Monday.

Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Kiren Rijju, Congress MP Jairam Ramesh, SP MP Ram Gopal Yadav and AAP's Sanjay Singh after the all-party meeting in New Delhi.

Congress pushes for Deputy Speaker's post

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Harking back to the tradition it started in 1969, the Congress reiterated its demand for allocating the Deputy Speaker's post to the Opposition during the all-party meeting on Sunday.

Till 1969, the Congress as the ruling party had held both the

posts of Speaker and Deputy Speaker. However, that year it offered the Deputy Speaker's post to All-Party Hill Leaders Conference's Gilbert Swell, an MP from Shillong.

The tradition of offering the post to the opposition nominee continued until 2019. The post has been

lying vacant ever since, as the 17th Lok Sabha, which convened in 2019 and ended in 2024, did not have a Deputy Speaker. This was the first instance of its kind since Independence.

In the 16th Lok Sabha, when the Narendra Modi-led NDA government first came to power,

it had given the post to AIADMK's M Thambidurai.

With the 18th Lok Sabha having just been convened, the Congress-led Opposition with its swelled ranks, is now trying to put pressure on the weakened NDA government, to give the post to the party, though the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

SC to take up pleas on NEET-UG today

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court will on Monday take up petitions seeking cancellation of the NEET-UG over alleged irregularities. A Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud, which had on the previous hearing directed the NTA to declare centre and city-wise results of the medical entrance test, will hear the matter. The NTA has already complied with the order. Some successful candidates have also moved the SC opposing pleas seeking cancellation of the exam. **BACK PAGE**

Kedarnath landslip leaves three dead

RUDRAPRAYAG: Three pilgrims 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 took place around 7.30 am near Chirbas area on Gaurikund-Kedarnath route when the devotees were hit by heavy stones and debris falling down from the hill. — PTI



Hospital staff at a Nipah isolation ward in Kozhikode. REUTERS

14-yr-old dies of Nipah in Kerala, 4 contacts traced

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

A 14-year-old boy from Kerala's Mallapuram, who had tested positive for the Nipah virus, succumbed to the disease at Government Medical College Hospital in Kozhikode on Sunday.

Kerala Health Department officials said the boy had developed fever 10 days ago and was put on ventilator support at a private hospital in Kozhikode. His samples were sent to the NIV, Pune, which on July 20 confirmed Nipah infection. Four persons who had come into contact with the victim

HOW IT SPREADS

From close contact with other Nipah infected people, bats, or pigs. Bat secretions laden with viruses can infect people when they climb fruit trees, or eat and handle contaminated fallen fruits or consume raw date palm sap and juice or toddy.

THE SYMPTOMS

Brain fever, fever with persistent cough and difficulty in breathing.

have been traced and their samples sent for tests. The Union Health Ministry on Sunday announced that a multi-member joint outbreak

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

B'desh SC scales down job quota after deadly protests

DHAKA, JULY 21

Bangladesh's top court on Sunday scaled back a controversial quota system for government job applicants, in a partial victory for student protesters after days of nationwide unrest and deadly clashes that have killed over 100 persons.

Students, frustrated by lack of jobs, have been demanding an end to 30 per cent reservation in 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 quota and set off a new round of protests.

Ruling on an appeal, the Supreme Court ordered the veterans' quota be cut to 5 per cent, with 93 per cent of jobs to be allocated on merit. The remaining 2 per cent will be set aside for members of ethnic minorities and transgender and disabled persons.

The protests have posed the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

EDIT: BANGLADESH IN TURMOIL



Vehicles that were set ablaze in Bangladesh capital Dhaka by a mob during clashes over job reservation controversy. REUTERS

BJP slams Didi as she offers to give shelter to refugees

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, JULY 21

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday said that in the wake of the escalating violence in Bangladesh, she would keep the doors of her state open for people in distress from the neighbouring country and offer them shelter.

BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya criticised Mamata and

Calls it ploy to bring in illegal B'desh migrants

called her stand an "evil plan to settle illegal Bangladeshis".

Mamata referred to the UN resolution on refugees as justification for her stand over a possible humanitarian crisis

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Fearing LS poll redux, Saini govt holds out olive branch to farmers

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21

The BJP government in Haryana on Sunday reached out to the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body comprising over 40 farmers' unions, for the first time since its below par performance in the recently held Lok Sabha elections.

Top state officials, who held a meeting with SKM representatives, will soon submit a report to CM Nayab Singh Saini, who is expected to take a call on the farmers' 33-point charter of demands. The official team, led by Chief Principal Secretary to the CM Rajesh Khullar, assured the farmers of an expeditious redressal of their long-pending demands.

SKM leader Rattan Mann told *The Tribune* the farmers would wait for a prompt response from the CM, failing which the agitation plan finalised by them at a meeting in Rohtak on July 14 would be revived.

The BJP was able to win only five of the 10 Lok Sabha seats in the state as against all 10 in the 2019 elections. In terms of

LIKELY TO MEET SOME DEMANDS

- BJP anxious ahead of the Haryana Assembly elections as it could win only five of the 10 Lok Sabha seats in state
- Anti-BJP sentiment among farming community major factor behind poor LS poll show
- Top officials meet SKM leaders, assure them of early resolution of certain demands

votes, the BJP's share fell from 58.21 per cent in 2019 to 46.11 per cent with the Congress' rising from 28.51 per cent to 43.67 per cent. A strong anti-BJP sentiment among the farming community is said to be one of the major reasons behind the lacklustre show.

Sunday's meeting is seen as an attempt by the BJP to mollify the farmers ahead of the Assembly poll scheduled in October. "The CM is favourably inclined towards Haryana-specific demands of farmers," a senior officer, who attended the meeting said, adding another round of talks could also be held to arrive at a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

J&K security forces focusing on OGWs

JAMMU: Intelligence agencies and security forces are intensifying efforts to dismantle the network of overground workers (OGWs) across Jammu region that was built by Pakistan-based handlers, mostly after 2019. The network of overground workers is helping terrorists, who have infiltrated from Pakistan, not only by providing them with food and shelter but also by guiding them to areas where terror incidents took place in different areas of Jammu division. **INSIDE**

From Tokyo to Paris, Manpreet dreams of striking gold

AAKANKSHA N BHARDWAJ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JALANDHAR, JULY 21

"Ardaas karo — pray for us!" This is what Manpreet Singh tells his mother, Manjit Kaur, whenever he calls her.

Manpreet, the former India hockey captain, finds faith in God above and inspiration in his family, and especially in Jasmine, his daughter who was born soon after he led the team to a historic bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics. Since that bronze that heady

day in August, 2021, in Tokyo — an Olympics medal in hockey after a 41-year drought — Manpreet has been dreaming, hoping to change the colour of the medal from bronze to gold in Paris.

Some things have changed since that morning in Tokyo. That squad had 11 men from Punjab. That number is down to eight in the 16-member team for the Paris Olympics.

Of the 16, four are from Amritsar — skipper Harmanpreet Singh, Jarmanpreet Singh, Manpreet Singh, Mandeep

PUNJAB HAND

■ The squad that won bronze in Tokyo had 11 men from Punjab. The number is eight in the 16-member team for Paris Olympics.

■ Four of them are from Amritsar — skipper Harmanpreet Singh, Jarmanpreet Singh, Gurjant Singh and Shamsher Singh — and another four from Jalandhar: Manpreet Singh, Mandeep Singh, Sukhjeet Singh and vice-captain Hardik Singh.

preet Singh, Gurjant Singh and Shamsher Singh — and another four from Jalandhar: Manpreet Singh, Mandeep

Singh, Sukhjeet Singh and vice-captain Hardik Singh.

Manpreet, 29, knows that this will be his last shot at the medal, for his fourth Olympics will be his last. The reins of the team are now with Harmanpreet Singh, but that matters little to Manpreet. "Even if I am not the captain now, it does not make any difference. Every player has his role in hockey. The effort is to take everyone along. Being seniors, we have to inspire the youngsters," he told *The Tribune* earlier this month.

Three years of joy and trau-

ma have been transformative, made him the wise statesman of the team. He gave up captaincy in 2022 after leading India to a silver at the 2022 Commonwealth Games. He lost his faith in people when former coach Sjoerd Marijne, in a book released in 2022, accused him of influencing a player to underperform in 2022. He regained faith in the arms of his team and his family, especially little Jasmine.

"I was broken and lost faith in everyone," Manpreet said. "My mother encouraged me

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Former hockey skipper Manpreet Singh is playing his fourth Olympics.

BJP, Cong trade barbs over ED raids ahead of poll

Wrongdoers will have to face music: CM

TRIBUNE REPORTERS

SIRSA/KARNAL, JULY 21

Reacting to the recent raids by the Enforcement Directorate in the state, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday said those who indulge in wrongdoings would have to face the consequences. On the arrest of Congress MLA Surender Panwar by the ED, he said, "ED is an independent agency which works independently and decides its own course of action."

The Chief Minister criticised MP Deepender Hooda and accused him of failing to account for the actions during his father's tenure and urged him to explain the work done during the Congress' rule.

CM Saini labelled the Congress' 'Haryana Mange Hisaab' campaign as a journey of lies, with its leader Rahul Gandhi leading the misinformation.

He highlighted the issues from the Congress' 10-year tenure, including corruption in recruitments, limited electricity supply during summers and inadequate pension schemes for the elderly. He contrasted this with the BJP's focus on equitable development across the state.



CM Nayab Singh Saini at Karneshwar Mandir in Karnal on Sunday.

CONGRESS CAMPAIGN BASED ON LIES

Deepender Hooda should first account for the actions during his father's (Bhupinder Hooda) tenure and explain the work done during the rule of the Congress. The 'Haryana Mange Hisaab' campaign is a journey of lies.

Nayab Singh Saini, CHIEF MINISTER

launched 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign in Sirsa. The campaign, involving Radha Soami Satsang (Bias)

volunteers, saw the planting of 20,000 saplings to combat environmental pollution. Saini announced that the

government would appoint 50,000 'Van Mitras' (forest friends) to plant and protect trees, offering them Rs 20 per tree for their efforts.

In Karnal, CM Saini participated in various social programmes and also held tea programmes at the residences of party workers.

On the Aam Aadmi Party's five guarantees, he said, "They have given guarantees in Punjab and Delhi as well, and everyone knows what the worth of their guarantees are. None trusts their guarantees as they spread false promises. The situation in Punjab is terrible due to their guarantees. They talk about development, but they are involved in corruption. Their end is in jail," he said.

He referred to Congress and AAP as like siblings and said sometimes they criticize each other and sometimes they hug each other. "The Congress has a history of corruption with many major scams, and they have faced consequences. The AAP has also been involved in several scams, and their leaders are in jail," he said.

Regarding farmers going to Delhi, he said, "The Central leadership is looking into this. We appeal to the farmers that blocking roads is not a solution. It comes with dialogues."



MP Deepender Hooda during the 'Haryana Mange Hisaab' campaign in Rewari on Sunday.

Such tactics can't stop us from asking questions: Deepender

REWARI, JULY 21

Continuing his trade against the BJP over ED raids, Rohtak MP Deepender Hooda on Sunday said ever since the 'Haryana Mange Hisaab' campaign started, the ED and CBI had also started a parallel campaign against Congress leaders at the behest of the BJP government. "The BJP government should not be under the misconception that the Congress will stop asking questions," he asserted.

"There is a wave in the favour of the Congress and that is why

Asks why BJP govt is afraid of giving account of its work in 10 years

the party and its leaders are on everyone's target," he added.

He said the "Haryana Mange Hisaab" campaign would continue even during the Lok Sabha session, and asked why the BJP government was afraid of giving the account of the work done in its two terms.

He carried out a 'padyatra' in

the Bawal Assembly constituency and garlanded the statues of Shaheed Bhagatram, Chotu Ram and Bhimrao Ambedkar. Talking to the media, he continued his attack on the BJP government over the Agnipath scheme.

He asked why Haryana became the capital of temporary jobs without reservation, without pension and without merit. Former MP Raj Babbur, Rewari MLA Chiranjeev Rao, Rajasthan MLA Lalit Yadav, were also present on the occasion. — TNS

CBI books Rohtak oil mill, partners for ₹20 crore fraud with bank

HISAR, JULY 21

The CBI has registered a case against a Rohtak-based oil mill, three of its partners and several others for cheating, criminal conspiracy and abuse of official position and causing a loss of Rs 20.66 crore to Bank of Baroda in Hisar.

Yogendra Singh Saini, Bank AGM and Regional Head, Hisar, lodged a complaint that Shri Banke Bihari Oil Mills, a borrower firm registered in Mehram, through its partners Shakuntala Devi, Vipul Singla and Sonam Bansal, along with unknown officials and private persons cheated the

11 bank officials face disciplinary action

bank of Rs 20.66 crore. The complaint was filed on June 13 and the CBI registered the FIR on July 19 in Delhi.

The firm initially enjoyed a credit facility of Rs 17.98 crore with HDFC Bank and later the account was taken over by the BoB which sanctioned a credit facility of Rs 22.96. The audit report in July last year revealed that bank funds had been diverted. The bank also conducted an investigation and found lapses by 11 bank officials against whom internal disciplinary proceedings were underway. — TNS



Congress workers protest the Sonepat MLA's arrest at Gandhi Chowk in Sonepat on Sunday.

Congress protests MLA's arrest in Sonepat, says not afraid of action

SONEPAT, JULY 21

Congress workers today held a protest against the arrest of party MLA Surender Panwar by the ED at Gandhi Chowk here today. The protest was led by Zila Parishad member Sanjay Badwasnia, who tied himself with a chain, to protest the arrest.

Badwasnia said the BJP was afraid of the Congress' cam-

paign 'Haryana Mange Hisaab' and now it was threatening leaders through the central agencies. "The people are fed up with unemployment, corruption, poor law and order and inflation. The Congress is raising their voice and it would work to oust the BJP from power," he said.

Giving warning to the BJP government, he said no

Congressman would be afraid of the BJP's action. The Congress would go door to door to tell the people about the BJP's misuse of power. Congress leaders Manoj Jain, Binny Bhardwaj, Prashant Sharma, Anuj Jain, Sanjay Chauhan, councillor Surender Nayyar and others were present during the protest. — TNS

Central agency doing its job, BJP has no role: Rao Inderjit

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HJAJAR/GURUGRAM, JULY 21

Reacting to the ED action, Union Minister Rao Inderjit Singh on Sunday said the Congress had been in power for several years and the cases against Congress politicians or anyone else were registered many years ago.

"The ED does it work slowly. It is doing its job, and the BJP has nothing to do with it. The ED is taking action against only those who have done wrong," said Rao while interacting with the media on the sidelines of a function in Bahadurgarh area on Sunday.

On being asked that the Opposition leaders are blaming the BJP for the ED raids, Rao said: "I don't know why they are saying this. Getting sympathy may be their motive as the Assembly elections are near. They have been in the Opposition for the past 10 years, so they will definitely try to bring their party into power."

In reply to another question,



Union Minister Rao Inderjit Singh at an event in Bahadurgarh town.

the Union Minister said the party would take a final call, but his recommendation was that the ticket should be given to new faces in the upcoming Assembly poll. The BJP always remained ready to contest the election, he added.

In Gurugram, Rao Inderjit dismissed the Congress campaigns publicity gimmick. He said rather than seeking 'hisaab' Congress should be giving one for the rampant corruption which continues to rip-

ple many developmental issues in the state till date.

"The scams and corruption conducted by them a decade ago haunts the state, region and city even today. They should rather than seeking 'hisaab' be giving one as corruption by their leaders is talk of the town," said Rao Inderjit.

Earlier, Deepender said the BJP government owed maximum accountability to the millennium city, which was turned into 'Kuda City' by the BJP.

Political circles abuzz as Bishonis skip event attended by CM Saini

DEEPENDER DESWAL
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HISAR, JULY 21

The absence of the BJP's Adampur MLA Bhavya Bishnoi and his father and former MP Kuldeep Bishnoi in the yesterday's state-level function attended by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has set political circles abuzz. The father-son duo though were present in Hisar district and attended functions in the Adampur assembly segment.

The function was held in Arya Nagar village of the Nalwa Assembly constituency in the district yesterday which was attended by the BJP MLAs, including Hisar MLA and Health Minister Kamal Gupta, Nalwa MLA and Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa and Hansi MLA Vinod Bhyana besides the JJP MLA from Barwala.

BJP district president Asha Khedar said: "All MLAs from the region were sent the invites. Though I could not attend the function as I was out of station, all MLAs who were in Hisar were supposed to attend it".

Bhavya Bishnoi could not be contacted. However, a spokesperson for the Bishnois Mohit Sharma said Kuldeep Bishnoi and Bhavya Bishnoi had sched-

ALL IS NOT WELL?

Former MP Kuldeep Bishnoi had also stayed away from the electioneering during the Lok Sabha elections for some time and joined the party's campaign after Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini visited him at his Delhi residence.

uled programmes in their own Adampur segment. "They have some more programmes in their own segment and will stay in Hisar at night as well," he said. However, a close aide of Kuldeep Bishnoi and Randhir Panihar attended the CM's function.

Supporters of Kuldeep had expressed their unhappiness with the BJP after he was denied the Lok Sabha ticket from Hisar in the Lok Sabha elections. Congress candidate Jai Prakash won the Hisar Lok Sabha seat.

Bishnoi had also stayed away from the electioneering for some time and joined the party's campaign after Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini visited him at his Delhi residence. Later, BJP candidate Ranjit Singh too had taken exception to the party's campaign in Adampur and Nalwa assembly segments - both the segments have considerable influence of Bishnois.

