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## Biden leaves presidential contest, endorses Harris

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WASHINGTON: American President Joe Biden dropped out of the presidential race on Sunday, paving the way for Democrats to pick another nominee in their convention next month to take on the Republican nominee, Donald Trump.

Minutes later, Biden endorsed his running mate and Vice President Kamala Harris as the Democratic nominee for the White House. If nominated, she will be the first Black woman and the first Indian-American woman to be a presidential candidate of a major party in the US.

"It has been the greatest honour of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term," Biden announced in a letter to Americans on Sunday. Roughly half an hour later, he said in a post on X: "My very first decision as the party nominee in 2020 was to pick Kamala Harris as my Vice President. And it's been the best decision



...While it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down.

JOE BIDEN, U.S. PRESIDENT

### String of missteps: How Joe stumbled

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden's decision to end his re-election campaign on Sunday followed a series of strategic missteps by his campaign team and White House aides that amplified concerns that the 81-year-old president wouldn't be able to win in November's election, or run the country for another four years.

at the June 27 presidential debate against Republican candidate Donald Trump, pushed even some of his closest allies to question whether he could endure a full campaign, and added gasoline to a smoldering Democratic party movement questioning the wisdom of his second term.

A press conference held on the sidelines of the Nato summit worsened things. He introduced Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky as President (Vladimir Putin and identified his own vice president, Kamala Harris, as Vice President (Donald) Trump

Within days, Biden went from the party's figurehead to a liability. He became the first sitting president to stand down from a possible re-election since Lyndon B Johnson in 1968.

## APEX COURT SET TO RESUME NEET HEARING TODAY

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a batch of petitions related to this year's controversy-ridden NEET-UG.

After the top court directive, the National Testing Agency (NTA) on Saturday released city and centre-wise results of the medical entrance exam, which is shrouded in accusations of paper leak and inordinate inflation of marks.

The petitioners have argued for the cancellation of the exam, citing "the large-scale nature" of the leak. The government has opposed a retest, saying that the leak was localised.

## SHAH RAISES MAHA POLLS' PITCH, TAKES ON OPPN ALLIANCE

PUNE: Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) as he dubbed NCP(SP) chief Sharad Pawar the "ringleader of corruption", accused Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray of sitting with people who sought clemency for 1993

Mumbai blasts convict Yakub Memon, and targeted Congress MP Rahul Gandhi for his "arrogance".

## More acrimony likely as Parliament reopens

HT Correspondent  
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NEW DELHI: The Monsoon session of Parliament will begin on Monday, with finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman set to table the first Union Budget of the third Narendra Modi-led central government a day later, even as the Opposition prepares to corner the Centre on a range of issues, including the fiasco surrounding public examinations, price rise, unemployment and railway safety.

The session is slated to end on August 12, with 16 sittings scheduled in that time. Sitharaman will table the 2023-24 Economic Survey on Monday.

And while the session will largely be focused on the Budget document being passed, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has listed six new bills to be introduced, including the Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyakt to replace the 90-year-old Aircraft Act.

Parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijiju said he looked forward to a constructive Parliament session.

"As we prepare for the Budget Session, it's clear that running Parliament smoothly is a collective responsibility. Our combined efforts & dedication will ensure that we address the nation's needs effectively. Looking forward to a constructive session & meaningful discussions!" he said in a post on X after a customary all-party meeting ahead of the session on Sunday afternoon.

During the meeting, Rijiju said the Monsoon sitting will be devoted largely to financial mat-

### Monsoon session: What's in store

**Review of economy:** Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will table today the Economic Survey reviewing Indian economy's performance and presenting an outlook for future

**Union budget:** On Tuesday, the finance minister will present the Union budget with a likely focus on consolidating India's fiscal position and boosting growth

**Crucial bills:** Govt is likely to table at least six crucial bills, including the one to replace the 90-year-old Aircraft Act

**Stormy sitting?** The Oppn, buoyed by its increased numbers in the House, is all set to take on the govt



## JD(U), YSRCP, BJD seek spl status for their states

Smriti Kak Ramachandran  
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NEW DELHI: Three political parties, including an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on Sunday demanded special category status for their states at the all-party meeting ahead of the Parliament session on Monday.

While the Janata Dal (United), which runs a coalition government with the BJP in Bihar, sought special category

status for the eastern state, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Yuva-jana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) demanded the same for Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, respectively.

"Odisha has been deprived of the special category status for more than two decades. The BJD has been demanding the status. States such as Andhra Pradesh and Bihar have also made similar demands..." BJD leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sasmith Patra said.

## Mamata, Akhilesh slam Centre at Kolkata rally

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KOLKATA: West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav shared the stage at a mega rally in Kolkata on Sunday and launched a joint attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), saying that the coalition government at the Centre will soon collapse.

Addressing the 'Martyrs' Day' rally of the TMC, party chief Banerjee vowed to "oust the morally defeated BJP" from the Centre as soon as possible. "The government at the Centre won't last long. This is not a stable gov-

ernment and will collapse soon," she said.

Describing the NDA allies as "cowards and greedy individuals who yielded to financial inducements," she added: "Has anyone ever heard of money being offered instead of ministries?"

Akhilesh, who was invited as a special guest to the rally, echoed similar views and said the days of the NDA government at the Centre were numbered.

"Those who have come to power at the Centre will be ousted. They never wanted anything good for the people. Their only intention was to grab power somehow," he said.

## PM opens World Heritage Committee meet



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspects an exhibition of ancient artefacts with Unesco's director general Audrey Azoulay (right) before inaugurating the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi on Sunday.

## Kanwar order row simmers after more BJP allies oppose directive

HT Correspondent  
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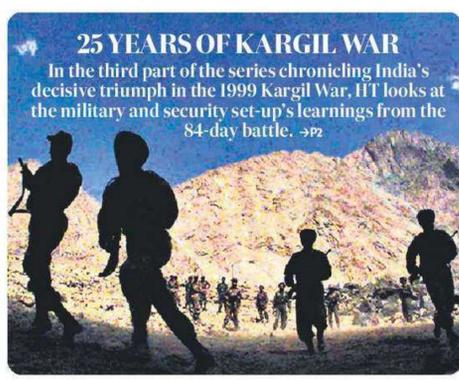
LUCKNOW: Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief and minister of state (MoS) Jayant Chaudhary on Sunday asked the Uttar Pradesh government to roll back its order asking eateries along the Kanwar route to display the names of their owners as he joined the ranks of Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP) allies to criticise the directive, which has triggered sweeping outrage and Opposition censure.

The Uttar Pradesh Police initially softened its stance by making the order—first issued in Muzaffarnagar on July 15—voluntary, but chief minister Yogi Adityanath appeared to double down on the dictate on Friday as his

### Internet shut down in Nuh

GURUGRAM: Haryana on Sunday suspended mobile internet services in Nuh and imposed prohibitory orders after the VHP and the Bajrang Dal said that they plan to conduct a religious procession through the district on Monday.



## Quotas scaled down but B'desh still tense



Security personnel stand guard outside Bangladesh's Supreme Court in Dhaka on Sunday.

HT Correspondent and agencies  
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NEW DELHI/DHAKA: Bangladesh's Supreme Court on Sunday scaled down a controversial quota system for government jobs following violent protests led by students spiralled into clashes, killing at least 151 people across the South Asian country that remained on the edge after demonstrators said they will continue their stir and

the government extended a strict curfew.

The protesters have been demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30% of government jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of Independence in 1971. The government previously halted it in 2018 following mass student protests, but in June, Bangladesh's high court reinstated the quota and set off a new round of protests. Ruling

## AIRBUS SCOUTING 8 SPOTS IN INDIA FOR H125 CHOPPER UNIT

Rahul Singh  
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MARIGNANE (FRANCE): Airbus Helicopters has shortlisted eight locations in India for setting up a production line for the H125 chopper, the fourth such facility in the world, in partnership with Tata Advanced Systems Limited, and the company has projected a demand for 500 helicopters in the country and south Asia during the next 20 years, senior Airbus officials said on Sunday.

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## SPOTLIGHT | 25 YEARS OF KARGIL WAR

## War ushered in sweeping military reform

India learnt hard lessons from the war, with experts underlining that the overhaul of the intelligence set-up, military reforms, a focus on modernisation and improved border management will keep any repeat of 1999 at bay

Rahul Singh

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**NEW DELHI:** Twenty-five years after the Indian Army rewrote the rules of mountain warfare and beat astonishing odds to eject a treacherous foe from the dizzying heights occupied by it in the Kargil sector a few months after the signing of the Lahore peace declaration, the focus is back on how the military has transformed since the turn of the century, weeded out its vulnerabilities, and sharpened its readiness to deter its adversaries.

As the country prepares to celebrate a milestone anniversary of the 1999 Kargil war with Pakistan on July 26, what has also unquestionably returned to the spotlight is the bold leadership of commanders in the combat zone, and the courage, resilience and sacrifice of the young men they fearlessly led.

Hard lessons were learnt from the war and the events that led to it, and there's no question of a repeat of a Kargil-like misadventure by Pakistan, military affairs experts said, pointing to the overhaul of India's intelligence set-up, far-reaching military reforms, sharpened focus on the modernisation of the armed forces, and vastly improved border management.

Several steps taken to tighten security came on the back of a report by a Group of Ministers (GoM) set up by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in April 2000 to review the national security system as well as the recommendations made by the K Subrahmanyam-led Kargil Review Committee (KRC) that highlighted yawning deficiencies in the system.

The GoM also backed the appointment of a chief of defence staff (CDS) to provide single-point military advice to the government and enhance jointness in the armed forces, a significant recommendation that was on the back-burner for years before the government finally cleared it in 2019 and appointed General Bipin Rawat as India's first CDS.

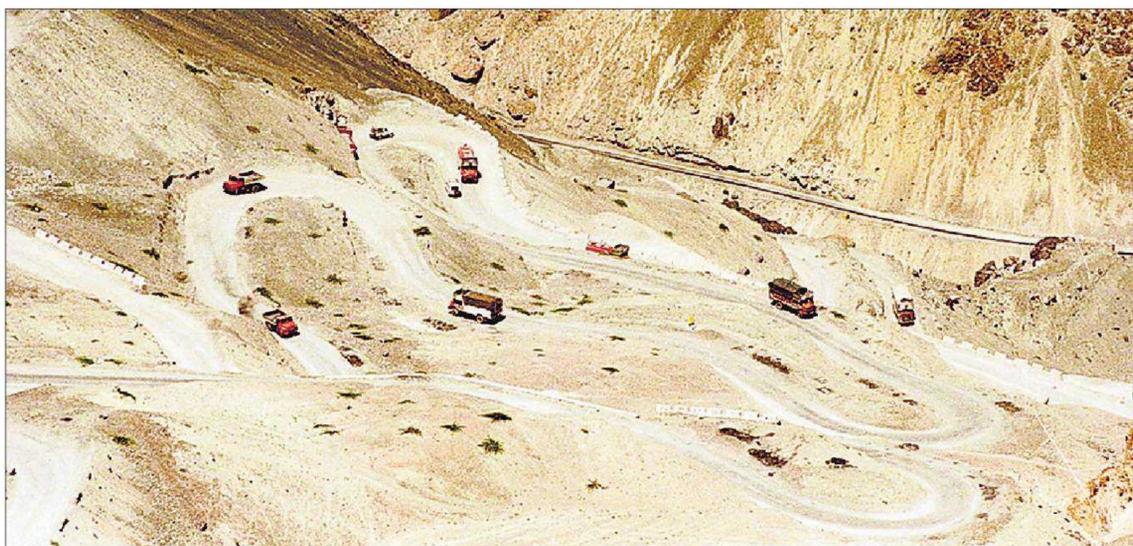
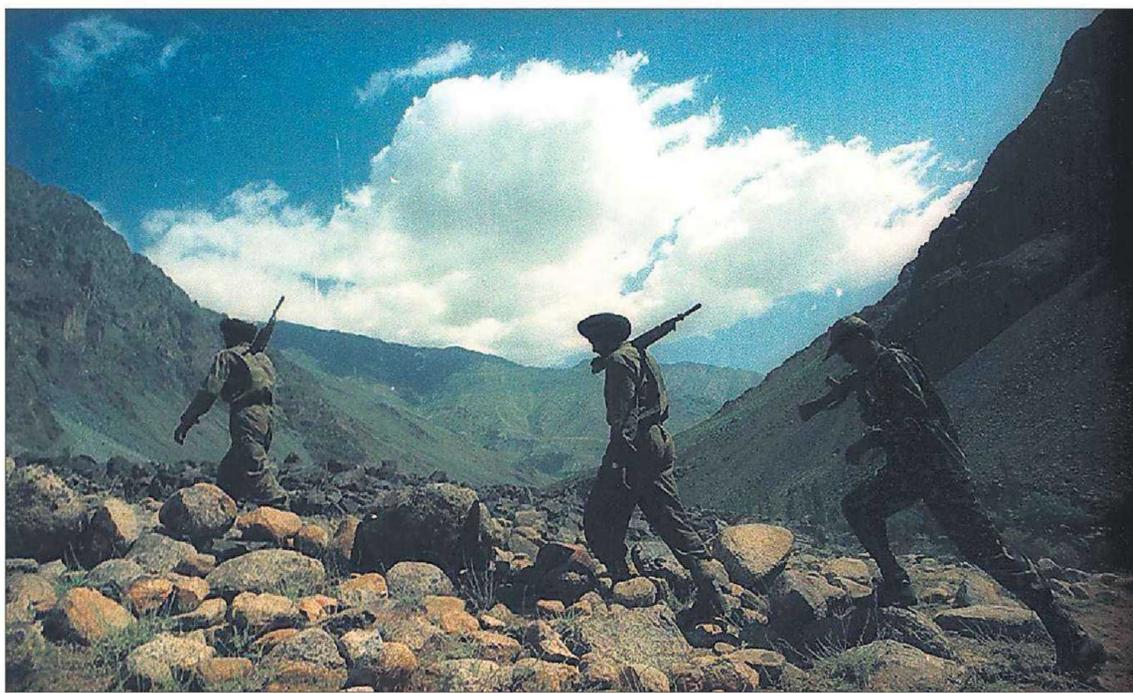
The Kargil war, though limited in geography and scale, had a significant impact on India's strategic thinking, and it forced the country's leadership to take a holistic look at the national security architecture, said former Northern Army commander Lieutenant General DS Hooda (retd).