Power consumption in F'bad up by 15.5%

BIJENDRA AHLAWAT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

FARIDABAD, JULY 21

The demand for power in the Faridabad operation circle of the Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam (DHBVN) has gone up by 15 per cent in the past year. The circle has around 5.70 lakh domestic and non-domestic connections.

The average daily consumption of power in Faridabad in June was around 272.80 lakh units per day, which is around 36.02 lakh units higher than the 236.02 lakh units consumed in July 2023. The demand which was around 192.53 in July 2020 has seen a growth of 41.90 per cent in the past four years, according to details available with the Power Department. The department may be witnessing a rise of another 20 to 25 per cent in the next one year as the development works in around 200 regularised residential colonies are likely to be taken up. This would mean hundreds of new connections, said sources in the department.

The rise in power consumption in the past about one year,



which is around 15.58 per cent, is mainly attributed to factors like the rise in inhabitation areas (residential) and activities related to commercial and non-domestic sectors, claim sources in the Nigam. Subhash Lamba, a spokesperson of the All India Electricity Employees' Federation of India said no new power plant had been set up in the district in the past about 20 years, he said that it had made the department dependent on sources from outside the state, resulting in an additional financial burden both on the department and the consumers.

Naresh Kakkar, Superintendent Engineer, DHBVN said that as the summer and rainy seasons saw a sharp rise in demand, the department was fully prepared and equipped to meet the requirement.

In a first, waste-to-charcoal plants to come up in Faridabad, Gurugram

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21

Waste-to-charcoal plants, also known as green coal plants, will be set up in the state with the Central government's support. This project will be the first-of-its-kind green initiative and will be set up in Faridabad and Gurugram.

An MoU was signed between NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited (NVVNL), a wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC Limited, and the Municipal Corporations of Gurugram and Faridabad in the presence of Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, and Minister of State for Urban Local Bodies Subhash Sudha today.

The MoU was signed by A Mona Sreenivas, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Faridabad, Narhari Singh Banger, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Gurugram, and Renu Narang, CEO, NVVNL.

The Chief Minister said today is a very important day

TO COST ₹500 CR EACH

- The green coal plants will be set up in Bandhwari, Gurugram, Motuka and Faridabad at a cost of around ₹500 crore each
- These plants will convert 1,500 tonnes of waste collected daily from Gurugram and Faridabad into charcoal

for Haryana as an MoU has been signed for setting up plants to produce green charcoal. According to the agreement, NVVNL will establish waste-to-charcoal plants in Gurugram and Faridabad under the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign of the Government of India, he said.

The Chief Minister said green coal plants will be set up in Bandhwari, Gurugram, and Motuka, Faridabad, at a cost of around Rs 500 crore each. These plants will convert 1,500 tonnes of waste collected daily from Gurugram and Faridabad into charcoal. The Municipal Corporations of Gurugram and Faridabad will provide 20 acres for these plants each. NTPC will soon take possession of the land and start setting up the plants, which are expected to be completed in about 30

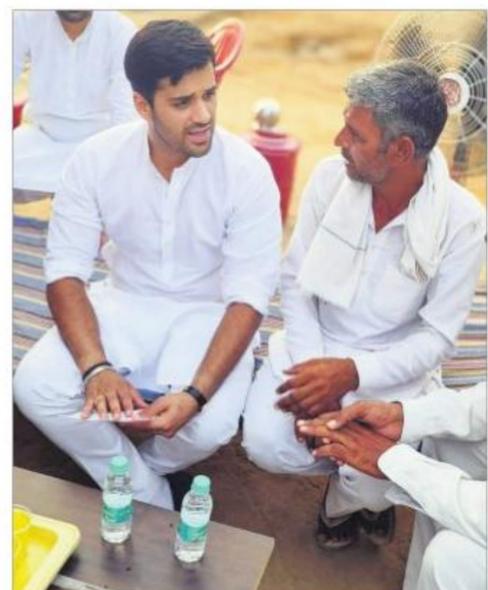
months. These plants will be based entirely on indigenous technology, Saini said the establishment of these plants will significantly contribute to the realisation of PM Narendra Modi's Swachh Bharat campaign, making Gurugram and Faridabad garbage-free.

In the future, the cities will be free from waste heaps. He said the waste-to-green coal plants in Gurugram and Faridabad will not only provide a permanent solution to the waste problem but will also increase energy production. This charcoal will be used in power generation plants, reducing the use of mineral coal. He said this effort will play a crucial role in significantly enhancing urban cleanliness and promoting environmental sustainability in Gurugram and Faridabad, the Chief Minister said.

Earlier, Commissioner and Secretary, Urban Local Bodies Department, Vikas Gupta said with the increasing urbanisation, the generation of waste is also continuously rising, making waste disposal a major challenge in cities. To address this problem, we have initiated this step with NVVNL under the guidance of the Chief Minister. The setting up of these plants in Gurugram and Faridabad will strengthen waste management, he said.

NVVNL CEO Renu Narang said currently NTPC is operating a plant in Varanasi that produces charcoal from 600 tonne of waste daily. However, the two plants to be established in Haryana will be the largest in India, producing charcoal from 1,500 tonne of waste daily. After their success, this technology will be considered for implementation in other cities, she said.

This initiative aims to implement efficient waste management strategies, including better collection, recycling, and disposal methods.



BJP MLA Bhavya Bishnoi holds a meeting with his supporters in Adampur Assembly segment on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO



Govt. of Haryana



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Ram Singh
Vs.
Jatinder Patil @ Jatinder Patil
CNR No.:
PBPTB0-000761-2023
Next Date: 22.08.2024

Publication issued to:
Jatinder Patil @ Jatinder Patil
:- Gulab Rai Patil
Village Dulladi, Teh. Nabha,
District Patiala.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 22.08.2024 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to:
https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=district_notice&district=patiala

Dated, this day of 19.07.2024.
Sd/-
Additional Civil Judge
(Senior Division),
CL24037115 Nabha.

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HC directs strict execution of SOP for detoxification of drug addicts

SAURABH MALIK

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has asked the Chief Secretaries of Punjab and Haryana, along with the Advisor to the UT Administrator, to establish and implement a standard operating procedure (SOP) to facilitate the detoxification of drug addicts and reduce drug trafficking.

The Bench of Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Sudeepti Sharma took note of the fact that Section 27 of the NDPS Act penalises consumers of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances with rigorous imprisonment up to six months or a fine up to Rs 10,000, or both. But Section 64-A of the Act provides immunity from prosecution to addicts voluntarily undergoing treatment at government-recognised de-addiction centres.

The court emphasised the necessity of aligning Section 27 with Section 64-A to fully mobilise statutory provisions

USE DRUG DETECTION KITS: COURT

■ The key directives include filing an application with the trial judge for voluntary detoxification of the accused, using a drug detection kit to verify the individual's addiction status, ensuring the completion of treatment at a de-addiction centre to grant immunity from prosecution, and deploying adequate plainclothes police personnel at de-addiction centres

■ The court emphasised it would decrease drug demand and trafficking, lessen the investigative burden on officers and reduce trial court cases under the NDPS Act

■ The immunity would extend to those dealing in small quantities of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, provided they underwent de-addiction treatment

for the detoxification of drug addicts to decrease drug demand and trafficking, lessen the investigative burden on officers and reduce trial court cases under the NDPS Act.

The key directives include filing an application with the trial judge for voluntary detoxification of the accused, using a drug detection kit to verify the individual's addiction status, ensuring the completion of treatment at a de-addiction centre to grant immunity from prosecution, and deploying adequate plainclothes police personnel at de-addiction centres to prevent untoward incidents.

The Bench asserted Section 27 and Section 64-A

without such an SOP would remain ineffective, defeating the statute's purpose. The court further directed trial judges to elicit consent from the accused for using the drug detection kit upon receiving a report under Section 173 CrPC or Section 193 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

If the accused is confirmed to be a drug addict and consents to treatment, the trial judge may send them to a recognised de-addiction centre. Upon completion of the treatment, the trial judge may grant immunity from prosecution as per Section 64-A, based on an application by the public prosecutor.

The Bench added that

immunity would extend to those dealing in small quantities of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, provided they underwent de-addiction treatment. To ensure effective implementation, the court stressed the necessity for all concerned centres to purchase and stock drug detection kits.

Additional directives to tackle drug warlords

The High Court also issued a slew of directions to the Chief Secretaries of Punjab and Haryana, along with the Advisor to the UT Administrator, to bring to book drug warlords who deploy peddlers for trading narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.

The court noted that the central and state governments were empowered to exercise statutory leverages under the NDPS Act, but the lack of a "designated authority" rendered these provisions ineffective.

To galvanise these provisions, the court directed the immediate constitution of a designated authority to exercise statutory powers and ensure the provisions do not remain idle. Investigating officers are required to be thoroughly trained to make the provisions functional, understanding the conditions under which a designated authority can exercise discretion, particularly requiring the person claiming immunity to make a full and true disclosure of all circumstances related to the contravention.

The court directed the Registrar (Judicial) to circulate this order to all Chief Secretaries and Directors-General of Police in all federal states of India, ensuring nationwide compliance.

Wary of violence, Net blocked in Nuh ahead of Jalabhishek Yatra

SUMEDHA SHARMA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

GURUGRAM, JULY 21

The Haryana Government on Sunday beefed up security and ordered suspension of mobile Internet and bulk SMS services in Nuh district for 24 hours ahead of the Jalabhishek Yatra that was marred by violence last year.

Though according to the local authorities and the police there were no inputs on disturbance of any kind erupting during the yatra, the government was taking precautionary steps to ensure peace in the district.

The mobile Internet service in the district would remain suspended for 24 hours from 6 pm on Sunday, according to an order by Haryana Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Anurag Rastogi. The local administration has also barred the entry of cow vigilante Bitu Bajrang in Nuh. He has been ordered not to take part in the yatra. Bajrang is one of the key accused who allegedly instigated the Nuh violence last year.

The Nuh police and Guru-

POLITICIANS TO STAY AWAY?

The right-wing outfits had planned to rope in BJP leaders, including Haryana CM Nayab Saini, for the Jalabhishek Yatra, but they have not confirmed their participation so far. Sources claimed due to the administration's ban on speeches, most politicians were not keen on taking part in the yatra.

gram police also plan to keep the proposed route of the yatra under drone surveillance. The police have conducted flag marches and special teams are being stationed at vulnerable points. The Nuh administration has barred carrying of arms/sticks and playing of loud music during the yatra. There is a complete ban on speeches also.

"Everything is under control and we are taking precautions to ensure a peaceful yatra. Participants have strictly been advised against any hoilangism," Nuh DC Hridayender Khadgata told *The Tribune*.



Agriculture Minister Kanwar Pal Gujjar at a function held in Pratap Nagar in Yamunanagar.

Govt to form committee to educate farmers: Gujjar

SHIV KUMAR SHARMA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

YAMUNANAGAR, JULY 21

The Haryana Government will soon form 'Haryana Agricultural Committee' on the lines of the Haryana Medical Council to streamline agricultural education and other related activities.

This move by the government will also curb the use of pesticides in Haryana and provide relief to farmers from the increasing costs of agriculture. This was announced by Haryana Agriculture Minister Kanwar Pal Gujjar in a 'Krishi Kalyan Sammelan' held in Pratap Nagar town of Yamunanagar district on Sunday.

Stressing on the need of high tech laboratories, he said, "Our aim is to establish such laboratories where soil, water, pesticides and fertilisers can be tested for quality. These laboratories will also be capable of testing the quality of agricul-

tural products at a global level." Addressing the employees of the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, he said that the Agriculture Department would also start world-class Technical and Excellence Centres like the Horticulture Department.

"These centres will focus on crops such as sugarcane, cotton, oilseeds, maize, coarse grains, rice and agricultural engineering, helping farmers produce high-quality seeds and products," said Gujjar.

He further said that technology-driven offices for Agriculture Development Officers (ADO) and Horticulture Development Officers (HDO) would be established in the state, which would be referred to as Plant Clinics. He added that these clinics would provide all necessary facilities to farmers close to their villages.

He said a helpline number

would be issued in every block for farmers to report their issues and block agricultural officers would be responsible for resolving these problems. The Agriculture Minister also inaugurated a Block Agriculture Office in tehsil complex of Pratap Nagar town.

He emphasised that before every season, agriculture development officers and block agriculture officers would verify the stock of seeds and fertilisers in their respective areas.

The minister said soon, various committees of farmers would be formed and around 20 farmers would be included in one committee. "These committees will talk to other farmers and provide them information on reducing the use of pesticides in the fields and on crop residue management," said Gujjar.

Govt sets target to open 500 creches across state

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21

Haryana Women and Child Development Minister Aseem Goel recently said while the government has set a target to open 500 creches for child care, more would be opened if necessary.

Following its creche policy for 2024-25, the government has approved a comprehensive budget. Reflecting the state government's commitment to women and child welfare, Rs 32.15 crore has been allocated. Goel said in 2020, the government decided to open 500 creches in the state for children. The Women and Child Development Department has already opened 165 creches in 16 districts in the

first phase.

He said Haryana is the first state in the country to create its own creche policy.

Detailing the creche policy, the minister said the trained staff at these centres — located near women's workplaces — can take care for children aged six months to six years for 8-10 hours. The staff manage activities such as regular health check-ups and vaccinations, sleeping arrangements, education, and recreation. The creches also provide nutritious meals. "There are feeding rooms for infants, allowing mothers to feed their babies during designated lunch breaks," he added.

Regarding future policies, Goel said the Women and

CM mourns death of MLA's son

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MAHENDRAGARH, JULY 21

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini reached Narnaul today to express his deep condolences on the demise of Umesh Yadav (44), son of Narnaul MLA and former minister Om Prakash Yadav. Umesh passed away on Friday due to an illness.

The CM consoled the bereaved family and paid tributes to the departed soul. Cabinet ministers Dr Banwari Lal, Dr Abhe Singh Yadav, Ateli MLA Sitaram Yadav, former ministers Ram Bilas Sharma and Om Prakash Dhankar were among those present on the occasion.

Haryana Diary

Health Minister's 'official' visit to Rajasthan

Hisar: The visit of Health Minister Dr Kamal Gupta to Hanumangarh town of Rajasthan on Saturday kicked up another storm as the minister's tour programme showed that he would hear the public grievances in the Karni Dharamshala in Hanumangarh and would also attend a rasam pagri. The copies of the official tour programme were also marked for the DGP Haryana, ADGP CID and SPs of Hisar, Fatehabad and Sirsa districts for a police escort on the way. However, Congress leader Manoj Rathi questioned whether the minister was going there to redress public grievances or attend a condolence meeting in Rajasthan. "What is the rationale behind a Haryana minister listening to the public grievances in Rajasthan? Apparently, the tour programme was designed to show it as an official tour so that the minister could participate in a private function in an official vehicle," he alleged. Gupta had also been in controversy over his demand of changing the name of Hisar to 'Agrodhak' and also when he pushed aside a local social activist accusing him of being his critic.



Congress MP Deepender Hooda with the goat and sheep.

Sheep, goats in Cong's padyatra

Yamunanagar: These days, people of the Gadaria Pal community are a worried lot due to the increasing number of cases of theft of their sheep and goats in the district. With the local administration failing to find any solution to their problem, a few community members, along with their sheep and goats, reached the 'padyatra' programme held by the Congress party in Yamunanagar Assembly segment recently. Rohtak Congress MP Deepender Hooda and Ambala MP Varun Chaudhary were the chief guests at the padyatra programme. Led by community leader Narsingh Pal, they handed over one goat each to Deepender and Varun, telling them that most of the people in their community were poor and the livestock was the main source of their livelihood. With hope in their eyes, they requested them to protect their sheep and goats from thieves.

CM's remark brings hope to Grover supporters

Rohtak: The recent visit of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini to Rohtak gave some relief to the supporters of former minister Manish Grover as Saini addressed him as 'Bhavi Mantri'

while speaking at a gathering. After the CM's remark, the supporters are fully confident that Grover will get the party ticket for the upcoming Assembly polls. Grover, a close aide to former CM Manohar Lal Khattar, lost the previous Assembly polls to Congress nominee Bharat Bhushan Batra, hence, some other local BJP leaders too are vying for the party ticket from Rohtak this time.

Last-row seat in party event irks AAP leader

Kurukshetra: Allotting last-row seat to the Kurukshetra district chief of the Aam Aadmi Party and workers in the party's event held in Panchkula on Saturday, has not gone well with district chief Vishal Khubber, and he announced to quit his post. Expressing displeasure through a late night social media post, Vishal Khubber wrote that he had been associated with AAP since 2012. He announced his resignation from all party posts because 'he was not getting due respect' but would continue working as a party worker. In the party's programme, he was treated as being a part of the crowd and offered a seat in the last row. Khubber had also announced to hold a press conference on Sunday to disclose the activities of the party, however, later he went incommunicado.

No-confidence motion against ZP head

Kaithal: The no-confidence motion against Zila Parishad chairperson Deepak Malik, also known as Deep Malik, on Friday has increased the political temperature in Kaithal. Malik was elected as chairperson with the support of JJP, but according to sources, after the alliance broke up between BJP and JJP, some BJP leaders had started a campaign against Malik. The no-confidence motion came after 15 councillors submitted affidavits on July 12 to Deputy Commissioner Prashant Panwar asserting their majority support for the no-confidence motion. Out of the 21-member council, 17 councillors attended the meeting and cast their votes. However, on the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, the result was not declared, and the ballot papers were sealed and stored in the treasury. This voting has kept the future of the chairperson in limbo.

Road divider turns into political issue

Panipat: The divider on the under-construction road in Model Town has become a political issue here. Now, BJP MLA Pramod Vij and former BJP councillor Lokesh Nagroo have come face-to-face over it. Two roads in the posh Model Town are the dream roads for the MLA and he got special approval for these roads from former Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and tenders have also been allotted for the construction of these two roads. The residents welcomed the widening of the roads, but they opposed the construction of dividers between the roads as they said the roads would be congested badly. The people took up the issue with former councillor Lokesh Nagroo and he got the work stopped. The issue has gone viral on social media. Whether the divider will be constructed or not, only time will tell.

To shift from paddy, farmers demand high-yielding options, assured buyback

RUCHIKA M KHANNA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21
The state government's ambitious plan to incentivise farmers who shun paddy cultivation has been welcomed by farmers. They, however, feel that it should be accompanied by a rollout of high-yield varieties of alternative crops and sustainable buyback mechanism for those crops.

Yesterday, Punjab Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian had announced that the government would give Rs 17,500 per hectare incentive to the farmers shifting to alternative crops, leaving the water-guzzling paddy. The policy would be effective from the current year.

The announcement of the new policy has come at a time when around 96 per cent of paddy sowing is already complete. As of date, paddy transplantation on 28 lakh hectares has been completed. "But it's better late than never. The biggest threat facing Punjab is its imminent desertification in another two decades. Action to reverse the situation has to be taken now. We have started reaching out to farmers in areas where paddy is yet to be transplanted, asking them to go in for



INCENTIVE AMOUNT NOT ENOUGH	OTHER CROPS HAVE LOW YIELD	ESCAPING FROM BRINGING NEW AGRICULTURE POLICY
<p>“The incentive amount is just ₹7,085 per acre. The average income of a non-basmati paddy sowing farmer is ₹74,200 per acre... Why will he opt for this scheme when there is no assured buyback of other crops at MSP?” Sandeep Jakhar, ABOHAR MLA</p>	<p>“Farmer barely makes both ends meet through paddy cultivation, but what will happen if he produces other crops, having much less yield and no assurance of his crop being bought at MSP?” Rajinder Singh Deepsingh, KIRTI KISAN UNION LEADER</p>	<p>“The government has abandoned claims of a radical new agricultural policy to resolve the state's agrarian crisis and has limited it to a meagre amount for the cultivation of alternative crops, that too after paddy sowing is complete.” Rajinder Singh Joginder Singh Ugrahan and Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan</p>

other crops,” Punjab Director Agriculture Jaswant Singh told *The Tribune*.

Jagmohan Singh Patiala of the BKU-Dakaunda, said only the potato and sunflower

growers would benefit this year, as paddy sowing was almost complete.

Sandeep Jakhar, MLA from Abohar, said the amount translated into just Rs 7,085

per acre. “The average income of a non-basmati paddy sowing farmer is Rs 74,200 per acre, if the yield is 32 quintal per acre. Why will he opt for this scheme when there is

no assured buyback of other crops at MSP?” he said.

Rajinder Singh Deepsingh-wala, vice-president of the Kirti Kisan Union, said though he welcomed the first “baby step”, it did not seem a well thought out and planned exercise. “Over the years, there is lack of research on high-yield varieties of legumes; millet seeds are not easily available; and cotton crop is repeatedly falling prey to insect attacks. Farmer barely makes both ends meet through paddy cultivation, but what will happen if he produces other crops, having much less yield and no assurance of his crop being bought at MSP?” he said.

Agreeing with him, paddy grower Shingara Singh of Fatehpur village near Patiala said if the incentive was higher, many farmers would be open to shifting to potato and maize.

Another farmer, Kulwant Singh from Kishangarh in Mansa, said it had taken almost 20 years for Punjab farmers, especially in the south Malwa region, to ready their sandy fields for paddy cultivation. “The government should set a target to wean away farmers from paddy and then work on it by providing them a ready market for alternative crops,” he said.

Retired govt official alleges ₹38L fraud by business partner

AVNEET KAUR
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JALANDHAR, JULY 21
In an alleged fraud case, Karnail Singh, a retired election tehsildar from Hoshiarpur, accused his former business partner, Hardeep Kumar of Jalandhar's Abadpura, of defrauding him of Rs 38 lakh. Singh claims that Kumar fled to Canada in November last year after selling the entire stock of their pharmaceutical business. Singh's complaint to the Commissionerate Police (CP) last November resulted in an FIR only a few days ago on July 16, highlighting what he describes as police's sluggish response. Their business, Maple Pharmaceutical, was founded in October 2020.

Singh invested 75 per cent of the capital, amounting to Rs 38 lakh, while Kumar, an experienced pharmaceutical professional, contributed the remainder. Singh claims that after jointly running the business for three years, Kumar sold the entire stock amounting to Rs 40 lakh and fled to Canada.

Singh described his relationship with Kumar, stating that he first met him while serving as a tehsildar in Jalandhar in 2015-16. Kumar used to provide him medicines on dis-

Accuses police of 'sluggish action'

count. “This professional relationship grew into a personal connection, which led to the business proposal in 2020. Kumar suggested that when I retired, I buy a local pharmaceutical company whose owner was moving abroad. The deal was settled at Rs 44 lakh, with me contributing Rs 33 lakh via bank transfer and an additional Rs 5.56 lakh to set up the office,” he said.

He added that the licence was obtained in Kumar's name, but a legal agreement documented their joint partnership, including a joint bank account with him as a signing authority.

“My focus shifted to family matters in 2023, following the cancer diagnosis of my brother-in-law. Kumar took advantage of my preoccupation, liquidated our stock, and fled with the proceeds,” he added.

Meanwhile, Sahil Chaudhary, SHO Division Number 6, said the complaint was filed with a CP officer, and that after a thorough investigation and necessary formalities, the case was forwarded to them for FIR registration.

Team of 16th finance panel arrives in state

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21
The state government has pinned high hopes on the 16th Finance Commission that began its visit to the state from today.

The cash-strapped state is looking for additional grants and a special package to rebuild its old infrastructure. The 15th Finance Commission had given Punjab a Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant of Rs 25,968 crore.

The six-member team of the 16th Finance Commission, led by its Chairman Arvind Panagariya, reached Chandigarh this evening. The team is accompanied by other officials of the commission.

Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Cheema said, “The state has high hopes from the commission and I am certain that they will surpass those.”

It is learnt that the commission will hold meetings with state government functionaries tomorrow, before meeting representatives of urban and rural local bodies. The team will also hold meetings with leaders of Opposition parties tomorrow. On Tuesday, the team will visit Amritsar and meet representatives of trade and industry.

Growers upbeat over boom in basmati exports

Shipments soar 83% over 4 years, raises hopes of better prices this year too

NEERAJ MOHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21
A significant surge in basmati rice exports has growers optimistic ahead of the harvesting season in Punjab and Haryana. Despite the condition of the Minimum Export Price, India's basmati exports saw an increase of nearly 25% in the 2023-24 fiscal, at Rs 48,389.21 crore. The jump is expected to drive up basmati prices, offering a much-needed boost to the local agricultural economy.

As per data of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), in the previous fiscal year, India exported 45.61 LMT of basmati worth Rs 38,524.10 crore. Over the past four years, basmati exports have witnessed over 83% increase — from Rs 26,415 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 48,389 crore in 2023-24. Basmati was exported to



150 countries in 2023-24, up from 149 countries in the previous fiscal. Monthly export statistics released by APEDA indicate that India's exports saw a 13.11% rise in April to May figures, reaching \$1,037 million compared to \$917 million during the corresponding period last year. Saudi Arabia was the largest importer of Indian basmati in

Asia. Basmati prices are hovering around Rs 4,000 a quintal while the premium quality is fetching Rs 5,500 to Rs 6,000. Traders believe that if the trend continues, it may give a boost to the prices in the harvesting season in September.

Following an increase in demand and exports, the area under basmati cultivation has also gone up in Punjab and Haryana, with the traders predicting a record production this year.

Last year, Punjab saw a 16% increase in the area under basmati cultivation during the kharif season, reaching nearly 6 lakh hectares, of the total paddy area of 32 lakh hectares, compared to 4.95 lakh hectares in 2022. This year, the state agriculture department projects that acreage in Punjab may reach around 10 lakh hectares, surpassing Haryana's nearly 7.80 lakh hectares — the highest in the country.

Cops' 'grounded' approach to war against drugs

Sit with villagers to share, discuss measures to tackle the menace

ARCHIT WATTS
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MUKTSAR, JULY 21
To make people feel comfortable and to extract information related to drug menace from them, the Muktsar district police have started behaving like commoners. A police team under the leadership of Malout DSP Pawanjit recently held a meeting on the floor issue at Jhorar village, where the cops sat on the floor along with the public. The village is notorious for the drug problem.

Notably, a large number of cases have been registered under the NDPS Act in the village, 13 km from Malout town.

Malout DSP Pawanjit said, “This is a fact that Jhorar village is notorious for drugs. I, along with the SHO and additional SHO of Malout Sadar police station, held a meeting with the villagers and sat on the floor with them. We discussed the ways to curb the drug menace. Besides, the villagers raised some other



A police team sits on the floor with public during a meeting at Jhorar village in Muktsar district.

problems being faced by them, which are being looked into. This is just a step to make the public feel friendly and assist us in our duty.”

Meanwhile, the cops are also holding seminars in educational institutes, 'sath' (village common land), etc. Faridkot IGP Gursharan Singh Sandhu had recently

attended a programme at the Red Cross Bhawan in Muktsar town, in which nearly 300 representatives of different organisations, sarpanches and others participated.

Muktsar SSP Bhagirath Singh Meena said the district police had frozen the properties of drug smugglers worth about Rs 3 crore in the recent

past. “We are also motivating people who want to assist us in our ongoing war against drugs,” he claimed.

Ranjit Singh, founder member of the anti-drug committee of Gurusar village here, said, “We have started reviving the anti-drug committees in the district and cops are supporting us as of now.”

Only three foreign medical graduates to get stipend in state

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

FARIDKOT, JULY 21
After the Finance Department approved the funding of only three new seats for the payment of stipend to foreign medical graduates (FMG) for internship in the government medical colleges of the state, the Punjab Medical Council (PMC) has reduced the internship seats from 36 to three.

As many as 62 FMGs from Punjab are eligible for the internship after they cleared the Foreign Medical Graduates Exam (FMGE) conducted by the National Board of Examination in January this year. Last month, the PMC had offered 36 seats to FMGs for internship. Every medical intern gets Rs 15,000 per month as stipend. However, after the Finance Department's order, the PMC has issued a notification saying only three seats are available for internship.

While these 62 FMGs of January 2024 batch are struggling to start their internship for the last about

five months, a new batch of FMGs, comprising about 250 medical graduates, has joined them this week.

The latest FMGE test was conducted on July 6 and its result was declared on July 17. In the latest FMGE test, 35,819 foreign medical graduates had appeared for the exam all over the country and about 7,200 (20.19 per cent) of them passed the exams. About 250 of the 7,200 successful candidates are from Punjab.

Akashdeep Aggarwal, secretary, PMC, said the council was in the process of starting internship of all these students at Government Hospital, Sector 16, Chandigarh. “We are discussing the matter with the UT administration,” he said.

HC mandates digital verification for document registration, bail sureties

SAURABH MALIK
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21
In a bid to combat fraudulent activities in document registration and bail procedures, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has mandated the use of mAadhaar for verifying witnesses and executants. Justice Anoop Chitkara's ruling aims at enhancing the authenticity of legal transactions involving power of attorneys, sale deeds and other documents.

Justice Chitkara also called for the use of mAadhaar in bail matters to verify sureties to plug in the “loophole” associated with the “illegal” and “immoral” demand for money by individuals identifying the authenticity of sureties.

To avoid incarceration of accused following inability to furnish sureties, Justice Chitkara further ruled it was permissible for the officer or court concerned to reduce the bond amount or exempt the surety bond altogether, if the accused — to their satisfaction — demonstrated inability to provide the same. The High Court registry



“The court directions are likely to shut down the business of illicit service charges, while mandating the use of the mAadhaar application for surety verification. Justice Anoop Chitkara

was also directed to forward the order to the Chief Secretaries of Punjab, Haryana, and the UT Administrator, to “consider this aspect”.

The order was also directed to be sent to all Session Judges of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh. The directions came as Justice Chitkara observed that the court had granted bail to an accused, while directing him to furnish surety in accordance with the provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. But the ground reality was that the investigators or the attesting officers insisted on verification of

sureties from — among others — the lambardar and ward members, after they appeared before the courts.

Justice Chitkara asserted: “It is common knowledge that many people, who identify the authenticity of the sureties, take money to cover travelling expenses, loss of day's earnings or charges for providing service, which is not only illegal and impermissible but also unethical and immoral and this loophole must be plugged in.”

Justice Chitkara added the court directions were likely to shut down the business of illicit service charges, while

Road safety project delivers, fatalities dip 16% in 5 months

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21

The state government's flagship road safety project Sadak Surakhya Force (SSF), launched in January this year, has started yielding results.

The number of fatalities in road accidents in the state came down by around 16 per cent between February 2024 and June 2024, compared to the corresponding period last year. In January this

year, CM Bhagwant Mann had flagged off the SSF fleet of 144 vehicles.

Navdeep Asija, Traffic Adviser to the Punjab Government, said the fatalities had come down due to timely evacuation of victims. Hoshiarpur district has reported the highest dip in fatalities (28), followed by Khanna (27), Fatehgarh Sahib (27) and Kapurthala (22). — TNS

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Pipelines Division

RECRUITMENT FOR FILLING NON-EXECUTIVE VACANCIES IN PIPELINES DIVISION

Advertisement No.: PL/HR/ESTB/RECT-2024 Date: 22.07.2024

Pipelines Division of Indian Oil Corporation Limited invites applications from eligible Indian Nationals for Non-Executive positions in Group C and D at various locations of Pipelines Division for the posts of Engineering Assistant (Electrical/Mechanical/T&I) and Technical Attendant-I in states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

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The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Bail under UAPA

SC relief for undertrials languishing in jails

IN a landmark decision, the Supreme Court has granted bail to a person who was booked under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967, and was languishing in jail for nine years due to the slow pace of the wheels of justice. The ruling reiterates the judicial principle that "bail, not jail, is the basic rule". It comes as a relief in a legal landscape where the reluctance to grant bail has led to prolonged incarceration and significant human rights concerns. The higher judiciary has been grappling with an overwhelming number of bail applications, highlighting a troubling trend of reluctance at lower judicial levels to grant bail. Prolonged detention often infringes on the personal liberties of the accused, even as their trials progress at a snail's pace.

Several recent cases exemplify the shift towards upholding personal liberty through the granting of bail in stringent cases. In 2021, the Delhi High Court granted bail to student activists Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita and Asif Iqbal Tanha, all accused under UAPA in connection with the 2020 Delhi riots. The court criticised the misuse of anti-terror laws to stifle dissent.

The SC decision clarifies that no statute, including UAPA, inherently precludes the granting of bail. This distinction is crucial as it reinforces that legal principles must not be overshadowed by rigid interpretations that compromise individual freedoms. The matter of bail should not be complicated or politically charged. It is a straightforward judicial procedure intended to balance the rights of the accused with the interests of justice. However, the continued denial of bail has disproportionately affected ordinary citizens, especially the poor, who languish in jail awaiting trial. This decision marks a step towards rectifying the imbalance and ensuring that justice is not only done but seen to have been done.

Bangladesh in turmoil

Court steps in to slash contentious quota

THE violence that has claimed over 100 lives in Bangladesh has shown the Sheikh Hasina government in a poor light. The ruling dispensation should have anticipated disturbances after the High Court reinstated in June the quota that reserved 30 per cent of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in the 1971 war of independence; the Hasina regime had earlier halted the quota in 2018 following large-scale student protests. The new round of protests caught the powers that be off-guard, as clashes broke out between the police and protesting students across the country.

Making a welcome intervention, Bangladesh's Supreme Court has slashed the contentious reservation. It has ordered that the veterans' quota be cut to 5 per cent, with 93 per cent of the jobs to be offered on merit; the remaining 2 per cent will be set aside for members of ethnic minorities and some other groups. The ruling is expected to help in pacifying the protesters and restoring peace and normalcy. However, the high death toll must make the government do ruthless introspection.

The frustration among students over the shortage of good jobs should be addressed urgently. The quota provision has been under fire as it apparently benefits supporters of Prime Minister Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement. She had defended it on the grounds that veterans deserved the highest respect for their contribution to the liberation, regardless of their political affiliation. However, the PM cannot afford to ignore the present realities. A merit-based system for jobs will help Bangladesh sustain its impressive economic march. Hopefully, the government will implement the apex court's order in letter and spirit. And there is also a lesson here for India, where unemployment is a major issue and several states have witnessed an uproar over quotas. Prioritising political considerations over ensuring a level playing field for recruitments is fraught with grave consequences.