"The KRC and the GoM reports were the most comprehensive examination of national security issues. This led to a restructuring of the intelligence setup in India to bring in greater cooperation between intelligence agencies. It also led to the raising of HQ Integrated Defence Staff, the Andaman and Nicobar Command, and the Strategic Forces Command," he said.

The creation of the Defence Intelligence Agency in 2002 and the technical intelligence gathering agency, National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) in 2004, were among the key outcomes.

On the ground in the Kargil sector, the gaps in deployment that led to an undetected intrusion were filled by placing a mountain division in an area that only had a brigade and a new Corps HQ came up in Ladakh to improve the command and control, Hooda said.

The limited war, India's fifth, was fought in the summer of 1999 along a 170km mountain frontier, stretching from Mashkoh Valley to Turtuk in the Kargil sector, after thousands of Pakistani intruders exploited gaps in Indian defences and sneaked across the Line of Control (LoC) to



The Kargil war, though limited in geography and scale, had a significant impact on India's strategic thinking.

HT ARCHIVE

capture several commanding heights, with some of them offering a sweeping view of the strategic Srinagar-Leh highway.

"Today, a repeat of Kargil, where large-scale incursions occur, is not possible on LoC," said Hooda.

"However, one lesson we need to continuously reinforce is that irrespective of what is happening bilaterally at the political and diplomatic level, the Indian military must always keep its guard up. Even as the Lahore summit was being held between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan in February 1999, Pakistan soldiers were crossing the LoC in Kargil."

The need to remain vigilant equally applies to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, he said. The military standoff between India and China in eastern Ladakh is now in its fifth year, with no indication of an immediate resolution even as India is hoping that ongoing negotiations with the neighbour will help restore the status quo ante of April 2020.

Things have totally changed during the

last 25 years because of a significant increase in force levels, induction of new equipment and technologies, and a laser focus on intelligence, said Lieutenant General YK Joshi, a former Northern Army commander and Kargil war hero. He was awarded the Vir Chakra, India's third-highest wartime gallantry honour, for his heroism and leadership in the difficult battle to recapture the strategically important and towering feature, Point 5140, in the Dras sector.

#### Young and indomitable

Joshi's unit, 13 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles, secured a morale-boosting win on June 20 that was one of the turning points in the war. The other hard-fought victories that turned the tide of the war in Kargil included the daring recapture of Tololing, Tiger Hill, Point 4875, Khalubar, Point 4812 and Chorbat La.

"The indomitable fighting spirit, the grit, the determination and the resolve of our troops during the Tololing-Point 5140 bat-

tle made everyone among the civil and military leadership in New Delhi realise that we could do it," General VP Malik, who was the army chief during the war, wrote after retirement in his book *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*.

The war, in which 527 Indian soldiers were killed in action, gave birth to a new generation of Indian heroes — Captain Vikram Batra, Lieutenant Manoj Kumar Pandey, Grenadier Yogendra Yadav and Rifleman Sanjay Kumarall of whom were awarded the country's highest wartime honour, the hallowed Param Vir Chakra.

The pantheon includes Majors Vivek Gupta, Rajesh Adhikari, Sonam Wangchuk and Padmapani Acharya, Captains Neikezhakuo Kenguruse and Anuj Nayyar, and Lieutenants Balwan Singh and Keishing Clifford Nongrum, who were all decorated with Maha Vir Chakra, Indian's number two wartime medal.

Batra, Pandey, Gupta, Adhikari, Acharya, Kenguruse, Nayyar and Nongrum didn't return from the battlefield.

Operation Vijay, India's code name for the war, accounted for four of the 21 PVCs awarded in India's military history. There is no definitive account of Pakistan Army casualties, but different estimates peg the number between a few hundred and a few thousand.

At 19, Tiger Hill hero Yadav became the youngest recipient of PVC. Whether it was Yadav riddled with 15 bullets but still persevering with the mission or Batra's iconic victory slogan "Yeh Dil Maange More" that thrust the Pepsi tagline into the national consciousness or Kenguruse who kicked his boots off for a better grip to climb a rock face at 16,000 feet and -10 degrees Celsius, the unbreakable spirit and fortitude of the Kargil heroes at the tip of the spear rocketed them to cult status.

"We won the war because of our youngsters," said Joshi.

"The brave soldiers and officers stared death in the face and pulled off some nearly impossible missions. Their heroism and sacrifice is unmatched. It was India's

first televised war and some of the iconic images from the war zone will stay etched in the public mind," he said.

#### Early setbacks

The Indian Army's initial sluggish response to Pakistan's Operation Badr ruthlessly exposed a series of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance failures, gaps in defences and lapses in command and control.

The army's 121 (Independent) Infantry Brigade responsible for guarding the sector was oblivious to the looming threat posed by the battle-ready intruders, a mix of Pakistani army regulars and Mujahideen, until a local herder alerted a unit (3 Punjab) deployed in the Batalik sector.

Tashi Namgyal of Garkon village was looking for a missing yak when he unwittingly spotted the Pakistani infiltrators on a mountain top on May 3, becoming an unlikely entry in the war's timeline stretching almost three months. In the days that followed Namgyal's accidental discovery, it was clear to the army leadership that a war was in the making and recapturing the dominating positions would take blood, sweat and tears.

The Indian soldiers weren't well equipped, a point emphasised by Malik at a media briefing on June 23. In response to a question on the glaring shortcomings, he ominously said, "We shall fight with whatever we have."

"When the Kargil war began, it was not the vintage but the deficiencies of weapons, equipment, ammunition and spares that worried us more. Even infantry weapons such as medium machine-guns, rocket launchers and mortars, apart from signal equipment, bulletproof jackets and snow clothing for high-altitude warfare, were in short supply," he wrote in his book, which captures the layered realities of the war.

Urgent action helped fix some of the deficiencies as the war rumbled on.

The Indian Air Force's role in crushing the enemy cannot be overstated.

After the PM-headed Cabinet Committee on Security authorised the use of air power on the Indian side of LoC on May 25, IAF launched a deadly wave of airstrikes on positions held by the Pakistan army, including the administrative and logistics base at Muntho Dhalo in the Batalik sector and a battalion headquarters atop Tiger Hill, dealing a crippling blow to the enemy's war effort and somewhat easing the Indian Army's advance.

#### Military reboot

The military is a rebooted force, and its capabilities are no longer in question, said a senior army officer, who asked not to be named. "The three services have inducted new weapons, systems and technologies at a staggering speed during the last 10 to 15 years. We have strengthened our military posture with new fighter jets, a variety of helicopters, transport planes, missiles, warships, submarines, artillery guns, surveillance systems, drones, radars and other modern equipment. Indigenisation is also in full swing," he added.

To be sure, the induction of more fighters, mid-air refuellers, airborne early warning and control systems, submarines, light tanks and artillery gun systems is still a work in progress. So is theaterisation, a long-awaited reform for the best use of the military's resources to fight future wars.

"For a moment, let's look at what has been done. There's been a remarkable technology infusion that allows gap-free surveillance of our borders. Modern weapons and systems have sharpened our combat edge. We have turned the corner on infrastructure development. We've come a long way," said Joshi.

India will celebrate the landmark Kargil Vijay Diwas in the shadow of tensions with China in Ladakh and a resurgence of Pakistan-backed terror in the Jammu region. Keeping the powder dry is the only option.

## Theatres, self-reliance: India puts Kargil lessons to use

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**NEW DELHI:** On August 15, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), paving the way for creation of theatre commands to promote 'jointness and synergy' in the Indian armed forces, a move that came more than 18 years after a recommendation to the effect by the Group of Ministers (GoM) on Kargil.

Five years later, CDS Gen Anil Chauhan is virtually ready with the blueprint of three adversary specific theatre commands, based in Lucknow, Jaipur and Thiruvananthapuram, and will shortly be seeking approval for the implementation from the Modi government later this year.

The Kargil war came as a rude shock to the Indian Army and national intelligence. But the 84-day war fought at the glacial heights of up to 15,000 feet across a 200km range turned out to be a catalyst for major reforms and overhaul of the Indian military. The big lesson of Kargil for national security planners was to simply expect the unexpected — the Indian Army did not expect Pakistanis under Gen Pervez Musharraf to exploit the unheld gaps and glacial features next to the Line of Control (LoC) in Kargil sector.

While China's PLA mobilised in Eastern Ladakh during the Kargil war, it was more of a precautionary measure as Beijing overtly stayed away from the India-Pakistan border skirmish. However, after the PLA transgressions in East Ladakh in May 2020, India has to be prepared for a



With long-range missiles, ballistic missile-carrying subs and Rafale jets (above) capable of nuke deliveries, India's nuclear deterrent now has high survivability. PTI

two-front war as China has replaced the US as the chief security guarantor of Pakistan since the war in Kargil and is the main weapons, missile-tech and drone supplier to Rawalpindi. It is for this reason that India's national security planners are in favour of the creation of a northern theatre command to handle China from Daulat Beg Oldi in Ladakh to Kibuthoo in Arunachal Pradesh, and a western theatre command from Siachen to Sir Creek to handle Pakistan, with a maritime theatre command protecting the 7,700-km-long Indian coastline and littoral territories.

Even though they took a back seat during the UPA regime, the Kargil war was the inflexion point of military reforms in

India as World War II strategies of air-land battles were superseded by the era of stand-off weapons, drones and gun-locating radars. It was during the Kargil war that Israel supplied Searcher Mark I and II surveillance drones to India as well as Litening (precision-targeting) pods to laser guided aerial bombing of Pakistan Army bunkers at Muntho Dalo in the Batalik Sector and Tiger Hill in the Dras sector.

While acquisition of high-altitude long endurance (HALE) drones was one of the key recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee headed by K Subrahmanyam, the father of external affairs minister S Jaishankar, India is still in the process of acquiring Predator HALE

armed drones from US with price negotiations currently underway.

Even though the Committee's recommendation of separation of the post of principal secretary to the Prime Minister and National Security Advisor was implemented after the fall of the Vajpayee government, the creation of Integrated Service Headquarters and the Defence Intelligence Agency have hardly made a dent in overall military reforms. But the replacement of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) has paid dividends during the Modi government with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval being able to create a structure that provides a 360-degree view of national security with one military advisor and three deputy NSAs. With Vikram Misri serving as Deputy NSA before taking over as Foreign Secretary this month, it is likely that only diplomats with national security exposure will be appointed to the post in the future.