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, TUESDAY, JULY 22, 1924

The bureaucracy and communal riots

NO saying was commoner during the Great War than that it was intended to make the world safe for democracy. It may similarly be said that the one clear purpose which the disturbances like those that took place in Delhi in connection with the recent Id celebration are likely to serve is to make India safe for the bureaucracy. It is not necessary for our present purposes to enquire whether the bureaucracy itself wants India to be made safe for it in this sense. There is no doubt that there are some among the bureaucrats who resent any such imputation, who honestly believe that whatever may have been the case in the past, at present, at any rate, there is no disposition on the part of the average bureaucrat to divide the people in order to rule them, to foment or encourage racial differences in order to more effectively deal with the warring elements. What is absolutely certain, however, is that the strengthening and consolidation of the power of the bureaucracy is not only the immediate and direct but the one sure consequence of every outbreak of communal fanaticism or racial hatred. Take the case of Delhi. Who thought of the Congress, the Khilafat and other popular organisations, in and through which the desire for Swaraj usually manifests itself, during the fateful days when rioting of a major or minor description was the order of the day at Delhi, except in the sense that everybody felt that this rioting connoted the utter failure of those organisations? Who, indeed thought of anyone or anything else except the bureaucracy and its resources which, apart from the mobs and their victims, were the only thing one saw during the prevalence of the trouble?

ICJ, Knesset and the rules-based order

The illegality of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is no longer in doubt



NAVDEEP SURI
EX-AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT AND UAE

TWO significant developments within the space of less than 24 hours have brought much-needed clarity on the vexed issue of Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories.

In response to a request from the UN General Assembly for an advisory opinion on the subject, the 15-judge Bench of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague began deliberations in January 2023. As many as 57 countries submitted their opinions on the case, which is distinct from the one on South Africa's submission that Israel is committing genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Treating the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip as a contiguous territory, the court provided a stunning, unequivocal opinion on Friday (July 19). It ruled that Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is illegal; that Israel must end its unlawful presence as rapidly as possible; that it must cease immediately all new settlement activities and evacuate all settlers; that Israel has the obligation to make reparations for the damage caused by the occupation; and that all states/nations, the UN and international organisations have an obligation to recognise the occupation as illegal.

Israel, led by President Isaac Herzog and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has predictably lashed out at the judgment, but its usual efforts to describe any criticism as anti-Semitism would stand on tenuous ground. Key elements of the opinion were passed by a majority of 14 to 1. Uganda's Judge Julia Sebutinde was the solitary voice in opposition, while the



VOCIFEROUS: Israel, led by PM Benjamin Netanyahu, has predictably lashed out at the ICJ judgment. AP/PTI

majority opinion included judges from the US, Japan, Germany, Brazil, Australia, China, Mexico, South Africa and Justice Dalveer Bhandari from India.

In a perverse way, the resolution passed by the Knesset just a day earlier (July 18) also brings an end to the ambiguity and obfuscation that have characterised Israel's position on the Occupied Territories since the Six-Day War in June 1967. Sixty-eight members supported the resolution opposing the establishment of a Palestinian state and describing it as "an existential threat to the State of Israel and its citizens", while only the nine Arab members of Knesset opposed it. Others, including centre-left groups and Labour, chose to sit out rather than stand up and be counted in opposition to the resolution.

The tenor of the Knesset resolution, at one level, reflects the marked hardening of public opinion in Israel following the brutal massacre by the Hamas on October 7, 2023, that left some 1,100 Israelis dead. But it also comes at a time when Israel's horrific war on Gaza has left close to 40,000 Palestinians dead and some 90,000 wounded. In the context of the ICJ ruling, it poses a serious challenge to the international community and especially to the US and others which invoke

A reality check is round the corner when Netanyahu will address a joint session of the US Congress on July 27.

international law and a rules-based order at the drop of a hat.

The obfuscation about the Occupied Territories began in 1967 itself, when British diplomats started drafting UN Security Council Resolution 242 that was eventually adopted in November that year. It called for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict". Or was it the territories? Didn't it mean all of the occupied territories, barring minor reciprocal adjustments to cater to considerations of demographics and territorial contiguity? English and French were the only two working languages of the Security Council and the French version was unambiguous. "Retrait des forces armées israéliennes des territoires occupés lors du récent conflit," it said in its reference to

"the occupied territories".

There was no ambiguity in the mind of the Indian representative at the UNSC, who said that the UNSCR 242 would commit Israel to "total withdrawal of Israel forces from all the territories — I repeat, all the territories — occupied by Israel as a result of the conflict which began on June 5, 1967".

The Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995, signed between Yasser Arafat and then Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin, led to the establishment of the Palestine Authority, initially with limited self-rule over the West Bank and Gaza and the promise of a transition to full statehood within a five-year period. Oslo II divided the West Bank into three zones: Zone A (18 per cent of the area) under full Palestinian civil and security control; Zone B (22 per cent) under Palestinian civil control and joint security control; and Zone C (60 per cent) under full civilian and security control of Israel.

The Palestine Authority took charge in Ramallah and for a while, there was real hope. But Rabin was assassinated by Jewish extremist Yigal Amir in November 1995, ironically at a rally in Tel Aviv in support of the Oslo Accords. Things started going downhill quite rapidly after that, leading to the Second Intifada in September 2000 and

an escalating wave of mutual violence including several suicide attacks by Palestinians. The Madrid Process, the Middle East Quartet (the US, EU, Russia and the UN) and the Saudi-led Arab Peace Initiative tried to revive the peace process on the principle of land for peace, but without success. Meanwhile, the steady rise of the ultra-right and ultra-orthodox parties in Israel combined with its overwhelming military superiority to underscore a narrative that Israel has a Biblical claim on all of the land from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. And as for peace, it can flow from the barrel of a gun.

As a result, government policies and incentives have allowed illegal Jewish settlements to expand at an ever-faster rate, leaving the presumed State of Palestine as a pockmarked landscape of 192 non-contiguous towns and villages in the West Bank and a Gaza Strip that is in ruins. A viable state has been rendered virtually impossible by the plain fact of 144 Jewish settlements spread over the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the presence of some 700,000 settlers, many of them armed and protected by the government of Israel.

For the optimists among us and perhaps for the 145 countries that have recognised the state of Palestine, the ICJ ruling will come as a breath of fresh air, possibly igniting hope that justice may finally be within reach. The ruling is non-binding, but some European nations will undoubtedly pay heed to it and may even impose sanctions against designated Israeli individuals and entities. It may also provide a basis for stronger UN resolutions.

The illegality of the occupation is no longer in doubt. But a reality check is round the corner when Netanyahu will address a joint session of the US Congress on July 27. And if the Trump-Vance duo ends up in the White House, don't be surprised if the intertemperate view of the Knesset prevails over the ruling of the judges at the ICJ. That might just be the fitting requiem of the rules-based order.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice. — Martin Luther King, Jr

Friends who rose to the occasion

SYED NOORUZZAMAN

EVERY year, the arrival of the rains reminds me of a happening that left a lasting imprint on my psyche. It was not a Bollywood-style romantic scene that we remember for a long time after having enjoyed a great film. It was an awe-inspiring incident in the early 1980s that revealed what kind of friends we all should aspire to have.

One Sunday morning, when I visited a friend's house in Chandigarh, I was told that he was busy taking care of his ailing friend from Shimla who was in the City Beautiful for treatment at the PGI.

He was suffering from an ailment which could not be diagnosed in Shimla, where he was posted as a government employee. He had come to Chandigarh with the hope of getting cured and regaining his health. However, the patient's condition continued to deteriorate with every passing day. Unfortunately, doctors at the PGI, too, failed to diagnose his ailment despite a series of tests. He fought for his life for around 15 days, only to lose the battle at the end.

It was raining cats and dogs the day the patient breathed his last. His wife wanted his body to be brought to his friend's house in Chandigarh, where she was staying, but without a post-mortem examination. It was not an easy task, but the friends of the deceased succeeded in somehow fulfilling her wish.

Nobody in our friends' circle those days had a car, except for one who lived in Mohali. He was the only one we knew who had a landline phone too. He used all the resources he had to ensure that the funeral was conducted the way the widowed woman wanted.

The torrential rain was refusing to stop, making our task very challenging. The unending rain that day forced us all to remain confined to our common friend's house for hours together. Everybody was weeping copiously over the loss of a dear friend. I had never seen such a scene in my life — friends shedding tears for the departed as if he were a family member.

One person who had somehow kept his tears under control was our friend from Mohali who owned a car. Instead of wasting time, he got busy making arrangements for a proper burial. The others present got the message that they, too, should focus on ensuring a decent funeral.

The widow was flabbergasted by what she saw after her husband's death. She could not believe her eyes when she observed his friends behaving like brothers. It is not for nothing that celebrated Hindi poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan tells us through his poem on friends, 'Main yaadon ka qissa kholoon to kuchh dost bahut yaad aatay hain...'

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't go gaga over Usha, Kamala

With reference to 'The complicated diaspora story' (*The Great Game*); the author has rightly noted that our admiration for Usha Vance and Kamala Harris is tainted. There is no need to celebrate the success of those of us who settle down in the West. There is no reason for us to go gaga over Kamala's or Usha's rise to prominence in American politics. First and foremost, they are American citizens. That's where their loyalty lies — to their fellow Americans. What can we expect from Usha as the potential future Second Lady of the US? Nothing. Whether it is Kamala or Usha, they are not going to reshape the US foreign policy to benefit New Delhi.

RAMESH GUPTA, NARWANA

Admiration for Usha misplaced

Apropos of 'The complicated diaspora story'; the subject is multifaceted. Admiration for Indian-origin citizens settled in the West, like Usha Vance, is often misplaced. Our fascination with them often overlooks their distinct backgrounds and politics. Be it Kamala Harris or former UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, we Indians often blindly embrace them as 'our own'. This reflects our deep-seated insecurity. We must celebrate their achievements. But we should also understand that they are global citizens who are not bound by their Indian identity.

GURDEV SINGH, BY MAIL

Engagement with Indian diaspora

Refer to 'The complicated diaspora story'; the article aptly highlights the paradox inherent in our perception of the success of the Indian diaspora in the West. While we celebrate the achievements of Indian-Americans like Usha Vance and Kamala Harris, at the same time, we harbour a sense of bias towards foreigners. That is a sign of our insecurity about where India stands in the world. The writer has rightly brought home the point that our engagement with the diaspora should progress so that the underlying issues can be addressed.

AMARJEET MANN, UNA

Can't whitewash one's identity

Indian-Americans are called 'coconuts' — Brown on the outside, White on the inside — in the lingo of the Chandigarh street for a reason. As they live half a world apart, they try to adapt to the Western lifestyle. As the years roll on, they stop identifying themselves with their motherland altogether. The fact of the matter is that it is common for Brown people across the globe to try and emulate the White-dominated Western culture. They are even willing to lose their real identity in the rush to ape others. But they must remember that no matter how hard they try, they can never be White on the outside.

GS ANAND, PANCHKULA

Jammu likely to remain on boil

The recent slaying of Indian soldiers in Doda during an exchange of fire with militants is tragic. Unfortunately, the situation is likely to remain tense since no concerted efforts have been made yet to stem the rot of insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. Thanks to unilateral, political and partisan steps, the flames of insurgency have now engulfed Jammu too. The dangerous consequences of the abrogation of Article 370 are now unfolding in the region. Besides, enhancing the powers of the J&K Lieutenant Governor is not the solution. Unfortunately, PM Narendra Modi does not seem focused on the rising terror attacks in Jammu or the plight of people in strife-torn Manipur.

PK SHARMA, BY MAIL

Assam shows the way

The decline of 81 per cent in child marriages in Assam is commendable. The biannual crackdown and targeted measures have shown promising results. These steps are aligned with the state's goal to eradicate the social evil by 2026. However, the move to repeal the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act, 1935, is a matter of concern. Many members of the minority community follow the personal laws prescribed by the 1937 Shariat Act. While the intent to protect minor girls is welcome, the move risks alienating one community. CM Himanta Biswa Sarma should focus on educational programmes to ensure lasting change. Balancing reforms with respect for religious customs is crucial.

AMANJOT KAUR, MOHALI

From Kargil to Jammu, a saga of intel lapses



C UDAY BHASKAR
DIRECTOR, SOCIETY FOR
POLICY STUDIES

KARGIL Vijay Diwas will be celebrated on July 26 to honour the memory of the 527 bravehearts who lost their lives in Operation Vijay. And this year is special, since it marks the 25th anniversary of that brief but bloody war. An audacious and stealthy operation by the Pakistan army that was conceived by then army chief Gen Pervez Musharraf was foiled and the intruders pushed back — but at a heavy cost. On July 26, 1999, the Kargil War came to a formal end.

An emotive national recall is on the cards, and it is appropriate that families who lost their loved ones and soldiers grievously injured are acknowledged and comforted in an empathetic and appropriate manner. It is an unfortunate tenet of history since time immemorial that those who pay the heaviest price on the battlefield are soon forgotten. But deeply embedded and glossed-over institutional omissions of that war merit scrutiny. This author dwelt on some

aspects of the Kargil War last fortnight (July 8), but certain developments compel this revisit. Gen NC Vij (retd), who was the DGMO (Director General, Military Operations) during that war and later served as the Army Chief, has made significant observations in his soon-to-be-released book, *Alone in the Ring*, about the Kargil intelligence fiasco. However, it is reported that the book is now 'on hold', awaiting government clearance, and this is a poor reflection on how the narrative and history of the war is being shaped. Another development pertains to allegations made by a former Major about command failure.

In excerpts published in the media, Gen Vij notes that the Pakistan army had the element of surprise in the early stages and that India was caught unawares due to an intelligence failure. He adds: "Not only was the intrusion detected late, but also our intelligence agencies were unable to assess if the intrusion was by militants or the Pakistan army." This observation is not a new revelation; much the same had been said in the preliminary reviews and assessment of the Kargil intrusion.

However, it draws attention to an abiding and tenacious structural inadequacy in India's higher defence management — that of intelligence-gathering and effective assessment. This entails a continuous, multi-layered activity of seeking and collating dis-



TRAGIC: Those who pay the heaviest price on the battlefield are soon forgotten. FILE PHOTO

parate information inputs, analysing them and then distilling that which is relevant into actionable operational inputs during a war or similar challenges to national security and integrity.

India's track record in this domain has been below par. From the October 1962 border war with China to Kargil (1999), Mumbai terror attacks (2008), Galwan clash (2020) and, most recently, the terror attacks in the Jammu region, systemic intelligence failures are a recurring feature. External intel inputs are provided by R&AW (Research and Analysis Wing), and the dominant Kargil narrative is that actionable inputs were not provided to the Indian military in a timely manner.

In the Kargil case, Gen Vij writes: "The assessment of R&AW was categorically that

there was no possibility of a war with Pakistan in the current year'. This inaccurate assessment resulted in a strategic failure."

As is the case in any post-event review, there is a different appreciation of the Kargil fiasco by other actors and the intelligence community has argued over the years that specific intel inputs were provided to the Army well in advance and that it was the inability of the *fauj* to acknowledge and assess the inputs that led to the setback.

An alternative narrative that challenges the current received wisdom (the Gen Vij version) was highlighted in an unhappy development. In early July, a junior Army officer on active duty in Kargil served a legal notice on Gen VP Malik (retd), who was the Army Chief during the war. Major

Manish Bhatnagar, Company Commander (5 Para) during the war, was court-martialled and dismissed from service in 2001. While he was deemed to be guilty of "acts prejudicial to good order and military discipline", the more serious charge was that he did not obey orders to carry out an attack. This charge, however, could not be proved during the court martial, but he was still dismissed from service by citing another transgression.

The immediate trigger for the legal notice against Gen Malik was a statement given on TV, where the former Chief asserted that a lack of intelligence inputs and surveillance gaps led to the Kargil intrusions. Bhatnagar challenged this assertion by claiming that he had reported the Pakistani intrusions well before they were discovered in May 1999 and added that his warnings had been ignored by his superiors in the chain of command.

This is a jarring intrusion in the run-up to the 25th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas but it draws attention to the institutional inadequacy in the Army's intel domain. First-person accounts by those who had served in Kargil at that time support the Bhatnagar contention that the Army at the brigade level had received these inputs of intrusions, but the enormity of the occupation of the peaks in the Indian territory, the identity of the intruders (Pakistan army soldiers) and the firepower they

had amassed were a huge surprise when it was revealed.

Twenty-five years after the war, the intelligence reforms that had been mooted by the Kargil Review Committee remain dormant. It is instructive that successive governments — led by Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh and Modi — have chosen not to touch this matter and initiate the much-needed reforms.

In a pithy comment, BB Nandy, a doyen of the Indian intel community, warned in 2004 that an overhaul of the 'Intelligence Leviathan' would be arduous and that the default position of successive governments was to perpetuate "a tradition of bungling". His lament — who will bell the cat? — still falls on deaf ears.

Hopefully, the book by Gen Vij will be in the public domain soon and other inputs regarding glossed-over omissions of the Kargil War will encourage the Modi government to embark on the much-needed intelligence domain reforms and deliberate on the matter in Parliament. Concurrently, the Army ought to carry out its own internal review in the light of recent disclosures and accept the onus for command lapses, if these are established.

There should not be a repeat of Kargil in any form, wherein the supreme sacrifice of young officers and soldiers redeemed the failures of their superiors.

Successive governments have chosen not to initiate much-needed intelligence reforms.

Holistic outlook a must for successful energy transition



K RAMATHAN
DISTINGUISHED FELLOW, TERI

ENERGY transition has become a buzzword among energy planners around the world. And rightly so, as the alarm bells are ringing loud and clear about the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from energy-related activities. Some recent reports contain ample evidence of how GHG emissions emanating from burning fossil fuels are leading to devastating climate change impacts. These include record-breaking heatwaves, extreme rainfall events, droughts, an accelerated rise of the sea level, ocean warming and a dramatic decline in ice sheets. Therefore, combating these adverse effects is now a priority for governments worldwide.