It was on the basis of the recommendations of the GoM headed by then deputy prime minister LK Advani that India has now acquired a robust and functional nuclear triad as part of its minimum credible nuclear deterrent doctrine. With long-range missiles, ballistic missile-carrying submarines and Rafale fighters capable of nuke deliveries, India's nuclear deterrent has high survivability, a key to the country's "no first-use" policy. With one ballistic missile nuclear submarine patrolling, another on verge of being launched and a third ready for sea trials, India's sub-surface deterrent is taking

shape with two nuclear-powered conventionally armed submarines on the verge of being sanctioned by the Modi government.

However, one of the key lessons of the war in Kargil and the 2002 military mobilisation under Operation Parakram was the need for India to be self-sufficient in modern weaponry, delivery platforms and ammunition. During 1999 and 2002, India had to rush in last minute supplies (procured at higher rates from Israel and Russia) to take on the Pakistan Army and its maverick generals. Despite Modi's total commitment to the "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India) doctrine, Indian armed forces are still interested in off-the-shelf acquisitions as defence PSUs and DRDO almost always fail to deliver in time. It was the late Manohar Parrikar as defence minister who cut down redundancies and ensured that India had enough ammunition for a 10-day war. Today, the Indian Army is self-reliant in ammunition after corporatisation of Indian Ordnance Factories; the Indian Navy now has the capability to build its own aircraft carriers, destroyers, frigates and submarines.

The Kargil war not only initiated reforms in Indian military structures and field formations but also triggered a change in Indian intelligence.

Shyamal Datta, director, Intelligence Bureau, on the basis of intelligence picked up by then additional director Ajit Doval sent a signed letter to then PM Vajpayee warning a build-up of Pak Army across the LoC in Kargil Sector, the Indian Army

was categorical that there was no intelligence alert on Pakistani intrusions apparently due to poor dissemination of information and appreciation of the intelligence collected.

It was the war in Kargil that led to creation of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) on the lines of the US' National Security Agency (NSA), the multi-agency centre (MAC) for pooling of central intelligence and the joint task force on intelligence (JFTI) for liaison between the central agencies and their counterparts in the states. Based on the recommendation of the Kargil GoM, then DIB Ajit Doval created MAC and the JFTI in 2004 so that actionable intelligence could be provided to the consumer.

Twenty-five years after the war in Kargil, the security and military structure recommended by the Subrahmanyam Committee and the GoM are in place but the speed of implementation is very slow due to inherent resistance from armed forces and intelligence agencies.

Decision-making within the national defence establishment is laborious and tedious with each branch of the armed forces, the ministry and DRDO protecting their own turf. In both dimensions, China presents a contrast. The overhaul of the military, and local manufacturing of defence equipment have to accelerate for India to hold its own in a neighbourhood where Beijing is flexing its muscle.

The author covered the Kargil war for Hindustan Times and has reported on Pakistan terror in Kashmir since 1994



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# Capital braces itself for kanwar yatra, cops say traffic arrangements in place

Karn Pratap Singh

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**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Traffic Police on Sunday said that vehicular movement in parts of Delhi — especially in northeast, east, central, south, southwest, and north Delhi — will remain affected for the coming 12 days due to the annual kanwar yatra, which starts from Monday. Officers said that traffic in some arterial stretches may be thrown out of gear as two million devotees return from their pilgrimage.

According to an advisory issued on Sunday, kanwars will enter Delhi from multiple Delhi-Uttar Pradesh borders and pass through key routes such as the Delhi-Meerut Expressway, Mathura Road, Aurobindo Marg, Mehrauli-Gurgaon (MG) Road, and Outer Ring Road, leading to traffic diversions and restrictions.

Nearly 1,500 traffic personnel, including traffic inspectors (T-1) and zonal officers (ZOs), will remain deployed on the routes and all the border points such as Apsara, Loni, and Bhopura (northeast), Maharajpur and Ghazipur (east), Kalindi Kunj, Badarpur and Rajokri (south), and Tikri, Jharoda, and Singhu (outer Delhi) as devotees carrying holy water from the Ganga in Uttarakhand travel on foot, traffic police officers said.

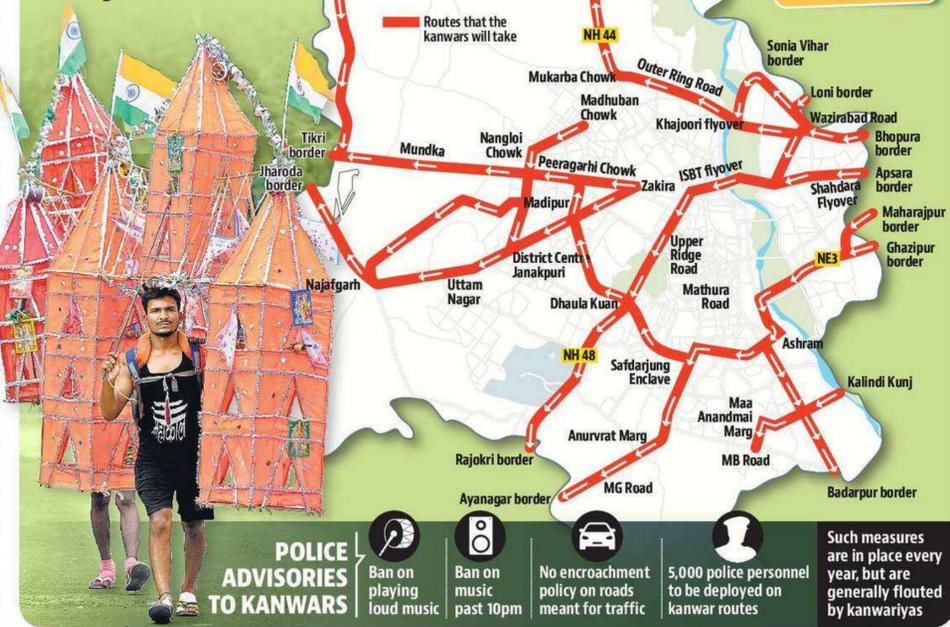
They said elaborate traffic arrangements will be in place on the designated borders and routes to minimise inconvenience to commuters. A senior officer aware of the preparations, requesting anonymity, said that nearly 200 kanwariya camps have been set up on roadsides for the next 12 days.

**Designated routes**

According to traffic police, devotees will mainly pass through

## Key roads likely to be affected

City residents are sceptical that police advisories to kanwars will lead to any changes on the ground



nine routes, most of which would fall in east, central and north Delhi. For those entering Delhi from Apsara Border, near Seemapuri, will be the Shahdara flyover to Seelampur T-point, further to ISBT Kashmere Gate flyover.

From there, kanwariyas can

enter north Delhi and take Boulevard Road, Rani Jhansi Road, Faiz Road, and Upper Ridge Road to reach Dhaula Kuan and further to NH 48 through which they will exit the city from Rajokri border and enter Haryana.

For kanwariyas entering

Delhi from Maharajpur border near Anand Vihar, the traffic police have designated the route via Road no. 56, Ghazipur border, NE3, Ring Road, Mathura Road and exit from Badarpur border to reach Haryana. The other two routes will either be via Kalindi Kunj, Mathura Road

and Badarpur border; or Kalindi Kunj, Mathura Road, Modi Mill, Maa Anandmai Marg, and Mehrauli Badarpur (MB) Road. For kanwariyas going to Gurugram, the traffic police have proposed two routes passing through south Delhi — from Ashram Chowk to August

Kranti or Aurobindo Marg and reach Mehrauli-Gurugram (MG) Road and exit from Ayanagar border.

The other two designated routes are New Rohtak Road (from Kamal T-point to Tikri border) and Najafgarh Road (from Zakhira to Najafgarh). In addition to these important roads and intersections, devotees may also move in smaller numbers in several locations across Delhi, the traffic police said.

According to the traffic police advisory, heavy transport vehicles will be diverted by the UP Police from Mohan Nagar in Ghaziabad towards NH44. No such vehicles will be allowed towards Wazirabad Road via Bhopura border and/or towards GT Road via Apsara border. Heavy commercial transport vehicles, except city buses, coming from GT Karnal Road at Outer Ring Road will be diverted straight towards NH44 and will not be allowed to move on Wazirabad Road and GT Road towards Shahdara.

"The devotees and road users are advised to follow the traffic rules and obey the directions of personnel on duty. During the kanwar yatra, traffic violations will be checked by on-the-spot prosecution teams and by photography and videography of violations, which will be followed by prosecution," added a second senior traffic police officer.

The kanwar yatra is carried out during the Hindu calendar month of Shravan. Thousands of pilgrims mostly from Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh move towards Haridwar to fetch holy Ganga water and return to their hometowns, where they offer the water to lord Shiva at prominent temples. This year, the annual pilgrimage will start on July 22, and it will conclude on August 2.

{ JAL ABHISHEK YATRA }

# Hry prepares for Nuh procession, suspends internet

Leena Dhankhar

leena.dhankhar@hindustantimes.com

**GURUGRAM:** The Haryana government on Sunday suspended mobile internet services in Nuh and imposed prohibitory orders as a precautionary measure after the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal announced that they plan to conduct a religious procession through the district on Monday.

Nuh deputy commissioner Dharendra Khadgata confirmed that permission has been granted for the yatra, adding that mobile internet services will only be resumed at 6pm on Monday.

Vijay Pratap Singh, the superintendent of police of the district, said stringent security measures are in place to ensure the safety of participants and the smooth conduct of the event. The SP led a flag march through the district, with police maintaining a vigilant presence at key locations, including Nuh city, the Nalhareswar temple, Aravalli hills, Badkai Chowk, Jhirkeswar temple, and Sringshwar Temple (Singar).

The precautionary measures have been taken keeping in mind the annual event, named the Brij Mandal Jal Abhishek Yatra, initiated by VHP in 2020. The purpose of the procession is to "revive holy Hindu sites" in Nuh—a district around 50km from Gurugram, where Muslims constitute 79.2% of the population, according to the 2011 Census.

The procession begins with a ceremonial "jal abhishek" (pouring of sacred water) at the Nalhar Mahadev temple. This ancient temple, surrounded by the Aravallis near Nuh city, is believed to date back to the time of the Pandavas, and houses the Nalhar Pandava Reservoir.

On July 31, 2023, communal violence broke out in Nalhar village of Nuh after mobs attacked the procession. The ensuing vio-

ON JULY 31, 2023, THE NUH YATRA WAS ATTACKED, LEADING TO COMMUNAL VIOLENCE WHICH THEN SPREAD ACROSS HARYANA

lence spread to other parts of Haryana, including Gurugram, leading to the death of six people, with a further 88 injured. Police later said that they believe the clashes were triggered by three provocative videos released by cow vigilantes on social media—two by Mohit Yadav alias Monu Manesar, and another by Raj Kumar (better known as Bittu Bajrang)—ahead of the religious procession.

With VHP and Bajrang Dal giving a call for a fresh yatra on July 22 this year, Haryana additional chief secretary (home) Anurag Rastogi issued an order to suspend mobile internet services as well as bulk SMS services (excluding banking and mobile recharge) and all dongle services on mobile networks (excluding voice calls) in Nuh. He said Rastogi issued the orders under provisions of section 20(2) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, and Rule 2(1) of the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017.

"The suspension is aimed at curbing the spread of inflammatory content and false rumours that could potentially incite violence, damage public and private property, and disrupt law and order. The misuse of internet to circulate misleading information through social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, and X, and to mobilise and organise crowds for violent activities, has necessitated this action," Khadgata said.

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Tender No.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value in Lakhs Rs.	EMD (Rupees)	Tender Closing Date and time
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
202424521494	EL-M-W-173 Conversion of Slip Ring Induction Motor driven Conventional EOT Cranes into Energy efficient and reliable Squirrel Cage Induction Motor Driven Crane with VFD system.	49.22	98,400/-	21.08.2024 at 15.30 hrs.

Website for submission of offer: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
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Letter No: 621 Date: 20/07/2024

**Short term Tender Notice**

Office of the Executive Engineer (M&G) Kulhal Power Station, Kulhal, invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

**Tender No. 04/UJVNL/EE(M&G)/KPS/2024-25:** "Cleaning of drain water sump, sealing water tank, penstock gallery flushing of cooling water strainer and Bye pass gate charging pit for the period of one year of Kulhal Power House."