India is committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. This is a challenging task, though the country's current annual per capita emissions are only one-third of the global average. This is because energy consumption is increasing at a rapid pace,

triggered by economic growth and the government's commitment to meeting the aspirations of the public. This can lead to a rise in GHG emissions. Energy usage varies across different sectors. Various organisations have been working towards sector-specific road maps. Are we following a holistic approach in these studies? And how well are the different sector blueprints coordinated? An introspection of the approach we are following would be desirable at this juncture.

Let us take the example of the power sector, which is the highest emitter of carbon dioxide. A key component of the country's strategy for achieving net-zero emissions has been the use of renewable energy (RE) in all productive activities while cutting down on the use of fossil fuels. The road maps have also tried to work out the type and quantum of energy storage systems like batteries and pumped storage hydropower plants required to manage the variability and intermittency of RE sources like the sun and wind. Of late, the road maps have been looking at the use of green hydrogen derived from renewable sources. Expanding nuclear power generation utilising the country's rich thorium reserves is yet



CONSUMPTION: The majority of the energy use occurs in industrial heating and cooling processes. ISTOCK

another supply-side option being considered as a source, which can provide reliable baseload power and help the integration of RE into the grid. It is, however, noted that the main objective of most studies has been to maximise the use of RE while achieving a demand-supply balance at a minimal cost.

It is necessary to lay greater emphasis on demand-side factors in the ongoing studies, particularly when considering longer time frames, such as 2050 and 2070. These factors play a crucial role in the energy transition. As we are aware,

India plans to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. This is challenging, though its current annual per capita emissions are only one-third of the global average.

grid-level demand growth and patterns are dynamic, particularly in the context of aggressive demand-side management measures, the growth of distributed energy resources, electric vehicle usage in G2V and V2G modes, fuel substitution in end-use sectors, and other initiatives that impact energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Exploiting demand-side flexibility through tariff-linked regulatory measures and demand response programmes would also need to be evaluated as options for minimising the transition costs. A scenario-based

approach considering different feasible demand-side options could be a solution in this regard.

Furthermore, the requirement for grid infrastructure is a critical aspect that could significantly influence energy transition action plans. It would impact both the overall system cost and supply reliability, necessitating a detailed power system stability analysis. A pragmatic study is also required on the constraints of Right of Way issues in building the infrastructure, as this could impact the transition target dates.

Yet another key objective of any action plan would be to look at how the transition would influence the lives of the people. It is widely recognised that a people-centric approach is crucial for the smooth implementation of net-zero pathways. Therefore, road maps for net-zero emissions should strive to incorporate findings from ongoing studies on 'just transition'.

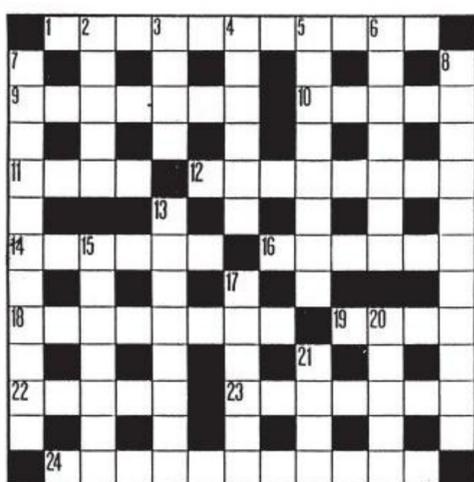
'Net zero' means balancing the amount of greenhouse gases released with the same amount stored or offset so that the temperature has no effect at all. This underscores the need to consider carbon capture and storage technologies, planting trees, restoring forests, and other biological options that can absorb the carbon dioxide released into the

atmosphere as part of the overall strategy to control temperature changes.

It is also debatable whether we are taking a narrow view by focusing primarily on the power sector, while the majority of energy use occurs in industrial heating and cooling processes. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, "heating and cooling consume approximately half of the world's final energy, making it the largest energy end-use sector, surpassing both electricity (20 per cent) and transport (30 per cent). This sector is also responsible for over 40 per cent of global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions." Net-zero reports must adopt a holistic approach, considering the decarbonisation opportunities within the heating and cooling demands of each sector.

A successful energy transition necessitates a comprehensive approach encompassing supply-side measures, demand-side management, grid modernisation, energy security and a just transition for the affected communities. The transition must extend beyond the power sector to include decarbonisation of the heating, cooling and transportation sectors. There is an urgent need to develop a framework for such integrated studies.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Past one's prime (4,3,4)
- Carry into effect (7)
- An itinerant (5)
- Ready for business (4)
- Done by a court of law (8)
- Of mixed origin (6)
- Bargain contentiously (6)
- Huge (8)
- Resound (4)
- Demand and obtain (5)
- Effective (7)
- Generous kindly nature (5,2,4)

DOWN

- Vitality (5)
- Basic cause (4)
- Hypocrisy (6)
- Carthaginian enemy of Rome (8)
- Small mass-migrating Arctic rodent (7)
- Deeply involved (2,2,3,4)
- Strange as it may seem (5,6)
- The measure through or across (8)
- Rich fabric with raised pattern (7)
- It's exactly as you say! (4,2)
- Sensation of cold (5)
- Advertisement by constant repetition (4)

Saturday's solution

Across: 1 Badger, 4 Two-faced, 9 Rustic, 10 Factotum, 12 Ally, 13 Coward, 14 Mole, 17 Kettle of fish, 20 Sugar the pill, 23 Aura, 24 Terms, 25 Spot, 28 Cavalier, 29 Motion, 30 Telltale, 31 Pro tem.
Down: 1 Barracks, 2 Desolate, 3 Epic, 5 Whale of a time, 6 Fate, 7 Cotton, 8 Damper, 11 Popocatepetl, 15 Flour, 16 Aster, 18 Pinpoint, 19 Platinum, 21 Fat cat, 22 Travel, 26 Flat, 27 Sour.

SU DO KU

3	1	4	7	9	6
6				5	
5	2		9		1
	2		4		9
		5	3		
1		8		3	
6		8	1		9
7					4
1	9	7	4	8	5

EASY

SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

9	4	8	2	1	6	3	5	7
6	5	2	8	7	3	4	1	9
7	3	1	4	5	9	2	8	6
4	2	6	5	8	1	9	7	3
3	9	5	7	6	2	1	4	8
1	8	7	9	3	4	5	6	2
2	1	3	6	4	8	7	9	5
8	7	9	1	2	5	6	3	4
5	6	4	3	9	7	8	2	1

CALENDAR

- JULY 22, 2024, MONDAY**
- Shaka Samwat 1946
 - Aashadh Shaka 31
 - Shravan Purnimotsava 7
 - Hijari 1446
 - Krishna Paksha Tithi 1, up to 1.12 pm
 - Priti Yoga up to 5.58 pm
 - Shravan Nakshatra up to 10.21 pm
 - Moon in Capricorn Sign
 - Shravan Somvar Vrat Start

FORECAST

CITY	MONDAY		TUESDAY	
	MAX	MIN	MAX	MIN
Chandigarh	34	28		
New Delhi	34	27		
Amritsar	37	29		
Bathinda	38	29		
Jalandhar	37	29		
Ludhiana	36	29		
Bhiani	36	29		
Hisar	37	28		
Sirsa	38	31		
Dharamsala	28	20		
Manali	29	20		
Shimla	25	16		
Srinagar	35	20		
Jammu	34	26		
Kargil	32	18		
Leh	30	13		
Dehradun	31	24		
Mussoorie	20	18		

TEMPERATURE IN °C

State govt initiates proposal to make Dehra a police dist

CM likely to dedicate an SP office to town on Independence Day

LALIT MOHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

DHARAMSALA, JULY 21

The state government has formally started the process of bringing up Dehra police district in Kangra. A proposal in this regard has been sent from the SP office Kangra to the police headquarters. Sources said that as per the proposal, Dehra police district would have boundaries across three Assembly constituencies of Dehra, Jwalamukhi and Jaswan Pragpur.

The sources said that the Chief Minister may dedicate SP office to Dehra at the state level Independence Day function to be organised in the subdivision on August 15.

The government in its Cabinet meeting held on June 18 had decided to bring up police district in Dehra. However, the decision was not notified due to model code of conduct enforced in Dehra subdivision of Kangra due to the

DECISION NOT NOTIFIED DUE TO POLL CODE

- The government in Cabinet meeting held on June 18 had decided to bring up police district in Dehra.
- However, the decision was not notified due to model code of conduct enforced in subdivision of Kangra due to Dehra byelections.
- Once the Dehra police district is formed, Kangra would have the third police district.
- Move is likely to attract criticism from political opponents. The Congress government had closed down 900 institutions opened by the BJP government citing financial crisis.

byelections. The Chief Minister, during his election campaign, had announced that Dehra would have an SP office and an SE PWD office.

Once the Dehra police district is formed, Kangra would have the third police district. The previous BJP government had formed police district in Nurpur area. The Nurpur police district has jurisdiction over Nurpur, Indora, Jawali and Fatehpur Assembly constituencies.

The Kangra SP office, which at one time was the

biggest police district of the state having jurisdiction over 15 Assembly constituencies, would now have jurisdiction of just eight Assembly constituencies. The Dehra police district would now be the 15th police district of the state.

The move of the state government to create a new police district in Dehra is likely to attract criticism from political opponents. The present Congress government, after coming to power, had closed down 900 institutions, including SDM offices, a hospital and police

stations opened by the previous BJP government across the state. The Congress government had alleged that opening up of the institutions was a waste of funds at a time when the state was facing financial crisis. The BJP carried out agitations across the state to protest against the closure of institutions.

Now opening up of third police district in Kangra, even when the crime rate in Dehra area is low, is likely to invite criticism.

Many political observers are viewing a giving Dehra police district a move to provide district status to the region. However, in case district status is given to Dehra, demands for district status to other regions of Kangra is likely to emerge. In Kangra district, the residents of Palampur are already demanding a district status.

There is demand for carving out smaller districts in Mandi also.

Kasol, Manikaran to get infra boost

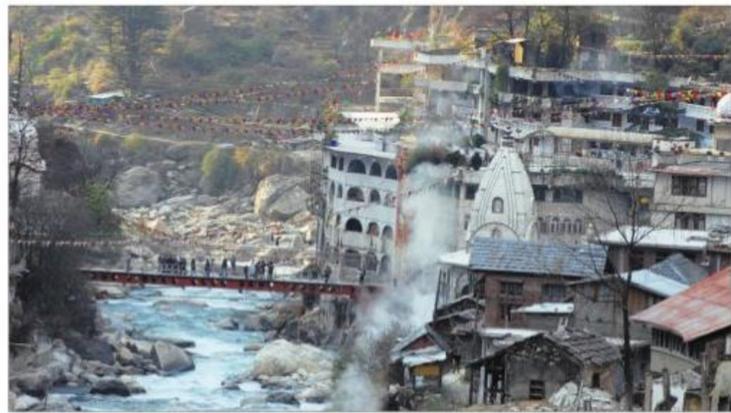
DIPENDER MANTA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MANDI, JULY 21

Famous tourist spots of Manikaran and Kasol in the picturesque Kullu district are grappling with severe infrastructure shortcomings that pose challenging conditions to visitors and locals alike. The lack of essential facilities such as sewerage system, public toilets and adequate parking spaces has become a pressing issue, particularly during the tourist season.

Chet Ram of Manikaran gram panchayat and Tehal Singh of Kasol panchayat have stressed the critical need for immediate intervention by the administrative authorities and the creation of crucial infrastructure. "The influx of tourists multiplies these problems manifold," says Chet Ram, urging the state government to prioritise infrastructure development in these areas.

In response to mounting concerns, Chief Parliamentary Secretary Sunder Singh stated that he recently held a meeting with local authorities. He said efforts were already underway with the Special Area Development Authority (SADA) allocating Rs 67.76 lakh towards essential development projects. "This funding will facilitate the construction of public



View of Manikaran in Kullu. PHOTO: JAIKUMAR

₹67.76 LAKH ALLOCATED FOR DEVELOPMENT

- ₹67.76 lakh has already been allocated for development projects. This funding will facilitate the construction of much-needed public toilets and improving infrastructure.
- Tenders will be invited soon for door-to-door garbage collection services. Security measures are also set to be bolstered with the installation of CCTV cameras in Kasol.

toilets and improvement of infrastructure like water and electricity supply," he said.

To solve traffic congestion problem, plans like introduction of a towing service to ensure orderly vehicle parking at designated zones would be introduced in Manikaran and Kasol. Proposals like inte-

grating administrative offices and a parking facility, optimising space utilisation and generating revenue through efficient management would be considered, he stated.

"Initiatives are being taken to enhance cleanliness standards. Tenders will be invited for door-to-door garbage col-

lection. The administration is already working on this plan. A structured fee system has been outlined to encourage responsible waste management practices," he said. Security measures are also set to be bolstered with the installation of CCTV surveillance in Kasol. This CCTV cameras will also monitor traffic movements and ensure public safety.

"These measures signify a concerted effort to transform Manikaran and Kasol into well-equipped destinations catering seamlessly to tourists while promoting sustainable growth," said Thakur.

Heavy taxes, lack of incentives hit tourism sector hard

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

DHARAMSALA, JULY 21

High taxes in the transport sector have hit tourism in the state hard. The taxes on commercial tourist vehicles entering Himachal Pradesh are the highest in the northern region. A private Volvo contract carriage bus entering the state has to pay an additional entrance tax of about Rs 1,400 per day.

The tax was Rs 5,000 per day a few months ago due to which the tour operators of Gujarat had boycotted the state and diverted tourists to the adjoining states of Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand.

The Himachal Government was levying a tax ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 1,400 per day on tourist vehicles entering the state depending on their seating capacity. Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand do not levy any such tax on tourist vehicles having an all-India tourist permit.

Himachal is the only state in the northern region that is charging entrance tax on vehicles registered in other states. Earlier, Jammu & Kashmir used to charge such a tax but it abandoned the practice after the state became a UT.



A view of the McLeodganj market in Dharamsala. FILE PHOTO

TOURISM DOWN BY 25%

"The move of the private tourist operators of Gujarat to boycott Himachal has brought down tourism in the state by about 25%. Now, even during the peak summer season, there was a sharp dip in the number of tourists coming to the state.

Ashwani Bamba, PRESIDENT, HOTEL & RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION, KANGRA DISTRICT

A leading private bus operator from the region said that Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand were providing incentives to pri-

vate tourist operators from across the country to bring in tourists. The J&K Government held a meeting with private tourist trans-

porters every year and free boarding, lodging and hospitality were provided to them while the Himachal Government charged an entry tax from vehicles having an all-India tourist permit (AITP).

The entry tax was being imposed on AITP vehicles though the Himachal Government was a signatory to the Central accord saying that no additional tax could be charged from AITP buses.

Ashwani Bamba, president of the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Kangra district, said that the move of the private tourist operators of Gujarat to boycott Himachal had brought down tourism in the state by about 25 per cent. Now, even during the peak summer season, there was a sharp dip in the number of tourists coming to the state.

He said that brawls between the taxi operators of Himachal and Punjab was one of the reasons for the reduced tourist footfall. After brawls, the taxi unions of Punjab had issued an advisory cautioning their counterparts to stay away from Himachal. "I hope the recent meeting of the taxi operators of Punjab and Himachal with Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri helped sort out the issue," he added.

Bamba said that there was an urgent need for the government to promote Himachal as a tourist destination as other states were doing. Besides, the state also has to be competitive in terms of taxes being imposed on the industry. Agnihotri was not available for comments over the issue despite repeated phone calls.

Dumping of waste a threat to Shrikhand Mahadev's ecology

DIPENDER MANTA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MANDI, JULY 21

In the serene valleys of Kullu district where majestic Shrikhand Mahadev shrine stands as a beacon of spiritual devotion, a disturbing trend has emerged that threatens the pristine environment of the region. Devotees undertaking the arduous 35-km trek to pay obeisance to the 72-foot Shivalingam at Shrikhand Mahadev are leaving behind plenty of trash along the route, posing a significant ecological threat.

Yearly, hundreds of pilgrims embark on this challenging pilgrimage from Jaon onwards through the breathtaking forest landscapes. However, in utter disregard to the ecology of the area, the devotees often leave behind heaps of garbage amidst the greenery as revealed in a video captured by Panchayati Raj team led by Pankaj Parmar, chairman of Zila Parishad, Kullu.

The footage vividly shows the extent of the littering with plastic waste and other debris spoiling the picturesque landscape. Such neglect not only defaces the natural beauty of the area but also jeopardises its delicate ecology. Concerned



Cleanliness drive being run by panchayat committee near the Shrikhand Mahadev pilgrimage in Kullu District. TRIBUNE PHOTO

over the situation, environmentalists and nature enthusiasts have emphasised the urgency to curb this practice, besides taking steps to hold offenders accountable.

"It is imperative to halt this irresponsible behaviour and

penalise those responsible," demanded Krishan Sandhu, a nature lover in Kullu. He stated there was the need for strict monitoring of visitors to deter such nefarious practices and safeguard the fragile ecosystem of Shrikhand Mahadev.

More area for green belts in Shimla

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, JULY 21

To enhance greenery and promote environmental conservation, the state government has added additional areas to the green belts of Retreat, Mashobra Band, Tukda Andri, Shiv Mandir Andri, Tal and Giri, DPF Khalini, BCS Mist Chamber, and Parimahal. "The decision to this effect was taken in the last Cabinet," said a government spokesperson.