Estimated cost : Rs. 5,33,119/- GST Extra  
Date of availability of bid document on website.: 20/07/2024 11:00 Hrs  
Last date for submission of tender: 27/07/2024 15:00 Hrs  
For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "[www.ujvnl.com](http://www.ujvnl.com)"  
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RO No. 617 Dated : 20/07/2024

**e-Tender Date Extension Notice-5**

Due to unavoidable reasons, the dates of tenders invited against e-NIT No. 01/UJVNL/DGM(Civil-Arakit-Tiuni-Plasu)/TP/2023-24, e-NIT No. 02/UJVNL/DGM(Civil-Arakit-Tiuni-Plasu)/TP/2023-24, e-NIT No. 03/UJVNL/DGM(Civil-Arakit-Tiuni-Plasu)/TP/2023-24 are hereby extended as follows:

Date of availability of bid document on website: 14.08.2024 from 17:00Hrs. Last date for submission of bids on website: 28.10.2024 at 16:00 Hrs  
Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/ cancellation etc. may be obtained from e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>  
Dy. General Manager (Civil) Arakit-Tiuni & Tiuni Plasu Project, Dakpathar  
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# Humidity, low wind push city's wet bulb temp to season high of 30.9°C

HT Correspondent  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Capital on Sunday logged the highest wet bulb temperature this season at 30.9 degrees Celsius (°C) — brought on by a combination of high humidity levels and inadequate wind movement, according to the India Meteorological Department. The weather agency, however, has predicted a marginal relief from sultry conditions on Monday and Tuesday and said parts of the Capital will likely record moderate rain.

The wet bulb figure indicates the thermal discomfort humans feel outdoors. Delhi's maximum temperature on Sunday was 36.6°C, two degrees above normal. However, a high relative humidity level of around 70% marred the bearable thermometer high and made way for muggy weather conditions, which has largely prevailed this month. The previous wet bulb high was 30.1°C on June 30.

At 70% relative humidity, recorded at 2.30pm, the Heat Index (HI) level or "real feel" was an intense 53°C. A higher humidity level makes steady perspiration difficult outdoors and cur-



IMD said rain in the next two days will likely bring down temperatures.

SANJEEV VERMA/HT PHOTO

tails the body's ability to cool itself effectively. A wet bulb temperature of 32°C or higher makes it difficult for even fit and acclimatised people to work outdoors for long, and at a wet bulb temperature of 35°C — the maximum threshold — humans can no longer regulate body temperatures, leading to heatstroke and potential collapse.

But rain in the next two days will likely bring down temperatures.

"Delhi-NCR, for most of the month, has recorded high humidity and low wind speed. At the same time, there has not been an active weather system, and the monsoon trough has stayed south of Delhi, closer to central India," said Mahesh Pala-

wat, vice president at Skymet meteorology, adding moisture was approaching from the Bay of Bengal even now.

"In the absence of a strong weather system, localised light rainfall is being recorded," he added, stating there is a chance the trough will move northwards in the next 48 hours. Parts of Delhi recorded light

**TRACKING WET-BULB TEMPERATURE**

**30.9°C WET-BULB TEMP**

**70% AT 2.30PM HUMIDITY**    **53°C HEAT INDEX**

The wet-bulb temp measures the heat's impact on human health. The principle is simple: because we cool down by sweating, the more readily sweat evaporates, the less hot you feel. But evaporation becomes harder when the air is heavy with moisture. This is why we tend to feel warmer in a bathroom right after a shower (where the air is humid) than we do once we step out. Scientists measure this by wrapping the bulb of a thermometer in a wet cloth, hence, the term wet bulb.

rain in the early hours of Sunday. Safdarjung, representative of Delhi's weather, recorded 7mm rainfall till 8.30 am, and the same was recorded at Anagar. At Lodhi Road it was 10.2mm and "trace" rain was recorded at Palam. Post noon, humidity remained high and the cloud cover reduced, giving way to bright sunshine.

"These conditions are common in the monsoon season, as humidity remains high. In the absence of strong winds, the body is not able to cool itself effectively," said an IMD official.

# Commercial vehicles with invalid permits face action

Karn Pratap Singh  
karn.singh@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Traffic Police has cracked down on commercial vehicles operating in Delhi with invalid permits, issuing challans to more than 20,000 such vehicles in the first seven months of 2024, officers aware of the matter said on Sunday, adding the highest number of offenders were from the Kotwali traffic circle, north Delhi.

Officers said the crackdown is part of a comprehensive initiative to improve traffic flow, and ensure the safety.

Data shared by the traffic police revealed that this year, 20,009 commercial vehicles were penalised for permit violations till July 15. In comparison, only 13,751 commercial vehicles were challaned in the corresponding period last year.

"This significant increase in the prosecution for permit violation in the current year reflects a broader crackdown by the Delhi

Traffic circles with maximum challans	Challans
Kotwali	1,406
Daryaganj	1,279
Civil Lines	1,263
Madhu Vihar	1,123
Lajpat Nagar	1,020

Traffic Police on traffic rule violations aimed at improving road safety and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards. Specialised teams have been deployed across the city to conduct regular checks at strategic locations, including major intersections, highways, and commercial hubs. This surge in prosecution is expected to continue as we aim to sustain the momentum of the enforcement drive," said a senior traffic police officer, who asked not to be named.

The permit violations, according to the officer, include contraventions of various conditions that are prescribed in the permit rulebook, such as driving vehicles without proper documents, carrying loads beyond permissible limit, vehicle being driven by an unauthorised person, vehicle fitness issues, and vehicles found plying on non-designated routes or carrying items for which they were not permitted.

"The crackdown is part of a larger initiative to enhance road safety and reduce congestion. We have emphasised the importance of adhering to regulations, as non-compliance poses significant risks to safety," added the officer.

In 2024, the maximum number of infringements were from the Kotwali traffic circle with 1,406 permit violations, followed by Daryaganj (1,279) and Civil Lines (1,263). The Madhu Vihar and Lajpat Nagar circles stood fourth and fifth on the list, with 1,123 and 1,020 permit violation challans.

# 2-yr-old found dead in central Delhi toilet

HT Correspondent  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A two-year-old boy was found dead in a public toilet in Anand Parbat, central Delhi on Sunday, police said, adding that they have registered a murder case and begun probe.

Deputy commissioner of police (central) Harsha Vardhan said the body of the boy was found in the transit camp in Anand Parbat on Sunday morning around 10am. "The body was in an abandoned toilet block around 100m from the slums where the family of the victim lives," Vardhan added.

The police control room received a call around 1am on Sunday from the boy's father who reported him missing.

"When police reached the spot, the parents of the boy said he was playing outside the house in the evening. They looked for him and asked their neighbours but could not find the boy prompting them to report it to the police," the officer added.

Multiple teams were formed to look for the boy. Around 10am, he was found in the toilet which was abandoned. "No one uses this space. In this area, men often come here to consume drugs," the officer said.

According to police, there were some superficial injuries on the body but his clothes were intact. "Prima facie, it does not appear that he was sexually abused but postmortem will ascertain the details," the officer said.

# Woman falls to death from Dwarka balcony

HT Correspondent  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A 29-year-old woman died after she fell off the balcony of a third floor flat in a residential society in Kakrola near Dwarka, southwest Delhi, early on Saturday, police said. The woman lived in the flat with her husband. Her father has accused the husband of allegedly killing her and throwing her down from the balcony, police said.

DCP (southwest) Ankit Singh said the Dwarka north police station received a call about the incident and a team went to the apartment complex in Shiv Park, Kakrola. The injured woman was rushed to a nearby hospital

but was declared dead on arrival. She was identified by her single name, Shashi. "Her family members were informed about the death and her body was transferred to the Deen Dayal Upadhyay hospital mortuary for autopsy," the officer said.

During the investigation, the victim's father, Shyam Singh, accused her husband, Sonu (single name), of throwing her off the balcony of their flat.

"As the couple had not yet completed seven years of marriage, we have informed the subdivisional magistrate (SDM) of Dwarka and requested an inquiry. Further legal action will be based on the autopsy report and the SDM's findings," DCP Singh added.

# GOVT RELEASES ₹100 CRORE FOR 12 DU COLLEGES

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi government has released ₹100 crore in tranches for the 12 state-funded colleges of Delhi University as part of the second-quarter allocations for the 2024-25 fiscal year, the office of education minister Atishi announced on Sunday. The total budget allocation for these colleges for the current financial year is ₹400 crore. Atishi said education has always been the biggest priority for the government. "We have opened three new universities and expanded existing ones... 12 DU colleges fully funded by the Delhi government play an important role in higher education and the budget for these has increased three times since 2014-15," she added.

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Summary of Post-wise vacancies notified is as under:

Post Code	Name of Post	Total No. of Vacancies
201	Jr. Engineering Assistant-IV (Production)	19
202	Jr. Engineering Assistant-IV (P&U)	06
206	Jr. Engineering Assistant-IV (Instrumentation)/Jr. Technical Assistant-IV	02
208	Jr. Engineering Assistant-IV (Fire & Safety)	03

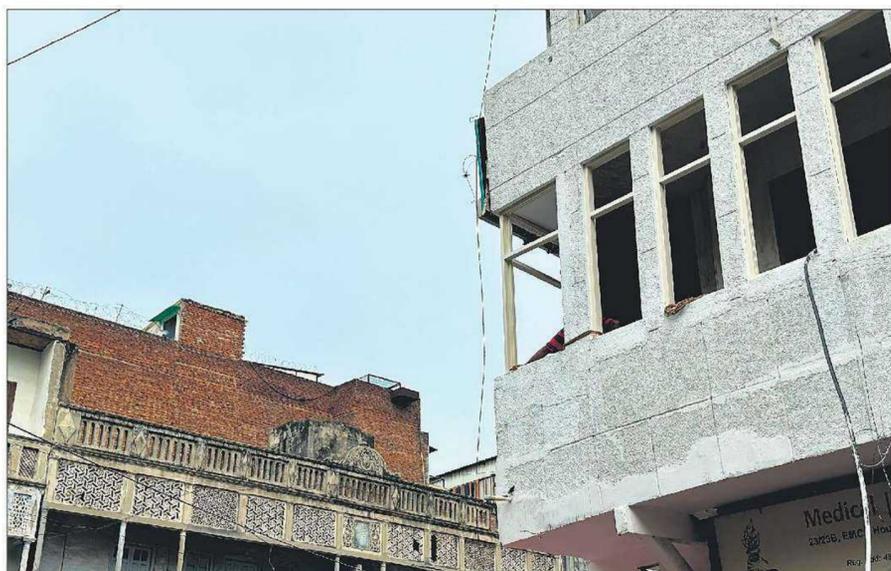
Refer to detailed advertisement for details of vacancies reserved for SC/OBC/EWS/ PwBD/EXM which is as per Govt. Directives

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Date of Opening of Online Application	22-07-2024 (10:00 Hrs.)
Last Date of Submission of Online Application, Document Upload and Payment of Application Fees	21-08-2024 (23:55 Hrs.)
Tentative Month of Computer Based Test (CBT)*	September, 2024
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\* Details of exact date and city/venue of CBT shall be communicated separately. Advertisement No: MR/HR/RECT/2024

## Delhiwale

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## Today and yesterday

On the changing architecture of a city avenue

**{ PUBLIC INTEREST }**

Look at this photo snapped last week. Two balconies, one old, the other also said to be quite old but so newly renovated that the work on it is still to be completed and it might not end up as a balcony at all. Both structures are worlds apart in their aesthetics.

Together they evoke the evolution of a Delhi neighbourhood in which the defining visual character for a long time has been the architecture.

Named after freedom fighter Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, the Old Delhi avenue is bordered by fragments of the mostly vanished Walled City wall. It houses several publishing houses and book distribution companies, and lately parcel delivery services. It also has some of those aged mansions that evoke a Delhi which existed around the time of Independence. But the district is changing, those edifices are giving way to the new. Today, as the photo shows, the architecture at Ansari Road is a hodgepodge of sensibilities from different eras.

No point in dwelling on Ansari Road's new buildings. They look similar to the modern buildings anywhere in Delhi. Older buildings are less common. One huge house embodies the area's signature style with its tall windows, massive doors, and little balconies roofed with cupolas.

The main door stays locked, and some homeless citizens (who work as labourers) live on the pave just outside its walls.