These eight areas were notified as green belts in January earlier this year, taking the total number of green belts to 25 in the Shimla Planning area.

"This initiative aims to preserve Shimla's natural heritage, ensuring a greener and healthier future for upcoming generations. We must maintain a balance between environment conservation and development. The state government is committed to curbing haphazard construction in Shimla.

PRESERVING NATURAL HERITAGE

"This initiative aims to preserve Shimla's natural heritage, ensuring a greener and healthier future for upcoming generations. We must maintain a balance between environment conservation and development. The state government is committed to curbing haphazard construction in Shimla.

— Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, CHIEF MINISTER

favoured destination for tourists," said Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu.

According to the Shimla Development Plan 2041, residential construction within the Green Belt Area is strictly regulated. Construction will only be permitted on plots devoid of trees. Any plot containing trees, whether green or dry, will be designated as a green plot, prohibiting any construction activities.

The areas currently designated as Green Belts include forests bounded by the bypass and cart road, Nabha forest, Phagli and

Lalpani forests, Bemloe forest, Himland forest, Khalini and Chhota Shimla forest areas and several others detailed in the plan. The green areas in Shimla are the city's lungs, crucial for maintaining environmental balance and enhancing quality of life.

Besides, these green spaces enhance the city's aesthetic appeal, offering residents and tourist places for recreation and relaxation. The increased forest cover is expected to mitigate soil erosion and bolster the state's environmental resilience.

SUBHASH RAJTA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, JULY 21

Yet another girl from the state has made it to the Indian national women cricket team. Tanuja Kanwar, who hails from a small village called Kuthar in Theog tehsil of Shimla district, made her India debut in the T20 International against the UAE today in the ongoing Asia Cup in Sri Lanka.

For her family back home, the moment marked the culmination of a long wait, hard work and sacrifice. "We are extremely happy and proud of her. We all have been waiting for this moment since long. Tanuja has been working nonstop to wear the Indian jersey, to see her playing for India is a special feeling," said Pratap Singh Kanwar, her father.

Coming from a small village where the girls normally play games like volleyball, kabaddi and kho-kho, it must have been tough for Tanuja to choose cricket and excel in it.

'To see Tanuja wear India's jersey a special feeling'

Shimla girl makes T20 debut against UAE in Sri Lanka



Cricketer Tanuja Kanwar with her parents and brother. TRIBUNE PHOTO

"She started off playing with the kids in the neighbourhood with a ball made of cloth. She would play with her cousins and we would also often join them," said Kanwar, a farmer.

Tanuja's interest in the

game kept growing with time, and her family decided to send her to women's cricket academy Dharamsala. "She played badminton and volleyball, too, but her interest in cricket was much more. Seeing her

interest, the family took her to the academy, where she improved by leaps and bounds," said Shaloo Kanwar, her elder sister.

At the academy, she developed into a handy all-rounder as a left-arm spinner and

middle order batter. Rising through the ranks, she represented the state in U-19 level and then made it to the senior side of the state. She shifted to Railways a couple of years back for a job. She has also played two seasons of the Women Premier League. "She came to the academy in 2013. She developed into a fine all-rounder, winning games for her team with both bat and ball," said Pawan Sen, her coach at the Dharamsala academy.

Sen feels Tanuja got the India call a little late at the age of 28. "She has been performing very well at the domestic level and in the women premier league over the last couple of seasons. The opportunity has come a little late but she will make it count and play for the country for a long time," said Sen. Looking at her performance in the very first game, in which she picked up a wicket conceding just 14 runs in four overs, the future surely looks bright for this Shimla girl.



Protesters and security forces clash in the Mirgund area of Baramulla district; and (below) women fetch water from a nullah.

Water scarcity goes unheard at Baramulla district for months

Led to first major stone throwing incident after abrogation of Article 370

ADIL AKHZER

MIRGUND, JULY 21 Severe water scarcity for the past few months was the reason behind a clash between locals and security forces in the Mirgund area of Baramulla district on Friday. The protesters later resorted to stone pelting, which was first major clash between locals and security forces in the Valley last week since 2019.



NEW SCHEME TO BE OPERATIONAL SOON
“A new scheme benefitting nearly 75,000 people of the village and adjoining areas was conceived years ago. It suffered delays due to multiple reasons. Now, work is going on in full swing and it will be operational soon. PHE official

“Water is a basic necessity. On Friday, the situation reached an alarming proportion when villagers said they were ready to sacrifice anything to get their voices heard,” Abdul Rehman Dar, former sarpanch of Chainabal area in Baramulla district, told *The Tribune* on Sunday.

People from Chainabal village of Baramulla district, which borders Srinagar district and has a population of around 5,000, blocked the Srinagar-Uri national highway on Friday over the shortage of drinking water. However, the situation later escalated as protesters resorted to stone pelting, leaving several people injured and many vehicles damaged.

It was the first major clash between locals and security forces after the abrogation of Article 370 in the Valley.

The locals, however, said they approached the authorities concerned several times to address the problem of water shortage, but to no avail.

“Everyone is aware of the problem. But, it has not been resolved yet,” said Mohammed Yousuf, a villager. He said the villagers had only two options either to fetch dirty water from a nearby nullah or arrange private water tankers. Tap water or tankers provided by the government failed to cater to their needs.

During a visit to the village on Sunday, this correspondent found several women washing clothes from dirty water in the nearby nullah. A woman said their children “had fallen ill after consuming dirty water.” “We are forced to take this water home, boil it and then consume it,” she said.

The villagers said they had adequate water supply for a year when Imran Raza Ansari was minister in the PDP-BJP coalition government and was their MLA.

“People are now becoming victims of misgovernance,” Ansari told *The Tribune*.

Fayaz Ahmad, another local

resident, blamed the police officials for not handling the situation properly on Friday. Fayaz said, he along with another villager, approached the local police post to inform them that they wanted to hold a peaceful demonstration on the road over water shortage. However, they were “detained.”

The locals alleged that when protesters were giving way to an ambulance, the police forcibly tried to open the road, which was blocked by irate villagers. “In the meantime, a woman protester was hit, which triggered the clashes,” said Ali Mohammad, a local. The police also used teargas shells to disperse the protesters.

During the clashes, two BJP leaders, who were travelling on the highway, also got stuck in the protest. The leaders said the mob attacked them too. Their police security officers (PSOs) opened fire in the air in self-defence.

The locals, however, praised

Baramulla SSP Amod Nagpure for bringing situation back to normal immediately. He turned out to be a people’s officer, said a local. Urging people not to resort to stone pelting, Nagpure on Friday said their issues could be resolved through talks. A villager said the authorities had been sending water tankers, but it was not enough for them.

Vivek Kohli, Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Kashmir, said a water scheme would be operational soon and would benefit the village. Water was also being supplied through tankers.

Another PHE official said there was no working water supply in the area. At present, the village was getting water supply from “Sukhnag Scheme of master plan Division Srinagar under a temporary arrangement.”

“We have issued instructions to the staff to inspect water pipes. We are also regulating water supply so that it reaches this village as well,” he said.

Cop dies after rifle goes off accidentally

JAMMU, JULY 21

An on-duty 43-year-old policeman died here of gunshot wounds he allegedly suffered after his service rifle accidentally went off, said the police, which are also probing whether it is a case of suicide.

Selection-grade Constable Jai Raj, a resident of Nagrota, was on duty in the Channi area when his rifle went off this evening, police officials said.

The police have started inquest proceedings to ascertain whether Raj died of accidental discharge of the rifle or deliberate firing to commit suicide, the officials said. — PTI

The network of overground workers is helping terrorists, who have infiltrated from Pakistan, not only by providing them with food and shelter but also by guiding them to areas where terror incidents took place in different areas of Jammu division.

An OGW, identified as Hakam Khan, a resident of Rajouri, was arrested by the Reasi police in the June 9 bus attack case in which nine pilgrims were killed. The arrest was made last month after it came to light that Hakam brought three terrorists to the spot in forest areas from where the bus, which was coming from the Shiv Khori shrine, was targeted.

The Doda police also arrested four OGWs involved in helping the terrorists behind recent

Agencies gear up to dismantle overground workers’ network

ARJUN SHARMA

JAMMU, JULY 21

Intelligence agencies and security forces are intensifying efforts to dismantle the network of overground workers (OGWs) across Jammu region that was built by Pakistan-based handlers, mostly after 2019.

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An armoured vehicle stationed in Doda district. FILE PHOTO

spate of terror in the region. During a high-level meeting, which was attended by Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, J&K L-G Manoj Sinha and other senior officials of security forces on Saturday, it was stressed that the network of OGW needs to be dismantled.

Intelligence agencies have inputs that after infiltrating from Pakistan, terrorists are provided by guides in areas close to border and Line of Control (LoC). They are later taken to hideouts, mostly natural caves, in forest areas. The agencies have learnt that the hideouts are frequently changed so as to remain off the radar of the security forces.

vide food, clothing and other logistics among Internet connection through their mobile phones to these terrorists to contact Pakistan-based handlers.

Army Intelligence, Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), J&K Police, Border Security Force and CRPF have been asked by the Union Home Ministry to work in coordination to stop further attacks in the region and also to eliminate over 50 terrorists present in the division.

The Army Chief, during his visit, had also chaired a high-level joint security review meeting, focusing on thwarting the malicious design of terrorists.

Congress pushes for...

FROM PAGE 1

government has not yet shown any signs of accepting its request.

Article 93 of the Constitution states the Lok Sabha shall choose two of its members as Speaker and Deputy Speaker. The President fixes the date of election of the Speaker. The election to Deputy Speaker’s post is held on a date decided upon by the Speaker.

As per Article 95 of the Constitution, the Deputy Speaker performs the duties of the Speaker when that office is vacant or when the latter is away. If the office of Deputy Speaker is vacant, the duties are performed by a Lok Sabha MP whom the President appoints.

Article 94 says if the Speaker intends to resign, he or she needs to address the resignation letter to the Deputy Speaker. — TNS

5 killed, 7 hurt in road accidents

JAMMU, JULY 21

Five people, including a father-son duo and a mother-daughter duo, were killed and seven injured in two separate road accidents in 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 in Rajouri in the morning, they said.

The driver of the vehicle, Arun Kumar (32), a resident of Lam, was found dead on 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),



A vehicle that met with an accident in Rajouri on Sunday. PTI

daughter Asiya (7) and sister Zareena (36) are undergoing treatment at the GMCH. Their condition is stated to be critical, the officials said.

In another accident, two persons were killed while two others suffered injuries when a Mahindra Bolero car in which they were travelling in rolled

200 feet down into a gorge at Bidda village in Reasi district around 3:30 pm. The deceased have been identified as Guddi Devi and her daughter Shobha.

Devi’s son Mukesh Singh and his minor daughter were rescued and shifted to a hospital in a critical condition, the officials said. — PTI

FROM PAGE 1

BJP slams Didi as she offers to give shelter...

that may emerge on account of the severe law and order breakdown that has gripped the neighbouring country over the past few days. “I should not be speaking on the affairs of Bangladesh as it is a sovereign nation and whatever needs to be said is the subject matter of the Centre. But I can tell you this, if helpless people come knocking on the doors of West Bengal, we will surely provide them shelter,” she said at the “Martyrs Day” rally of the TMC in Kolkata. She drew an example of people from Assam who were allowed to live in adjacent Alipurduar district in northern West Bengal for a considerable period during a strife in the

Bodoland Territorial Region in the northeastern state.

BJP’s West Bengal unit chief and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar, however, opined that such matters should first be consulted with the Centre before any public statement is made. “It’s true that we are all concerned about the current situation in Bangladesh over which Delhi is keeping a close watch. Our CM should not be voicing her opinions on matters involving our country’s foreign policies without first consulting the Centre,” he said.

Taking to X, Malviya posted, “Mamata Banerjee on odd days — We will not allow Hindu refugees, who came to

India to escape religious persecution, to apply for citizenship under the 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. Who gave Mamata Banerjee the authority to welcome anyone in India? Immigration and citizenship are exclusively in the Centre’s domain. The states have no locus standi. This is part of INDI Alliance’s evil plan to settle illegal Bangladeshis from Bengal to Jharkhand, so that they can win elections.” — TNS/PTI

From Tokyo...

to keep playing to fulfil my father’s dream, and my whole team supported me.”

His mother’s sacrifices, the memory of her working hard, stitching clothes for people after his father passed away after falling ill... “To ensure he was in good physical condition, I ensured that he always had desi eggs, ghar ka doodh and kharode da soup,” Manjit said. Manpreet said the memory of his mother’s struggles, the poverty the family faced, kept him going — apart from love for the sport. Manpreet’s idol Pargat Singh, also from Mithapur village, says that tough times he faced as a child gave Manpreet strength and determination. “It’s his humble background that keeps him grounded. He has come a long way just because of his perseverance,” Pargat said. He expects another medal from his protégé in Paris.

Manpreet looks back his Olympics journey with wonder, starting as teenager at London 2012 before becoming an integral part of the team at the next two Olympics. Coach Avtar Singh, who first spotted Manpreet in 2008, recalled a conversation they had Manpreet before he left for Paris. “We are prepared. We just want a gold medal,” Manpreet told Avtar.

Little Jasmine doesn’t know how great a player her father is, but she loves accompanying him to various tournaments, and her eyes are riveted to the TV when he’s playing. “She keeps saying she will go to Paris and be with her father,” says Manjit Kaur Manjit, who wishes that her son would play at the 2028 Olympics as well, banks heavily on the “almighty”. “On Saturday, the day the team plays its first match, I will visit the gurdwara,” she says.

Oppn, BJP allies turn heat on govt over...

workers under the CPM regime in Kolkata in 1993, when TMC chief Mamata Banerjee was the state youth Congress president.

At the meeting chaired by Deputy Leader of LS Rajnath Singh, who recalled opposition’s ruckus during PM’s reply in the previous session as “unparliamentary” and promised to take up all discussions within the rules, ally JD(U) and Jagan Reddy-led YSR Congress sought special category status for Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, respectively.

Questioning another NDA ally Telugu Desam Party’s silence on special category status to Andhra, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh pointed out: “In today’s all-party meeting, the JD(U) leader demanded special category status for Bihar. The YSRCP leader demanded special category status for Andhra. Strangely, the TDP leader kept quiet on

the matter.”

Even as NDA’s Bihar ally Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan backed JD(U)’s Sanjay Jha on the package demand, TDP leader in the LS Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu (who had switched loyalties to the TDP from the YSR Congress ahead of the state and general elections) said the Andhra Government would release a white paper on the state of finances in a day or two. “It will send shockwaves,” Devarayalu said, adding the TDP would raise in Parliament the issue of the financial mess that the erstwhile YSRCP had pushed the state into.

BJD Rajya Sabha MP Sasmit Patra sought special status for Odisha, backing JD(U)’s similar demand for Bihar. “Odisha has been deprived of the special category status for more than 20 years. Political parties from Bihar and Andhra have also demand-

ed special category status for their respective states. The BJD has demanded special category status for Odisha,” Patra said after the meeting.

The meeting saw Samajwadi Party’s Ram Gopal Yadav raising the issue of UP’s directive asking eateries along the Kanwar yatra route to display owners’ names. NCP’s Praful Patel backed the demand of the SP and other NDA allies — the RLD, JD(U) and LJP — to recall the “divisive order”.

RLD chief and Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary told the media in Muzaffarnagar later in the day that the Kanwar yatra diktat was “not well thought out”. “Any decision shouldn’t harm the sense of well-being and harmony in the community,” Chaudhary said, adding the yatra tradition had always been inclusive, with no distinctions made about who served the pilgrims.

Earlier, in response to Rijju’s appeal to all parties to cooperate during the upcoming Budget session for smooth conduct of both Houses, Deputy Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi said the Opposition should be allowed to raise issues in Parliament.

While assuring accommodation of all opposition demands, Rijju said “running Parliament smoothly is the collective responsibility of the government and Opposition.”

“The government is open to discussing any issue in Parliament by following the rules,” he said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said disruptions as seen in the last session when the Opposition interrupted PM’s speech “should not happen in Parliament”.

The Budget session will last till August 12. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Budget on July 23.

Fearing LS poll... B’desh SC scales down...

consensus on various issues. Besides a legal guarantee for the MSP, the prominent demands of the farmers are timely payment for procured crops, release of pending compensation for crops damaged due to natural disasters and a hike in the compensation amount to Rs 40,000 per acre in case of a total crop loss.

At the meeting, farmer leaders, including Mann, Joginder Nain, Balbir Singh and Ranbir Malik, registered their strong protest the government’s alleged apathetic attitude towards their pending demands. Meanwhile, Mann clarified they would launch an agitation only in case their statespecific demands were not met and that they had no plans to march to Delhi along with Punjab farmers. The latter have decided to resume their “Dilli Chalo” movement after the Haryana Government agreed to open the Shambhu border following court orders.

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. Universities have been closed, the internet has been shut off and the government has ordered people to stay at home.

The protests turned deadly on Tuesday, a day after students at Dhaka University began clashing with the police. Violence continued to escalate as the police fired tear gas and rubber bullets and hurled smoke grenades to scatter violent protesters. The Bangladeshi authorities haven’t shared any official numbers of those killed and injured, but Daily Prothom Alo newspaper on Saturday reported that at least 103 persons have died so far.

Sporadic clashes in some parts of Dhaka were reported

on Saturday, but it was not immediately clear whether there were any fatalities.

Ahead of the Supreme Court hearing, soldiers patrolled cities across the country. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the stay at home order will be relaxed from 3pm and 5 pm on Sunday for people to run essential errands.