Many other houses are similarly grand, but fortunately they are inhabited and well-maintained. Such as the residence with grills shaped into four numerals. "1938" might be the year the house was built, for many of the old Ansari Road landmarks came up during the 1930s and 1940s, as suggested by an inscribed plaque.

One building has a staircase shaped into a series of irregular landings — it looks like a cloud pattern that might dissolve any moment. Another noteworthy building has its porch etched in Hindi with "Non-violence, the supreme religion."

In the early 1960s, this was a neighbourhood of Chawri Bazar paper merchants and Chandni Chowk jewellers. After a big publishing firm shifted from Kanpur to Ansari Road in 1965, the locality — close to both the New and Old Delhi railway stations — became the first choice for publishers to set up offices in the Capital.

While you can exhaust an entire day surveying the Ansari Road architecture, one particular building is best viewed during the sunset. It has a balcony of lattice screen. In the evening, the gold sunlight pours through the pores of the lattice screen, and make a parallel lattice of light and shadows on the wall behind. This is the balcony seen in the photo.



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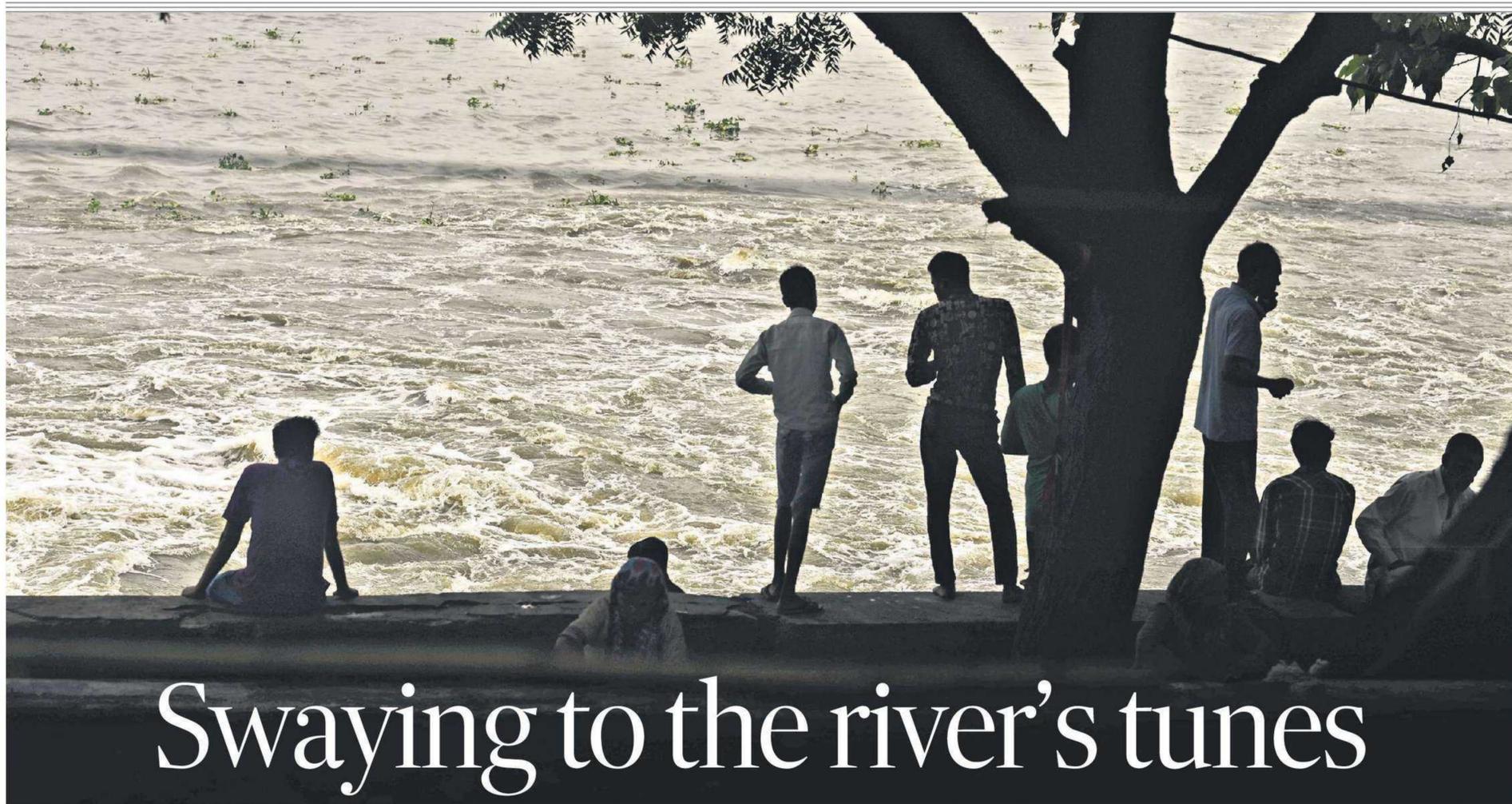
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## SPOTLIGHT | YAMUNA'S BANKS



## Swaying to the river's tunes

Banks of the Yamuna have a unique ecosystem, bringing together thousands of people seeking to earn their livelihoods, others who wish to pay respects to the deceased, and those who wish to get closer to nature. A look at how the river's tides hold strong for the city and its people

TEXT: PARAS SINGH PHOTOS: RAJ K RAJ

## THE COIN COLLECTOR

A tortoise-shaped copper pendant and many old coins from decades gone by are bunched up, a culmination of hours of dips. "Sometimes we strike gold as well," says 13-year-old Ashish (goes by a single name), who collects coins at Sur Ghat near the Wazirabad barrage. The gates of the barrage open to gushing water carrying water hyacinth but Ashish, an expert swimmer, expertly navigates his way, with his metallic pan floating abreast. He takes a deep

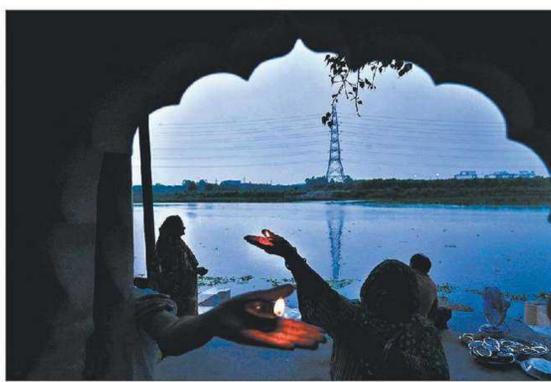
breath, goes upside down with his feet visible for a few moments and searches the muddy base of the river. He carries a small magnet — an old part of a speaker — to gather metallic things. Ashish, a student of Class 9 of a government school in neighbouring Timarpur, says he sells the old coins and collectibles to dealers on the ghat, from where they end up in Chandni Chowk for resale.

When not searching for coins, Ashish also helps people dispose of the ashes of their loved ones. The water in this section of the river remains relatively cleaner year-round. "There is garbage near the ghat but we leave the ash container in the middle. They give us ₹10-20 for helping," he says. However, the coin collection work stops during heavy flooding season.



## PRIEST OF YAMUNA BAZAR

Sunil Sharma works as a priest, who runs the Yamuna Ghat Panda Association in Old Yamuna Bazar. He says that a new ghat has been developed by the government (Vasudev Ghat) but old ghats are being overlooked. "We have been demanding a revamp of the old ghats. The authorities keep saying that this is DDA land and it has to be vacated, but we have spent generations here. We even have documents from 1902. This land was used for agriculture and Yamuna has shifted in this direction. Wherever the river flows, the pandits are present," he says. Sharma claims that the site and its 32 ghats had been sanctioned during the British era. "There were 32 original owners of these 32 ghats but there have been many illegal encroachments over the years," he says.



## THE FISHERMEN: FATHER AND SON



Subedar Nishad, 51, who belongs to Mallah community, works as a fisherman in the stretch of Yamuna between Wazirabad and the Signature bridge, the point just ahead of which the river starts getting polluted by sewage inflow from the Najafgarh drain. He catches fish for three to four hours every day, after finishing his duties as an MCD guard in east Delhi. Nishad, proudly, says that he owns various types of fish nets, which have a cumulative value of ₹1 lakh. "We handcraft them, but it is now easier to buy them from Sadar Bazar. The net sizes vary for different types of fish," he says.

Twenty-eight-year-old Ramsevak Nishad, his son, has just caught a massive 4.5kg fish. Fresh out of the river, the latest catch gets sold within minutes. Ramsevak also works as a contractual employee with DJB. He helps in the barrage repair and



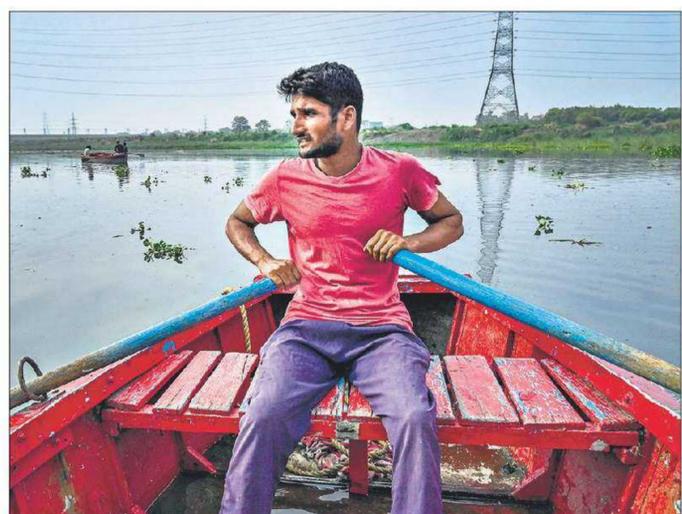
maintenance work, which are carried out between July and September. "Last year, during the floods, we were deployed for a week with Navy divers at the ITO barrage, where the gates were stuck and the flow of water was obstructed," he says. Ramsevak says that the floodwater brings bountiful of smaller fish, besides cleaning the river. "Just 15 to 20 days ago, we were finding dead fish due to industrial waste. Now, the water is full of fish. It depends on luck and hard work but we make around ₹800-1,000 a day," he says.



## THE DIVER AND RESCUER

In 1997, a speeding bus carrying school children hit a pile of sand and fell off the Wazirabad bridge, causing 28 children to drown and injuring 60. The 66-seater bus was packed with 117 students and two teachers from the Ludlow Castle-II School in north Delhi. A diver, Abdul Sattar, 62, was 35 years old during the incident and still vividly remembers the day. "It was a Tuesday in the month of November. The time was around 7.15am. We were just sitting around a fire when the bus fell off. Everyone jumped in the river and saved dozens of children," he says. The accident led to calls for improvement in school bus safety standards and the inception of the Signature bridge. "We work as gotakhors of Yamuna. We save people who are drowning," Sattar says.

## THE BOATMAN OF YAMUNA BAZAR

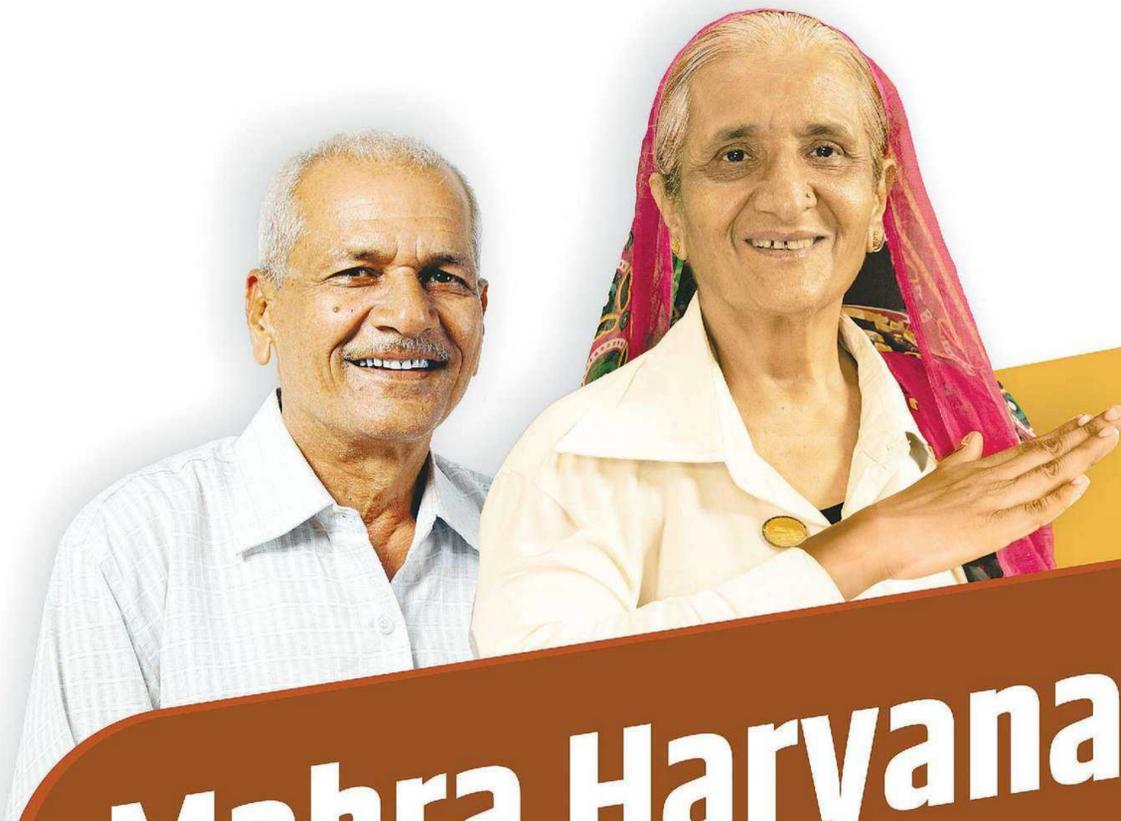


When he is not studying political science, 24-year-old Abhinandan Yadav, works as a boatman at Yamuna Bazar, ferrying YouTubers making videos and couples getting their pre-wedding photo shoots done. A second-year MA student, Yadav says that he took an exam on international politics before arriving at the ghat in the evening. "The place is popular during the four winter months, when migratory birds arrive in large numbers. Tourists and youngsters come to see the beautiful side of the river. If the pollution levels were low, this could be the cultural hot spot of the city year-round," he says, as he paddles the boat. Yadav also runs social media channels by name "The boatmanshow" to popularise the river and create awareness about it.

Yadav says boat rides, however, remain closed during monsoon, due to flooding.



Govt. of Haryana



# Mahra Haryana

# Non-Stop Haryana

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*Distribution of property cards continues...*



## LG ORDERS REVAMP OF SEEMAPURI HOSPITAL, SETS 6-MONTH DEADLINE

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Lieutenant governor VK Saxena has directed the revamp of the Seemapuri hospital run by the Indian Red Cross Society near Dilshad Garden in East Delhi, the LG secretary said in a statement on Sunday. A six-month deadline has been set for the facelift of the hospital, it added.

An LG office official said the hospital currently lacks modern equipment and suffers from manpower shortages. "During the inspection, LG Saxena asked the senior doctors and concerned officials present to expeditiously prepare a roadmap for developing the facilities in the hospital, which was functioning with skeletal staff and doctors," the official added.

The statement from the LG office adds that Saxena has directed a thorough assessment of the requirements for doctors, staff, equipment, and facilities needed to meet central government guidelines.

Saxena visited the building provided by the DDA to the Society in Dilshad Garden, which has been in a dilapidated condition for years. "He expressed dissatisfaction over the status of the building and instructed to devise a revamping plan," the statement said.

## AAP cites attempts on Kejriwal health; BJP calls it 'drama'

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Aam Aadmi Party Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Sunday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of "messing with the health of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in Tihar jail", alleging that the documents from Kejriwal's health reports indicate his blood sugar touching dangerously low levels from June 3 to July 7.

Singh alleged that there was a "sinister plan" to harm the CM's health and action should be taken against those behind this "conspiracy." However, the Delhi BJP said that Singh has also started a "drama" of being concerned about Kejriwal's health.

"Initially, they were saying Kejriwal is eating sweets and trying to spike his sugar levels. Now they are saying he has reduced his food intake. Why will someone do this and pose a threat to their own life?" said Singh.

Singh added that the documents the jail authorities have legally provided to Kejriwal's lawyer show that BJP was making false statements. "Kejriwal is suffering from diabetes, weight



AAP MP Sanjay Singh

loss, weakness, hypoglycaemia. If a person's sugar level falls below 50 units, a person can go into a coma or even die," said Singh.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said Kejriwal was "trying to lose weight to get bail".

"The problem is not with facilities. It is rather a well-planned conspiracy by Kejriwal, who is deliberately eating less food to lose weight so that he can use weight loss as an excuse to get bail. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Kejriwal is playing a game of bait through food and medicine cuts. By presenting himself as a victim before the court, Kejriwal wants to show that he is being mistreated in Tihar, but this conspiracy is not going to succeed," said Sachdeva.

## AAP, BJP spar over Bansuri's poll win

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday again raised questions over Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Bansuri Swaraj's victory in the Lok Sabha elections from the New Delhi parliamentary seat, claiming that she overspent the mandated poll expenditure. The BJP hit back, accusing the AAP of finding it "difficult to digest" their loss from the constituency.

The development comes a day after AAP legislator Somnath Bharti—who lost the Lok Sabha elections to Swaraj—approached the Delhi high court, challenging her election as an MP on grounds of alleged "corrupt practices".

Speaking at a press conference on Sunday, Bharti alleged that Swaraj spent Rs 16 lakh more than the permitted amount during the polls.

"The maximum limit of election expenditure for every candidate in Delhi is fixed at Rs 95 lakh, but Bansuri Swaraj, the BJP candidate from New Delhi, has officially spent about Rs 16 lakh more than the permitted amount," he alleged.

The MLA further claimed that on the day of the elections, BJP polling agents were sitting with Swaraj's pamphlets at every polling booth, even though display-



He (Somnath Bharti) is unable to digest the loss. It raises questions about his political survival.

BANSURI SWARAJ, BJP MP

ing such pamphlets within 100 metres of a polling booth is an offence. "We recorded all these things on our phones, but instead of taking action against them, these people confiscated our phones. To date, those phones are in possession of the police," he added.

Swaraj hit back, dismissing the allegations and questioning Bharti's political future.

"He (Somnath Bharti) is unable to digest the loss. It raises questions about his political survival. It remains to be seen whether he will get a party ticket in upcoming (assembly) elections. In order to justify his position, he has made these allegations and filed a petition," she said. The MP added that Bharti had made several baseless allegations during the polls too. "This petition is also a bundle of lies. I will stand firm against these lies of AAP," she said.

## India paves way for a cheaper anti-tuberculosis drug for kids

Rhythmia Kaul

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Patent Office's rejection of Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) application for the paediatric version of its anti-tuberculosis (TB) drug, bedaquiline, is likely to have broader implications for access to cost-effective TB treatment, according to experts.

Bedaquiline is a key treatment for drug-resistant TB recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Last year, the patent office also rejected the US pharmaceutical corporation's attempt to extend its monopoly in India on bedaquiline for treating adults beyond the primary patent's expiry in July 2023. If granted secondary patent, it would have extended the company's market control over the drug for an additional four years beyond the primary patent's expiry. The rulings, therefore, have paved the way for a generic tuberculosis drug in the market that is likely to cost 80% cheaper for a six-month course for patients suffering from drug-resistant TB from the lowest price of \$45 per person per month.

"It is a great step for access to treatment as it will open up the market for cheaper medicines. There is very less R&D in this drug and children are the most vulnerable. Adult drugs have seen

**BEDAQUILINE HAS BECOME THE BACKBONE FOR TB REGIMENS RECOMMENDED BY WHO SINCE 2020**

a significant reduction and for the children's version also we expect the cost of treatment to come down significantly," said Ganesh Acharya, a two-time TB survivor, who, along with other civil society groups and survivors, filed a petition challenging the patent in 2020, which J&J did not contest.

Since 2020, bedaquiline has become the backbone for all drug-resistant TB regimens recommended by the World Health Organization. It has been favoured over other drugs because it is proven to be less toxic and more effective.

In a statement last year, J&J announced it has granted the Stop TB Partnership's Global Drug Facility licences that would allow them to tender, procure, and supply generic versions of bedaquiline for the majority of low- and middle-income countries.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) also said this is a significant step towards increasing affordable access to the lifesaving TB drug for children, urging generic

manufacturers to take the opportunity to develop and supply the paediatric formulation to TB programmes.

"With still 1.3 million children and young adolescents developing TB globally in 2022 according to WHO, governments need to do more to ensure effective TB and DR-TB treatment reaches all children, in line with the WHO's treatment recommendations," said Aparna Iyer, project medical referent, MSF Mumbai drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) project.

Concerns over evergreening—a practice that extends patent life through patenting of obvious forms, improvements and modifications of life saving medicines—have led to several such pre-grant oppositions.

Indian patent law is pivotal in this context by explicitly prohibiting evergreening. This provision ensures that generic forms of essential medicines remain accessible through generic competition once the primary patent expires.

"It is crucial to protect the pre-grant opposition mechanism to prevent the approval of unmerited patents. This ensures the timely availability of quality-assured, affordable generic medicines," said Acharya.

India notified nearly 2.55 million cases of TB last year. The overall notification of TB cases has improved by 64% over the last 9 years, government data showed.

 <b>India Post Payments Bank</b>		
<b>INDIA POST PAYMENTS BANK LIMITED</b> Corporate Office: 2nd Floor, Speed Post Centre, Bahi Veer Singh Marg, Market Road, New Delhi-110001		
<b>BALANCE SHEET AS ON 31st MARCH 2024</b>		
(Amount Rs. in 000)		
CAPITAL & LIABILITIES	As on 31.03.2024	As on 31.03.2023
Capital	2105,00,00	1655,00,00
Share Application Money		200,00,00
Reserves & Surplus	-927,78,56	-962,02,34
Deposits	11,552,19,20	6292,35,85
Borrowings		
Other Liabilities and Provisions	933,35,64	435,38,54
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,662,76,28</b>	<b>7620,72,05</b>
ASSETS		
Cash and Balances with Reserves Bank of India	726,50,33	626,20,34
Balances with Banks & Money at Call & short notice	2994,96,75	1900,93,66
Investments	8839,44,93	4599,18,46
Advances		98
Fixed Assets	369,21,52	59,64,47
Other Assets	732,62,75	434,74,14
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,662,76,28</b>	<b>7620,72,05</b>
Contingent Liabilities	64,29,74	31,36
Bills for Collection	-	-
PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024		
	Year ended 31.03.2024	Year ended 31.03.2023
I. INCOME		
Interest earned	607,57,59	279,05,22
Other Income	657,71,50	487,09,80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1265,29,09</b>	<b>766,15,02</b>
II. EXPENDITURE		
Interest expended	169,73,60	94,02,16
Operating expenses	1003,68,23	646,14,10
Provisions and Contingencies	57,63,48	5,82,67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1231,05,31</b>	<b>745,98,93</b>
Net Profit/Net Loss	34,23,78	20,16,09
Balance in Profit & Loss Account (Brought Forward)	-969,96,73	-982,73,97
Profit available for Appropriation	-935,72,95	-962,57,88
Appropriations		
Transfer to Reserves (Net):		
Statutory Reserve	8,55,95	5,04,02
Grant Account - Capital Reserve	-	-
Investment Fluctuation Reserve	1,45,59	2,34,83
Other Reserve	-	-
Special Reserve	-	-
Balance carried over to Balance Sheet	-945,74,49	-969,96,73
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-935,72,95</b>	<b>-962,57,88</b>
Particulars	31.03.2024	31.03.2023
Shareholding of the Government of India	100.00%	100.00%
Capital Adequacy Ratio (CRAR) (%)	54.86	56.96
Tier 1 Capital ratio (%)	54.64	56.70
Earnings per Share - Basic/Diluted (in Rs.)	0.18	0.13
Sd/- (Priyanka Bhatnagar) Company Secretary	Sd/- (Anoop E S) Chief Financial Officer	
Sd/- (Pawan Kumar Singh) Director	Sd/- (Navneet Kakkhar) ACB Chairman	Sd/- (R. Viswesvaran) Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer
	Sd/- (Vandita Kaul) Chairman	
As per our report of even date For M/s Thakur, Vaidyanath Aiyar & Co Chartered Accountants		
	Sd/- (C.S. Karki) Partner	
Date: 26.06.2024		
Place: New Delhi		CBC 06346/12/0003/2425

### BIDEN BOWS OUT

I've made. Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year. Democrats — it's time to come together and beat Trump. Let's do this."