Meanwhile, the government has declared Sunday and Monday as public holidays, with only emergency services allowed to operate.

Protesters argue the quota system is discriminatory and benefits supporters of Hasina, whose Awami League party led the independence movement, saying it should be replaced with a merit-based system. Hasina has defended the quota system, saying that veterans deserve the highest respect for their contributions in the war against Pakistan, regardless of their political affiliation. — AP

'Took a bullet for democracy,' Trump attacks Democrats

GRAND RAPIDS (MICHIGAN), 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".

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 JD Vance.

"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 often-used Democrat talking point. "What did I do against democracy? Crazy," Trump, 78, said amidst applause from thousands of his supporters.

Trump also mocked Democrats and comparing former Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to a "dog."

After briefly calling for national unity earlier this week, Trump has since returned to his usual campaign tactics — using insulting and sometimes offensive language to attack his opponents, and repeating a string of false claims about immigration, the economy and election fraud, major elements of his speech on Saturday.

Trump frequently mocked Democratic President Joe Biden as feeble. He derided senior Democrats, including Pelosi, for trying to persuade Biden to end his re-election bid. There was a heavy police presence at Trump's rally in Grand Rapids on Saturday, with police on every street corner for several blocks.

US Secret Service officers were positioned on the top balconies in the Van Andel Arena, giving them a bird's



Republican nominee Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan. REUTERS

SAYS CHINA'S XI WROTE 'BEAUTIFUL NOTE'

Washington: Former US President Donald Trump has said Chinese President Xi Jinping wrote him a note after the Republican presidential nominee suffered a gunshot wound to his ear during an assassination attempt last week. "(Xi) wrote me a beautiful note

the other day when he heard about what happened," Trump told a crowd in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Trump mentioned Xi's letter while discussing his economic policy toward China during his presidency, adding, "I got along very well with President Xi." REUTERS



Donald Trump with Chinese President Xi Jinping. FILE

eye view of the crowd inside. Fresh from his nominating convention in Milwaukee where his takeover of the Republican Party was cemented, Trump appeared in Grand Rapids with Vance. They took the stage in their first campaign event together with the Republican Party unified behind them. In contrast, it is no longer certain that Biden will be the Democratic Party's nominee fac-

ing Trump in the November 5 election.

Trump attacked Democrats, saying they wanted to kick Biden off the ticket after he won their presidential nominating contest. "They have a couple of problems. No.1, they have no idea who their candidate is," Trump said to laughter and jeers. "This guy goes and he gets the votes and now they want to take it away." — PTI & Reuters

Got no warnings before bid on life, says ex-President

WASHINGTON, JULY 21

Donald Trump said on Sunday nobody warned him of a problem in the lead-up to the former president's rally in Pennsylvania when a would-be assassin shot him in the ear.

"Nobody mentioned it, nobody said there was a problem. I would've waited for 15, they could've said let's wait for 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 5 minutes, something. Nobody said," Trump told Fox News. "I think that was a mistake," he added. "How did somebody get on that roof? And why wasn't he reported?"

Secret Service accepts denying past requests

The Secret Service now acknowledged that it denied some requests by Republican presidential nominee Trump's campaign for increased security at his events in the years before the assassination attempt on him at a recent rally. — Agencies

Nepal PM Oli wins trust vote

KATHMANDU, JULY 21

Nepal Prime Minister KP 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 politically unstable 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 Representatives who were present, one member abstained.

Earlier while tabling the motion seeking a vote of confidence in his government, Oli made public the content of the seven-point agreement reached between the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML earlier this month. "This is a continuation of that collaboration. We have agreed to work together to protect national interests, control corruption, improve governance, expedite development activities, and ensure political stability, in accordance with the public desire," Oli said. — PTI

Fighting intensifies as Israeli strikes leave 22 dead in Gaza

CAIRO, JULY 21

Israeli forces battled Palestinian fighters in the southern Gaza city of Rafah on Sunday, and struck areas in the centre of the coastal enclave where thousands of Palestinians displaced from their homes have been seeking shelter.

Residents in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, said fierce battles raged between Hamas-led fighters and Israeli forces, especially in the centre and in western areas where tanks advanced in the previous two days.

The armed wings of the Islamic Jihad and Hamas Islamist militant groups said fighters confronted Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs.

The Israeli military said its soldiers had killed a group of fighters who were moving towards them, and destroyed ammunition, tunnel shafts and infrastructure in Tel al-Sultan, in the eastern part of the city.

Israeli strikes in the previous 24 hours killed at least 64 and wounded more than 100



Smoke rises from a site hit by Israeli strikes in Hodeidah, Yemen. REUTERS

TEL AVIV SHOOTS DOWN MISSILE

Israel said it shot down a missile launched from Yemen on Sunday, and the Yemeni Houthi movement said it had fired several missiles at the Israeli city of Eilat after Israel's first public strike against the Iran-aligned group a day earlier.

But a rare Houthi drone strike on Friday hit Tel Aviv and killed one person, prompting Israel to announce its first strikes against the group on Saturday. The strikes by war-

planes hit near the Yemeni port of Hodeidah and killed six people, local medics said.

The Israeli warplanes' air raid on Hodeidah on Saturday killed six people and wounded more than 80, medical sources in Yemen told Reuters, describing all as civilians.

Images from the scene showed a fiery blaze and dense smoke rising from the site of the strike. A Houthi-run TV channel said the strikes had hit an oil facility and power station.

others, the local health ministry said. At least 22 were killed by strikes on Sunday,

according to the Hamas-run Gaza government media office. — Reuters

13 Indians rescued from cybercrime scam in Laos

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Thirteen Indians, who were lured into certain cyber-scaming centres in Laos, have been rescued and sent back home, the Indian embassy in the Southeast Asian country said on Sunday.

"In our continued work to ensure safety & well-being of Indians as top priority, Embassy successfully rescues 13 Indians from cyber-scaming centres in Laos & ensures their safe return to India," the mission posted on

'X'. "So far, Embassy has rescued 518 Indians. We thank Lao authorities for their cooperation," it said.

On May 7, the embassy came out with an advisory cautioning Indians against fake job offers.

"Victims are illegally taken across the border into Laos from Thailand and held captive to work in Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone in Laos under harsh and restrictive conditions," the advisory said. — PTI

China, Philippines reach deal to avoid clashes in SCS

MANILA, JULY 21

China and the Philippines reached a deal they hope will end confrontations at the most fiercely disputed shoal in the South China Sea, two Philippine officials said Sunday.

The Philippines occupies Second Thomas Shoal but China also claims it, and increasingly hostile clashes at sea have sparked fears of larger conflicts that could involve the United States.

The crucial deal was reached on Sunday, after a

series of meetings between Philippine and Chinese diplomats in Manila and exchanges of diplomatic notes that aimed to establish a mutually acceptable arrangement at the shoal without conceding either side's territorial claims.

The Philippine officials, who have knowledge of the negotiations, confirmed the deal to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity ahead of a public announcement. — AP

REGIONAL JOURNAL

UNTOLD STORIES FROM THE PROVINCES

Hunt for Rahul's bungalow

HUNT is on for an official residence for LoP Rahul Gandhi, who had vacated his 12 Tuglaq Lane residence last April following his disqualification as Lok Sabha MP. In his new avatar, Gandhi gets a Cabinet rank and is entitled to a Type VIII bungalow in the heart of Lutyens Delhi, where top ministers like Defence Minister live. Gandhi can make a representation to the Lok Sabha House committee. Mahesh Sharma, the BJP MP from Gautam Buddha Nagar heads the committee, but it is yet to hold its first meeting.

stantly changing their modus-operandi so as to catch Indian security agencies off guard. Security officers say this is how it works: First, a drone with a loud humming noise flies in over the border, but it carries no payload. Meanwhile, another one emitting low-decibel noise quietly slips inside Indian territory, drops the contraband at a pre-designated place and flies back. Indian officials are now in a huddle trying to decipher ways to tackle this new menace.

Personal touch

LOK Sabha speaker Om Birla is known to take personal care when any MP flags a problem to him. This week DMK veteran TR Bалу complained to him about breathing issues he was facing at his Raisina Road residence. The Speaker has instructed Central PWD to carry out a thorough assessment of Bалу's home and equip it with whatever equipment is necessary to fix the problem.

Abohar artiste shines

A BOHAR is now on Netflix and the city is ecstatic. Anjum Batra, who grew up in a farmer's family in Abohar, has created three back-to-back superhit releases. An actor with the town's Sparsh Theatre Society, Anjum first registered his presence in 'Maam la Legal Hai'. Then he was noticed in 'Chamkila' and is now playing a lead negative role 'Wild-Wild Punjab'. Its entire shooting was done in Punjab and Chandigarh.

In no hurry

INTENSE speculation is rife on JP Nadda's successor as the next BJP president, but the party seems to be in no hurry to replace the Himachal BJP strongman. The RSS is learnt to be backing Maharashtra deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis and names of BJP general secretaries like Vinod Tawde and Sunil Bansal are doing the rounds. Since the last two party presidents — Rajnath Singh and Nadda — have been from the North, some say the next BJP president could be from the South.

Singer SDM

NEVER-say-die Sanjeev Kumar saved the life of a youngster last year who was stranded in the floods in Fatehgarh Sahib, by swimming more than 200m to rescue him. This year, as SDMMalout, he is focussing on the rampant drug problem. He has penned a song and a play, which will soon be released by the Muktsar district administration. He is turning into a role model for many, believing that the "reward of doing one duty is the power to do another."

Decoy drones

PAKISTANI state and "non-state actors", another word for "terrorists," are con-

Sharad Pawar kingpin of corruption: Shah

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Calling NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar the 'sargana' (ringleader) of corruption, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that the veteran leader had institutionalised corruption in the country.

Addressing a conclave of BJP party workers in Pune, the Union Home Minister also launched a scathing attack on the Leader of Opposition and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Shah said Rahul Gandhi's 'arrogance' would be crushed after the BJP and its allies win the forthcoming Assembly polls in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana slated to be held later this year.

Says saffron alliance must rise again in Maharashtra



Union Minister Amit Shah addresses a BJP convention in Pune. PTI

OUR WINS WILL CRUSH RAHUL'S 'ARROGANCE'

Rahul Gandhi's 'arrogance' will be crushed after the BJP and its allies win the forthcoming Assembly polls in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana slated to be held later this year. Amit Shah, UNION HOME MINISTER

He added that the people of India had given Prime Minister Narendra Modi their stamp of approval in the recent Lok Sabha elections.

Besides, he also targeted former Maharashtra Chief Min-

ister and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray. The Home Minister alleged that Thackeray was sitting with those who sought clemency for 1993 Mumbai serial blasts convict Yakub Memon.

Stating that the party workers would work harder and set new goals, Shah said, "Saffron must rise again in Maharashtra. We will do a review for the 2024 elections to form the

Lotus-Yuti (Mahayuti) government. I want to say that all workers had worked hard to bring glory to the BJP. PM Modi made a hat-trick by becoming PM for the third consecutive time." The Union Home Minister also exuded confidence that the BJP-led alliance would perform better in the ensuing Maharashtra Assembly elections than it did in 2019 and 2014.

Incidentally, in the recent General Election, the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance had faced a rout as it managed to win only 17 out of the 48 seats in Maharashtra, while the Maha Vikas Aghadi, led by the Congress-NCP (SP)-Shiv Sena (UBT), had bagged 30 seats, while one seat was won by an Independent candidate.

SC to hear PIL for seizing money received by parties

ELECTORAL BONDS

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Supreme Court will on Monday hear a PIL seeking directions to confiscate donations received by political parties through the electoral bonds scheme that was declared unconstitutional five months ago.

The petition filed by Khem Singh Bhati is listed before a Bench of CJI DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra.

The Bench is also likely to take up another petition seeking a court-monitored investigation into the scheme. Bhati has demanded that a committee headed by a former SC judge be constituted to investigate alleged quid pro quo between donors and the public authorities at the instance of political parties.

Alternatively, Bhati wanted the top court to direct the Income Tax Department to reopen assessment of all beneficiary parties from the financial year 2018-19 to 2023-24 and disallow the exemptions claimed by them under Section 13A of the IT Act. He demanded income tax be levied on the amounts received by them through electoral bonds along with interest and penalty.

"The political parties used electoral bonds as a tool and method to extract money by conferring undue advantage to corporate houses by way of compromising their criminal prosecution or granting State largesse, at the cost of public exchequer and against public interest," Bhati submitted in his petition settled by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria. — TNS

₹409 cr fine imposed on NTPC for illegal mining in Jharkhand

AKSHEEV THAKUR

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Mine developer-cum-operator Thriveni-Sainik Mining Private Limited, which was entrusted with National Thermal Power Corporation's (NTPC) coal mining project in Hazaribagh, illegally carried out operations on 156 hectares of forest land and also changed the direction of Dumuhana stream without prior approval, according to a report of the Union Environment Ministry.

An advisory committee of the ministry has imposed a fine of Rs 409 crore (Rs 409,49,10,300) on the NTPC for the violation. In this regard, the Jharkhand Government had imposed a penalty of Rs 857 crore on the NTPC. However, the corporation has

CHANGED THE COURSE OF STREAM

In total disregard for the conditions of approval, the user agency (NTPC) indulged in mining in the area and changed the course of the Dumuhana stream, which was actually required to be protected and maintained as a green belt. Union Environment Ministry

sought a waiver of the fine from the ministry. The Centre has asked the Jharkhand Government to give a detailed response on the issue.

The ministry had approved the mining proposal on the condition that not only the stream will be protected, but a greenbelt also be developed along its sides.

While the Jharkhand Government, earlier this year, had in its report to the ministry said illegal mining was carried out only on 3720 hectares of forest land, the regional office

of the ministry said the area impacted was 156 hectares.

The advisory committee said, "It was observed that in total disregard for the conditions of approval, the user agency indulged in mining in the area and changed the course of the Dumuhana nullah, which was actually required to be protected as a green belt."

The mining project faced stiff opposition from Hazaribagh villagers who were displaced due to it. In May 2016, there was a huge protest against land acquisition.



Paris 2024



PARIS 2024
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

04
DAYS TO GO

21-member contingent India's biggest



469.6
Sift holds world record in 50m rifle 3P final

18
Medals won by Manu in World Cup

SIFT KAUR SAMRA

AISHWARY PRATAP SINGH TOMAR

MANU BHAKER

SHOOTING



ANISH BHANWALA

MEN

10m air pistol: Sarabjot Singh, Arjun Cheema
Qualification: July 27
Final: July 28

10m air rifle: Sandeep Singh, Arjun Babuta
Qualification: July 28
Final: July 29

Trap: Prithviraj Tondaiman
Qualification: June 29-30
Final: June 30

50m rifle 3 positions: Swapnil Kusale, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar
Qualification: June 31
Final: August 1

25m rapid fire pistol: Anish Bhanwala, Vijayveer Sidhu
Qualification: August 4
Final: August 5

Skeet: Anantjeet Singh Naruka
Qualification: August 2-3
Final: August 3

WOMEN

10m air pistol: Manu Bhaker, Rhythm Sangwan
Qualification: July 27
Final: July 28

10m air rifle: Elavenil Valarivan, Ramita Jindal
Qualification: July 28
Final: July 29

Trap: Rajeshwari Kumari, Shreyasi Singh
Qualification: June 30-31
Final: June 31

50m rifle 3 positions: Sift Kaur Samra, Anjum Moudgil
Qualification: August 1
Final: August 2

25m pistol: Esha Singh, Manu Bhaker
Qualification: August 2
Final: August 3

Skeet: Raiza Dhillon, Maheshwari Chauhan
Qualification: August 3-4
Final: August 4

MIXED TEAM

10m air rifle
Qualification and final: July 27

10m air pistol
Qualification: July 29
Final: July 30

Skeet
Qualification and final: August 5



RHYTHM SANGWAN



ESHA SINGH

After flop shows at previous two Olympics, shooting team keeps expectations in check

VINAYAK PADMADEO
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

It is make or break time for the Indian shooting team as it heads to the Paris Olympics. The sport that gave India its first individual gold medal at the Olympics — Abhinav Bindra winning the 10m air rifle title in 2008 Beijing — is running on borrowed time. Since the 2012 London Olympics, where Vijay Kumar won silver in rapid fire and Gagan Narang won bronze in 10m air rifle, the sport is gasping for breath.

The shooting contingent, which is consistently amongst the top countries in the medal tally at the World Cups, returned empty-handed from two successive Olympics — 2016 Rio de Janeiro and 2020 Tokyo.

So what will happen in Paris, rather at the Chateaux Shooting Centre, some three hours from the French capital? The expectations are once again high from the 21-member team, the highest participation from the country. For a sport on which the government spends the most — the Sports Authority of India has spent Rs 60.40 crore in the last three years — the

SHOT AT REDEMPTION



ANANTJEET SINGH NARUKA

results in Paris will be very important for shooting's future in the country.

However, unlike the last time, the build-up is missing. The administrators and coaches, who in the past have talked freely about the

team's medal prospects, are keeping their expectations to themselves. It seems they have learned their lessons from Tokyo, where many of the Indian shooters, including Elavenil Valarivan, Saurabh Chaudhary and

Manu Bhaker, were touted as sure shot medal winners. The results told a different story, with only Saurabh managing to enter the final.

Flying under radar
The shooters also benefit-

ted from the fact that there was less media attention on them because of the T20 World Cup.

"The shooters never claim big, it is only the administrators who claim we will win these many medals," rifle coach Deepali Deshpande said. "Since we have not won in the last two Olympics, they are keeping quiet this time," she added.