Biden's decision comes after a disastrous debate performance on June 27 against Trump exposed his age-related deficits and triggered a crescendo of voices within his party, from donors, and among voters for a change in the Democratic ticket. While Biden had maintained that he won't quit, over the past two weeks, an increasing number of Congressional representatives, Senators, party elders made it clear that his candidacy was unviable. The assassination bid on Trump and a successful Republican convention added to Trump's already existing lead in the elections, including in swing states, according to polls.

Trump, meanwhile, told CNN that he thinks Harris will be easier to defeat than Biden. A CNN reporter said on X that Trump made the comments to the network shortly after Biden announced his decision.

In his letter, Biden spoke of what he saw as the achievements of his time in office — on the economy, infrastructure, health care, gun safety, climate, and more. "Together we overcame a once in a century pandemic and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We have protected and preserved our democracy. And we have revitalized and strengthened our alliances around the world."

Biden said he would address the nation later in the week.

The President's decision throws an already unprecedented election into uncertainty. Whether Harris becomes the clear undisputed choice, or whether there is an open convention in Chicago in August where other contenders compete to win the support of delegates for the nomination isn't clear. It also creates uncertainty about the fundraising that the Biden campaign has amassed so far, changes the nature of messaging around the election, and will force the Democrats to completely alter their campaign.

For her part, Harris became the first — and so far the only — Indian-American to be elected to the Senate. She threw her hat in the Democratic presidential primaries in 2020 but her campaign collapsed early in the process. But Biden picked her as his running mate, in a signal to the Black community as well as the women vote. In her time in office, Harris has become the most vocal spokesperson of the administration on abortion, taking on the Supreme Court's decision to remove the national protection to abortion. She has also been extensively campaigning in swing states in recent months.

But Republicans have cast her as the "border czar", placing the blame for the increase in illegal immigration from the Southern border on her. This stemmed from an early decision in Biden's term where he asked her to address underlying roots of migration from Central and South America.

Harris has come under criticism for high rates of attrition of her staff and being unable to carve out a distinct image, a criticism her supporters say is

unfair given the nature of the vice presidency. They also attribute the negative perceptions around her to do with racism and sexism. But if she wins the nomination, Harris will now have the difficult challenge of unifying her party, raising funds, carving out a distinct message about her personality and priorities, mobilising the base and winning over swing voters, and defeating an energised Trump — all in four months.

Harris was born to an Indian mother who migrated to US in the late 1950s and a Jamaican father. She was raised by her mother after her parents split, and she has often fondly recalled her trips to Chennai to visit her grandparents. Harris has also spoken at Indian-American and Asian-American events. But her upbringing also had a strong influence of the Black community. Harris went to Howard University in DC, a historically Black institution. And her candidacy is expected to galvanize the Black community, though her challenge will be in also winning over the White vote especially in the midwestern swing states.

### MORE ACRIMONY

ters. However, he added: "essential legislative and other business will also be taken up during the session."

Defence minister Rajnath Singh, who chaired the all-party meeting, told the participants that "the government is ready to discuss all issues raised in the meeting as per the rules of the House."

He also sought the Opposition's cooperation, but stressed that the "sanctity of Parliament should always be maintained."

Officials said 55 leaders were present in the meeting, though leaders of Opposition in both Houses, Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, and Trinamool Congress floor leaders skipped the meeting.

All eyes will, largely, be on the Budget.

Sitharaman presented an interim budget on February 1 this year, months ahead of the general elections, with an eye on fiscal prudence, as she announced a significant increase in capital expenditure, and continued the Centre's government's emphasis on welfare, especially targeting the poor, women, the young, and farmers. Indeed, the NDA budgets, under Prime Minister Modi have been characterised by fiscal prudence and capital spending.

Last year's Budget too announced a planned ₹10 lakh crore expense on capex, without any major cut in the spending of major ministries or any sharp hikes in tax rates.

It will also be the first full Parliament session since the 2024 general elections. The BJP won 240 of the Lok Sabha's 543 seats and had to lean on its allies to form the government for a third straight term. This was in contrast to the party's performance in 2014 and 2019 polls, when it stormed to power with 272 and 303 MPs respectively.

The sitting is hence likely to see the acrimony of the first session of Parliament, held from June 24, spill over, with the energised Opposition benches likely to spar with the Centre over a string of issues. The opposition's Indian National

### { FROM PAGE 1 }

Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) will demand debates over alleged irregularities in and postponements of a raft of public examinations, including the NEET-UG, NEET-PG, UGC-NET and CSIR-UGC-NET, apart

The Opposition has also demanded, including during Sunday's all-party meeting, that they be given the Lok Sabha deputy speaker's position — a role that was vacant in the last Lok Sabha.

During the special Lok Sabha session, the Opposition put up a candidate against NDA's Om Birla after they failed to get an assurance from the government on deputy speaker. Birla was, however, reelected to the position.

At the meeting, the Congress was represented by Jairam Ramesh, Gaurav Gogoi, K Suresh and Pramod Tiwari.

Ramesh, in a post on X, also said the party will look to discuss the "internal security situation in Jammu and Manipur", "challenges on our borders with China", "environmental concerns", "issues related to Centre-state relations and economy" and the passage of "unconstitutional orders in states like UP", the latter a purported reference to the diktat requiring owners of eateries along Kanwar Yatra routes to display their names.

The order has caused a firestorm across the country, drawing criticism from several political parties, including some of the BJP's allies.

Some parties are also likely to demand special category status for their states. Indeed, during Sunday's meeting, the Janata Dal (United), which runs a coalition government with the BJP in Bihar, sought special status for the eastern state, even as the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Yuva-Jana Samiksha Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) demanded the same for Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, respectively.

JD(U) working president and Rajya Sabha MP, Sanjay Jha said if giving special category state status is not possible, then Bihar should be given a special package. "Special category status for the state has been our stand since the beginning...if that is not possible then a special package should be announced."

The BJP's Rajya Sabha leader Sasmit Patra told media persons after the meeting that "Odisha has been deprived of the special category status for more than two decades."

"The Biju Janata Dal has been demanding special category status. States such as Andhra Pradesh and Bihar have also raised the demand," he said.

The government will introduce the Bhartiya Vayuvan Vidheyak, 2024, to replace the Aircraft Act of 1934 and provide enabling provisions to push the ease of doing business in the civil aviation sector.

Other bills listed for introduction and passage during the session are the Boilers Bill to replace the pre-Independence era law, the Coffee (Promotion and Development) Bill and the Rubber (Promotion and Development) Bill.

### KANWAR ORDER

office extended the directive to all Kanwar Yatra routes across the state and instructed strict compliance. To be sure, no formal order has been issued regarding the extension of the

directive.

"It seems that the order was taken without much thought, and the government is adamant on it because a decision has been taken. There is still time to roll it back, or the government should keep the order voluntary," Jayant said.

The Rajya Sabha MP said the government's step did not appear to be "well thought out or well-reasoned".

"Where all would one be made to place these identifiers? Should we now wear name tags too so that one knows whom to shake hands with?" he added. On Friday, RLD's UP unit chief Ramashish Rai called the order unconstitutional and said that it is a "step that promotes caste and communal divisions".

But the BJP remained unfazed. "The UP government's directive is completely within legal boundaries and in the public interest, and hence it must be welcomed by all," said BJP spokesperson Sameer Singh said.

Before Jayant, the government battled criticism of the controversial order from its allies Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas (LJP-RV) and Janata Dal (United). When asked if he supported the directive, Union minister and LJP (U) chief Chirag Paswan told news agency PTI on Friday, "No, I don't." "Whenever there is such a divide in the name of caste or religion, I absolutely do not either support it or encourage it," he added. The same day, JD(U) spokesperson KC Tyagi said the order should be withdrawn as it might "cause communal tension and there should not be any discrimination based on religion or caste".

The UP police has maintained that the order is aimed at maintaining social harmony during the Kanwar Yatra. Around 30 million Kanwariyas are expected to walk, run or drive to Haridwar from various parts of the country from July 22 till August 2.

The Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), another BJP ally, also urged the UP government to withdraw the order. "For the first time, such a decision has been taken in view of the Kanwar Yatra. The UP government should take it back," party's Rajya Sabha MP Praful Patel said after an all-party meeting in Delhi ahead of Parliament session. Though the order made no mention of religion, opposition leaders and activists have alleged that the move was aimed at displaying the faiths of food sellers, and marginalise Muslim traders. The issue also featured in Sunday's all-party meeting held in Delhi with Opposition leaders demanding the order's rollback.

"We said that if any government passes an order against the Constitution, then the Government of India should take note of it. Issuing such an order is a violation of Article 17. They are promoting untouchability. It is against the right to life," AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said after the meeting.

BJP's Sameer Singh, however, rejected the Opposition's charge. "The government has merely implemented an existing law. No one should politicise the issue for cheap popularity," he said.

Uttarakhand has also implemented a similar decision, with chief minister and BJP leader Pushkar Singh Dhami saying the purpose of the decision was not to target or put anyone in trouble. "Why should anyone have any problem in introducing themselves?" he asked.

### QUOTAS SCALED DOWN

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

"I am hoping normalcy will return after today's ruling and people with ulterior motives will stop instigating people," attorney general AM Amin Uddin said. The country's law minister Anisul Haq also welcomed the court's decision and said it is "well thought of".

The situation on the ground remained tense as Bangladeshi authorities extended a nationwide curfew on Sunday and soldiers continued to patrol cities across the country that remained under an internet blackout. The Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-led government has declared a public holiday on Monday, with only emergency services allowed to operate.

The coordinators of the anti-job quota movement maintained that their protests will continue despite the Supreme Court's ruling.

"We won't call off our protests until the government issues an order reflecting our demands," a spokesperson for Students Against Discrimination, which has been spearheading the protests, told news agency AFP on condition of anonymity. The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party has backed the protests, vowing to organize its own demonstrations as many of its supporters have joined the student-led protests. However, BNP said in a statement that its followers were not responsible for the violence and denied the ruling party's accusations of using the protests for political gains.

The turmoil in Bangladesh has sent ripples across its neighbours, including India. More than 4,500 Indians and nearly 540 citizens of Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives have returned from Bangladesh with the assistance of Indian authorities following violent protests, the ministry of external affairs said in a statement.

At a rally in Kolkata, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee said on Sunday said that she would be willing to provide shelter in her state to people from Bangladesh who were in distress.

"I should not be speaking on the affairs of Bangladesh since it is a sovereign nation and whatever needs to be said on the issue is a subject matter of the Centre. But I can tell you this, if helpless people come knocking on the doors of [West] Bengal, we will surely provide them shelter," Banerjee said.

She referred to UN resolution on refugees to justify her stand. "That's because there is a UN resolution to accommodate refugees in regions adjacent to those which are in turmoil," she said, citing the example of people from Assam being allowed to live in the Alipurdhars area of West Bengal during the Bodo agitation.

However, people familiar with the matter said that such matters are handled by the Central government. "These are matters which are handled by the Union government. A state government has no locus standi on the issue and as such, their comments are totally misplaced," one of the people said on condition of anonymity.