"The other good thing that has happened was the media's focus on the cricket team's World Cup win. Our shooters left before getting hassled about expectations. Sometimes it irritates them as the most asked question is 'how many medals are we expecting'. It's a good thing that there is less focus on them this time," she added.

Deepali also said that the Tokyo results should be written off as Covid restrictions threw all the planning and preparations out. "We have never discussed what happened in Tokyo. Seven months were lost due to lockdowns. After that we were all scrambling to get to competitions and went wherever it was possible. Also we were all stressed to not get the virus. We had to give samples daily and then anxiously wait for the

results. So yes Tokyo was a one-off," she said.

Trials pressure
This time, the rifle and pistol shooters came through a gruelling period of four trials in a space of a month to book a place on the Olympics team. "It was a dress rehearsal and if we can come through that we can cope with any stress," said a shooter who did not wish to be named.

Privately, the administrators are counting on podium finishes from both the rifle and pistol teams but there is a big catch. The finals format has been changed for the Paris competition. Earlier, the qualification rounds and medal rounds were conducted within the space of a few hours. This time, the finals will be held a day after qualification. Former coach Joydeep Karmakar, however, said it will not affect our shooters.

"Shooters adapt quickly to rule changes. We have had a lot of rule changes in the past and they got the hang of it. This time too they will adapt to the new rule change. I do not see this affecting the team's chances but the only thing is we have to keep them fresh," he said.

BRIEFLY

NEW DELHI
Chopra's adductor fine, says coach Bartonietz
The adductor niggle that has troubled Neeraj Chopra in the past couple of months "is fine" now and the reigning Olympics 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.

NEWPORT (USA)
Paes, Amritraj inducted into Tennis Hall of Fame
Legendary Indian tennis players Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj today became the first two exponents of the sport from Asia to be inducted into the International Hall of Fame. Paes spent 37 weeks at No. 1 in the world rankings in doubles, and won 54 doubles titles on tour.

BUDAPEST
Piastrri takes first win amid team orders row
Australian Oscar Piastrri took his first Formula One win in a McLaren one-two at the Hungarian Grand Prix after Lando Norris reluctantly handed back the lead on team orders three laps from the end on an afternoon of high drama. Lewis Hamilton took third for Mercedes, his 200th Formula One podium coming despite a late collision with Red Bull's championship leader Max Verstappen, who came off worse and finished fifth. AGENCIES

Harman, Richa fire India past UAE

WOMEN'S ASIA CUP Put one foot in semifinals after 78-run victory



Richa Ghosh and Harmanpreet Kaur shared a 75-run partnership off 45 balls; BELOW: Himachal Pradesh's Tanuja Kanwar receives her international debut cap from Renuka Thakur. ANI



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 today.

Invited to bat, Harmanpreet played the anchor's role to perfection with a 47-ball 66, while Ghosh produced a late charge with an unbeaten 29-ball 64 to power defending champions India to 201/5, 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 123/7 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 final group game against Nepal on Tuesday.

Chasing the daunting total, opener Esha Rohit Oza scored a 36-ball 38 but UAE kept losing wickets at regular intervals.

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. Harmanpreet stitched two crucial partner-

220.68
Ghosh's strike rate during her unbeaten 29-ball 64 is the highest for India in a 50-plus score in women's T20Is. The previous highest was 204 by Smriti Mandhana when she scored an unbeaten 25-ball 51 against Sri Lanka in the 2022 Asia Cup final

ships, adding 54 off 39 balls with Jemimah Rodrigues and 75 off 45 balls with Ghosh, who reached her fifty in just 26 balls. Opener Shafali Verma hit five fours and a six en route an 18-ball 37. "It was a great feeling especially when Jemi (Rodrigues) and I were batting. We were looking to run hard rather than playing risky shots. When Richa came I told her to keep watching the ball and she batted beautifully," said Harmanpreet.

Brief scores: India: 201/5 (Harmanpreet 66, Ghosh 64*; Egodage 2/36); UAE: 123/7 (Egodage 40, Oza 36; Deepti 2/23, Tanuja 1/14)

Pakistan hammer Nepal
Gull Feroza's belligerent fifty helped Pakistan beat Nepal by nine wickets and stay in contention for a semifinal berth. Feroza (57 off 35 balls) was helped by Muneeba Ali (46 not out off 34 balls) as Pakistan raced past the target of 109 in just 11.5 overs. They added 105 runs for the opening wicket. — PTI

Rose shares three-way lead

TROON, JULY 21
Britain's Justin Rose edged into a share of the lead at the Open early in his final round as the major headed towards a thrilling conclusion at a blustery Royal Troon on Sunday. The 43-year-old began the day one stroke behind overnight leader Billy Horschel on a tightly-packed leaderboard but birdies at the second and fourth took him to five under. Rose, who had to qualify this year, is bidding to become the first Englishman to win the Open since Nick Faldo in 1992.

Compatriot Dan Brown, one of six players to start their fourth rounds on three under, was fading though

after four bogeys in his opening six holes.

Horschel began in superb fashion with a birdie on the opening hole but bogeyed the third before another birdie at the fourth put him level with Rose and South African playing partner Thriston Lawrence. After the changeable weather of Saturday which left 24 players within six shots of the lead, the conditions were at least dry on Sunday but with a stiff westerly wind.

Ireland's Shane Lowry, the champion in 2019, suffered a horrible back nine on Saturday and dropped a shot early in his final round, but got into the mix again with

four birdies in five holes to get back to four under.

American Russell Henley was on four under after a tidy start featuring four successive pars and a birdie on the par-three fifth, while compatriot Xander Schauffele was also on four under after his first six holes.

World number one Scottie Scheffler was beginning to mount a charge when he got to three under but a bogey at the sixth also left the American three shots back. Of the earlier starters Spaniard Jon Rahm made a big move as he went out in 32 strokes to get under par although a bogey at the treacherous 11th hole left him four behind. — Reuters



Shubhandar Sharma watches his putt on the fifth green during his final round. Sharma shot a 1-over and looked set for a top-20 finish. AP/PTI

India Inc's pitch: Extend sops, boost ease of doing biz

VIJAY C ROY
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Industry chambers are abuzz with expectations from the Union Budget 2024-25 to be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday. Industry bodies, representing the Indian corporate sector, such as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) expect the Budget will aim at creating a roadmap for the country's economic growth for the next five years. Among the major expectations are:

Set up ministry of investment

Currently, the process of investment for foreign investors needs clearances from several ministries, including Finance, Home, Commerce, External Affairs, etc., besides state governments, certain institutions and regulators like the RBI, SEBI, stock exchanges and banks among others. The CII has recommended the setting up an independent ministry for investment, which could become the single point of contact for facilitating foreign investors seeking to invest in India as well as Indians wanting to invest abroad.

Expand ambit of PLI scheme

The industry chambers are of the view that there is a need for revamping and expanding the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme to encourage employment generation. The PLIs should be expanded to labour-intensive sectors such as apparels, toys



and footwear manufacturing. Also, to cut dependence on imports, PLIs should be extended to sectors that not only have large imports but also have domestic capability.

Encourage R&D

FICCI has recommended the government to encourage expenditure on scientific research, the lifeline of businesses globally. The withdrawal of weighted deduction in respect of scientific research expenditure will create hurdles for the "Make in India" initiative of the government.

No tax on PF interest

According to FICCI, interest on an employee's contribution to his/her provident fund account above Rs 2.5 lakh in a financial year should not be taxable. Before FY 2021-22, the interest credited to the EPF account on any amount of contribution was tax-free. Now, a cap of Rs 2.5 lakh has been introduced. Either this should be withdrawn or the limit should be doubled to Rs 5 lakh.

Boost to consumption demand

The CII, in its Budget recommendations, suggested the government should consider cutting down taxes on fuel, which will in turn lead to rise in disposable income and thus, boost consumption.

SC to hear petitions seeking scrapping of NEET-UG today

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Supreme Court will on Monday take up petitions seeking cancellation of the NEET-UG 2024 over alleged paper leak and other irregularities.

A Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud, which had on the previous hearing directed the National Testing Agency (NTA) to declare centre and city-wise results of the medical entrance test, will hear the matter.

The NTA has already complied with the order. Some successful candidates have also moved the top court opposing petitions seeking cancellation of the exam.

Senior counsel Narender Hooda had on July 18 sub-

TOPPERS NOT JUST FROM COACHING HUBS: GOVT

■ The Education Ministry said on Sunday that students from across the country, and not just those from coaching hubs, had been able to score 700 marks and above in the NEET-UG exam

■ "Such a large spread of top scorers shows that many candidates who were not from the traditional tuition hubs were also able to come in the toppers list in NEET 2024," the ministry said

■ The ministry claimed that the reason behind the rise in the number of students scoring well was due to its decision of aligning the syllabus of NEET with that of higher secondary

mitted on behalf of the petitioners that in the absence of a detailed result, the petitioners were handicapped in pointing out discrepancies in the NEET-UG and that publishing the entire result on the website by the NTA would bring about transparency on the marks obtained by candidates.

The Bench, which includ-

ed Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra, had rejected repeated requests made by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the names of cities and centres should also be masked.

On the basis of a technical analysis of NEET-UG 2024 data by experts from IIT Madras, the Centre had told the Supreme Court that there was no indication of mass

malpractice or local set of candidates being benefitted. The NTA too has opposed cancellation of the May 5 test.

However, Hooda had said unless the petitioners were given access to the entire city-wise and centre-wise result, they would be unable to contest and contradict the claims made by the Centre on the basis of the technical analysis.

Hooda cited a Bihar Police report to assert that the paper was leaked a day before the May 5 test and it could be widespread. The top court has already made it clear that any order for conducting the NEET-UG exam afresh had to be based on the concrete evidence that the sanctity of the entire examination was widely affected.

India won't abandon its relationship with Russia, says US NSA

WASHINGTON, JULY 21

There was no tangible evidence of India deepening its military and technology relationship with Russia, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said, asserting that Moscow, which had become a "junior partner" to China, was not necessarily going to be a "great and reliable friend" to India in a future contingency.

Sullivan made these remarks at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado, while responding to questions about the recent visit of PM Narendra Modi to Russia for bilateral talks with President Vladimir Putin.

"I think the biggest question is: Do we see tangible evidence that India is deepening its military and technology relation-

'TALKS IN PANNUN CASE EFFECTIVE'

The conversation with India regarding the allegations of a plot to assassinate a Sikh separatist in the US that involved an Indian government official had been "respectful and effective", said US NSA Sullivan.

ship with Russia? And I did not see tangible evidence of that visit that it was deepening; I didn't see deliverables in that space," Sullivan said.

"Don't you think the bear hug (with Putin) was significant then?" he was asked. "Well, Modi has a certain way, of course, of greeting world leaders. I've seen it up close and personal, actually," Sullivan said. — PTI

Joint drill



Indian Navy MARCOs and US Navy Seals and Special Forces of other partner nations take part in the US' RIMPAC exercise at the Joint Base Pearl Harbour on Sunday. ANI

NDA gov't formed through 'threats, intimidation,' will collapse: Mamata

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Stating that the Narendra Modi-led government had been formed through "intimidation and threats", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday said the Central Government would not "last long and soon collapse".

Addressing a massive 'Martyrs' Day' rally of the TMC in Kolkata, Banerjee, without naming anyone, also criticised the BJP's allies in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre for giving up ministerial positions for financial gain.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, who was also present at the event, also claimed that the NDA government at the Centre would not last long. He said communal forces might experience temporary success but would be defeated ultimately.

"This government at the Centre won't last long and will fall soon. Such communal forces want to be in power at any cost, but those designs won't succeed," he said, without naming the BJP or NDA. Describing NDA allies as



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav at the Martyrs' Day rally in Kolkata on Sunday. ANI

COMMUNAL FORCES WON'T SUCCEED

“The Central Government won't last long. Such communal forces want to be in power at any cost, but their designs won't succeed.” Akhilesh Yadav, SP CHIEF

"cowards and greedy individuals interested in financial inducements", Banerjee said: "Has anyone ever heard of money being offered instead of ministries? They are cowards, shameless and greedy. They sacrificed their own identities."

Complimenting Akhilesh Yadav, Banerjee said the "khe" (game) he played in UP should have made the BJP government in UP to resign. However, the government continued to remain power by misusing agencies, she said. "You cannot intimidate us

by misusing agencies," Banerjee asserted. The West Bengal CM said only Bengal can preserve the existence of India and there can be no India without Bengal.

Banerjee accused the BJP, Congress and CPM of having a "tacit understanding" in West Bengal, alleging that their sole aim was to obstruct development efforts in the state. She said when the West Bengal Government gave advertisement for jobs or recruited people, these parties filed PILs in courts to block job creation.

India to contribute \$1 mn to World Heritage Centre: PM

SHUBHADEEP CHOUDHURY
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced USD 1 million contribution to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, which works to protect and preserve cultural heritage, biodiversity hotspots, urban heritage and marine heritage.

Announcing the contribution after inaugurating the 46th World Heritage Committee (WHC) meeting here, Modi said the funds could be used for capacity building, technical assistance and conservation of world heritage sites in the countries in 'Global South'.

India is hosting the World

2,000 delegates taking part in 10-day meet



PM Narendra Modi speaks at an event in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

Heritage Committee meeting for the first time. The committee is responsible for managing all matters of world heritage. The meeting is being attended by more

than 2,000 international and national delegates. During the meeting spread over 10 days, proposals for nominating new sites on the World Heritage list and state of con-

servation reports of 124 existing World Heritage properties will be discussed.

Describing India as a living example of an ancient civilisation, Modi said history of India was also a history of science. Mentioning the iron pillar (kept at the Qutab Minar complex), Modi said despite standing in the open for many centuries, it had remained free of rust.

"This was an example of advanced metallurgy that prevailed in ancient India," the PM said, adding that the temple at Kedarnath was an example advancement attained by India in architecture. Located at an altitude of 35,000 feet, the temple was constructed in the eighth

century AD by taking into account the harsh climate prevailing in the area and the glacial alignment, Modi said.

He also mentioned Brihadeeswara Temple built by Chola kings in the South as an example of great architecture. He said the Dholavira and Lothal sites in Gujarat demonstrated advancement in urban planning and water management attained in India dating back to 3,000 BC.

The PM mentioned the Kashi-Vishwanath corridor, the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the Nalanda University, named after the ancient seat of learning in Bihar, as some of achievements of the government headed by him.

Govt has revoked 58-yr-old ban on staff taking part in RSS activities, claims Cong

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The Congress today claimed that the Modi Government had repealed a more than 50-year-old order banning Central Government employees from participating in the activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"Fifty-eight years ago, the Centre had imposed a ban on government employees taking part in the activities of the RSS. The Modi Government has withdrawn the order," Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera wrote on X.

The party quoted a purported official memorandum issued by the Ministry of Per-

sonnel, Public Grievance and Pension dated July 9, which Khera attached with his post on X. The subject line of the official memorandum read: "The participation of government servants in the activities of the RSS - regarding".

Signed by the Deputy Secretary, it mentioned official memorandum issued in 1966, 1970 and 1980 on the subject. The July 9 memorandum stated that the previous instructions had been reviewed, and it was decided to remove the RSS from the impugned official memorandums. The latest memorandum has been issued with the approval of the competent authority, it claimed.

MoD to buy 6 India-made radar planes

VIJAY MOHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, JULY 21

The Ministry of Defence has issued a request for information (RFI) to procure six Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AEW&CS), along with associated ground equipment for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

The offer, aimed at bolstering the IAF's surveillance capability, is open only for registered Indian vendors and Indian original equipment manufacturers, according to the RFI that was issued on July 19.

The AEW&CS provides long-range radar detection. Mounted on aircraft, it is a system that comprises a radar, electronic surveillance measures, communication support measures, command & control, battle management system and networking through data links.

The IAF's requirement is for jet-engine aircraft with an endurance of at least eight hours along with air-to-air refuelling capability, operational altitude of 40,000 feet

CHINA, PAK BETTER EQUIPPED

■ The IAF's present fleet of five AEW&CS is relatively small as compared to India's two hostile neighbours

■ China has a fleet of 20 Shaanxi KJ-500 20s, four Shaanxi KJ-200s and four KJ-2000s, while Pakistan has four Chinese ZDK-03 Karakoram Eagles and eight Swedish Saab 2000 Erieye platforms

and above, latest navigation systems and cruise speed higher than Mach 0.7.

The system's primary radar should have a 360° coverage and the capability to detect and track large-bodied aircraft to slow unmanned aerial vehicles having a low-radar cross section at ranges above 550 km and flying at heights ranging from 100 feet to 65,000 feet.

An identification friend and foe system, self-protection electronic warfare suite, data links and a mission suite to enable seamless integration of AEW&CS with the IAF's command and control grid for network-centric operations are among other requirements listed out in the RFI.

Vendors can offer a platform that is already customised as an AEW&CS, or modify a suitable aircraft according to specifications laid out by the IAF. A

pre-owned aircraft can also be used for the purpose.

According to sources, the IAF has projected a requirement of 12 AEW&CS, also known as 'eyes in the skies' to effectively monitor the airspace along the borders. At present, it has a fleet of three ageing Russian A-50s, based on the IL-76 airframe with Israeli avionics and two Netra aircraft developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The DRDO is also actively pursuing an AEW&CS programme and is in the process of developing a new, more advanced mission suite than the existing one in the Netra. Inducted in 2017, a Netra aircraft was deployed in a combat situation for the first time during the Balakote operation in 2019.



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