शिवः  
शिवाय

On the auspicious  
occasion of

**RAJKIYA**

**SHRAVANI**

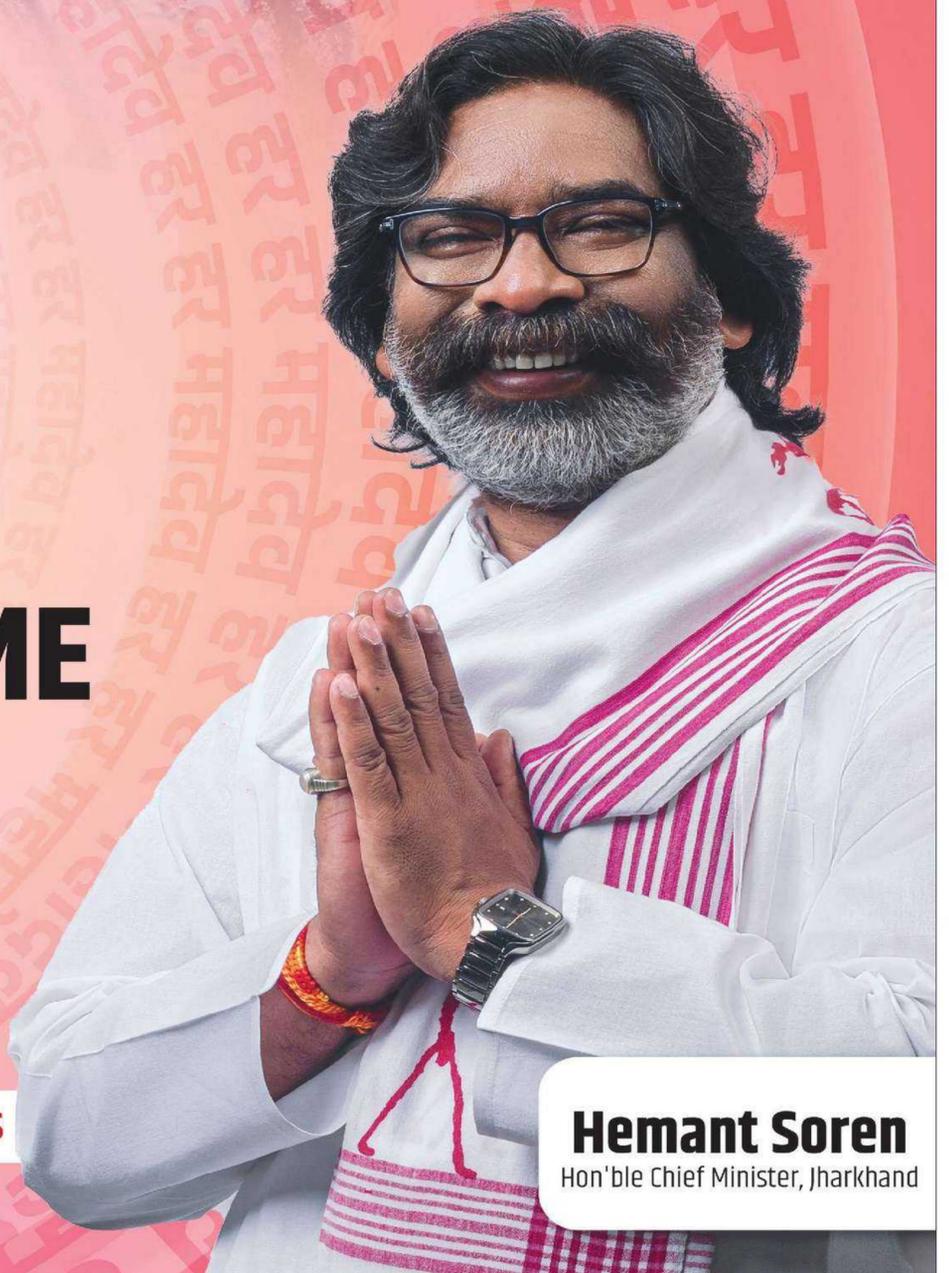
**MELA**

**A HEARTY WELCOME**

**AND JOHAR**

to all the devotees in  
Mahadev's land, Deoghar

May Lord Shiva fulfill the wishes of all the devotees



**Hemant Soren**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Jharkhand

# Shah kicks off poll campaign in Maha, hits out at 'corrupt' Oppn

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

**PUNE:** Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra, as he dubbed Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) chief Sharad Pawar the "ringleader of corruption", accused Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray of sitting with people who sought clemency for 1993 Mumbai blasts convict Yakub Memon, and targeted Congress lawmaker Rahul Gandhi for his "arrogance" despite the party's third loss in Lok Sabha polls.

The Union minister highlighted the welfare measures taken by the Mahayuti government in the western state, and said the ruling alliance must remain in power to ensure reservation for the Maratha community. He also exuded confidence that the losses in the Lok Sabha elections will be recovered during the assembly polls later this year.

The MVA allies reacted sharply to Shah's remarks as the NCP(SP) accused the BJP of "legitimising" corruption. The Congress accused Shah of spreading "fake narratives".

Shah was addressing the BJP's state convention in Pune when he made the comments. This was his first visit to the state after the BJP suffered severe drubbing in the Lok Sabha elec-



Union home minister Amit Shah and Maharashtra deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis in Pune on Sunday.

AMIT SHAH-X

tion. "If there is the biggest 'sargana' (ringleader) of corruption in Indian politics, it is Sharad Pawar. There is no confusion in my mind about this. I am saying it openly that Pawar has institutionalised corruption in the country," he said.

Shah said the BJP allotted reservation to Marathas when it helmed Maharashtra but the quota was lifted when Sharad Pawar's government came to power, referring to the MVA rule in 2019. The Mahayuti government must come to power to ensure the reservation for Marathas stays, he said.

The NCP(SP) hit back at Shah and alleged it is the BJP which has "legitimised" corruption. "They accuse political leaders of

attacks convict) Ajmal Kasab, those who seek pardon for Yakub Memon, those who give (controversial Islamic preacher) Zakir Naik a messenger of peace award and those who support (banned Islamist outfit) PFI. Uddhav Thackeray should be ashamed of sitting with these people," he said.

Sena leader Sushma Andhare said Shah was attacking Thackeray as the former chief minister is the biggest challenge the BJP faces in the state. "Shah cannot begin or end his speech without taking Thackeray's name. It is clear that the biggest challenge before the BJP in Maharashtra is Uddhav Thackeray," party leader Sushma Andhare said.

The Union minister also targeted Gandhi for his "arrogance" despite the Congress's third loss in the general elections. "Once we win the Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jharkhand assembly polls later this year, Rahul Gandhi's arrogance will be crushed," he said.

Hitting back, state Congress unit chief Nana Patole said: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has never worked as per the Constitution. Shah has spread fake narratives all these years. The BJP-led Mahayuti alliance is busy selling away Maharashtra and its pride."

Shah asserted that the BJP will do better in the Maharashtra assembly elections than what the party did in the 2014 and 2019 editions.

## MAHAYUTI ALLIES FREE TO GO SOLO IN CIVIC POLLS, SAYS AJIT PAWAR

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**PUNE:** Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar said that the members of the ruling "Mahayuti" alliance, including his Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), are free to contest the local bodies' elections independently.

Addressing the NCP workers in Pimpri Chinchwad, Pawar said, "Even though we are allies in Lok Sabha and state assembly, Mahayuti members are free to contest local bodies polls independently."

The schedule for elections to local bodies, which include municipal councils, nagar panchayats and zilla parishads, is yet to be finalised. The ruling Mahayuti alliance includes Shiv Sena led by chief minister Eknath Shinde, BJP, and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP.

Pawar also said "new and old faces" from all sections of the society will be fielded in elections to local bodies whenever they are conducted.

This will be the first time NCP will try its luck going it alone in the civic body elections after Ajit Pawar walked out of the party headed by Sharad Pawar in July 2023.



West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee with Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav at the Trinamool Congress's 'Martyrs' Day' rally in Kolkata on Sunday.

# BJP-led Centre will fall soon: Mamata, Akhilesh

HT Correspondent

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**KOLKATA:** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government at the Centre will not last long and would collapse soon, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav (SP) said on Sunday, as the two Opposition leaders vowed to oust the "morally defeated" ruling party at the earliest.

Sharing the stage at a massive Trinamool Congress (TMC) rally in Kolkata, Banerjee and Yadav also hit out at parties in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for being "sellouts" and "sacrificing their identities".

Banerjee, who is the chairperson of TMC, reprimanded her party workers and warned of strict action against those facing various complaints.

Banerjee and Yadav - both partners in the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) - jointly addressed a mammoth 'Martyrs' Day' rally of the TMC. "The government at the Centre won't last long. This is not a stable government and will collapse soon," Banerjee said, vowing to "oust the morally defeated BJP" as soon as possible.

Describing the NDA allies as "cowards and greedy individu-

Has anyone ever heard of money being offered instead of ministries? (NDA allies) are greedy...

**MAMATA BANERJEE,**  
West Bengal chief minister

als who yielded to financial inducements," she said. "Has anyone ever heard of money being offered instead of ministries? Has anyone heard that parties got sold for money? They are cowards, shameless, and greedy. They sacrificed their own identities."

The chief minister lauded Yadav, whose party emerged as the single-largest party in Uttar Pradesh with 37 MPs in the Lok Sabha. "The 'Khel' (game) you played in UP should have forced the BJP government (in UP) to resign, but the shameless government continues in power by misusing agencies and other means," she said.

Yadav, who was invited as a special guest to the rally, echoed similar sentiments and said the

NDA government at the Centre would not endure.

"Those who have come to power at the Centre will be ousted. This government will collapse. They never wanted anything good for the people. Their only intention was to grab power somehow. Some people in Delhi are hatching conspiracies every day but they cannot succeed against TMC with millions of workers by Didi's side. We have to stay united and face these people. I will be by your side," Yadav said.

Amid reports of "kangaroo courts" being held by some TMC workers, Banerjee asked party workers and supporters to be a "friend of the people". She also hinted at a "cleansing" drive in the party. TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said while the party's rally increased in the Lok Sabha, not many workers put in the required effort during the Lok Sabha polls. "They will face action in three months. I stick to my word," he said.

The BJP dismissed the TMC's bid to carry out a "cleansing" drive as a "gimmick". "Everybody is aware that the TMC is a party of corrupt people. Mamata Banerjee said these things to divert people's attention from other raging issues," state BJP chief spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said.

## KHARGE DISSOLVES ODISHA PRADESH CONG COMMITTEE

Debabrata Mohanty

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**BHUBANESWAR:** The Congress dissolved its Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee on Sunday, over a month after its poor showing in the recently concluded Lok Sabha and assembly elections in the state.

The Congress won one of the 21 parliamentary seats in Odisha in the general elections, and 14 out of 147 seats in the assembly elections.

A statement issued by the party said that Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge has approved the proposal for a complete dissolution of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee, including its president, PCC, office-bearers and executive committee, district/block/mandal committees, frontal organisations, departments and c

"The current DCC presidents will serve as acting presidents until new DCC Presidents are appointed," it said.

Congress's Odisha in-charge Ajoy Kumar said, "I thank our Hon @INCIndia President Shri @khargeji and Shri @kvenugopalmpji for approving my proposal for the complete dissolution of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee with the intention to restructure the organisation."

{ ALL-PARTY MEET }

## Special category status sought for 3 states

Smriti Kak Ramchandran

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**NEW DELHI:** Three political parties, including an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on Sunday demanded special category status for three states at the all-party meeting ahead of Parliament session on Monday.

While the Janata Dal (United) sought special category status for Bihar, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Yuva Jana Samika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) demanded the same for Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, respectively. The ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh did not reiterate the demand it made earlier, at the meeting. People aware of the details said Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president Chirag Paswan, whose party is also an ally of the BJP, also demanded special category status for Bihar.

States with special category status receive higher funds from the Centre, which also gives them special tax benefits. No state has been granted this classification since the BJP came to power in 2014.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, JD(U) working president and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Jha said Bihar should be provided with a special package if the state cannot be granted special category

## BJP, JD(U) slam Jairam Ramesh for sharing details of meeting

**NEW DELHI:** The BJP and its ally JD(U) slammed Congress leader Jairam Ramesh for "live-tweeting" some issues raised at the all-party meeting.

Ramesh, who attended the meeting, posted on X while the deliberations were on. "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 Pradesh. Strangely, the TDP leader kept quiet."

Reacting to Ramesh's

status. "Special category status for the state has been our stand since the beginning... if that is not possible, then a special package should be announced," he said.

The Naveen Patnaik-led BJD, which was earlier counted as a "friendly party" of the BJP, demanded special category status and supported similar demands made by the JD(U) and the YSRCP. "Odisha has been deprived of the



Jairam Ramesh

post, JD(U) MP Sanjay Kumar Jha said, "I wish this senior Congress leader had respected the sanctity of the Parliamentary proceedings."

BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya said the party should consider sending a "more seasoned hand" next time.

special category status for more than two decades. The BJD has been demanding the status. States such as Andhra Pradesh and Bihar have made similar demands..." BJD leader Sasmit Patra said.

Likewise, the YSRCP raised the issue of funds for Andhra Pradesh from the central pool at the all-party meeting.

The opposition party leaders took potshots at the ruling TDP for

not raising the issue of special category status for Andhra.

The Congress also took a swipe at the TDP over its silence on the matter on Sunday. "In today's all-party meeting of floor leaders chaired by defence minister Rajnath Singh, the JD(U) leader demanded special category status of Bihar. The YSRCP leader demanded special category status for Andhra Pradesh. Strangely, the TDP leader kept quiet on the matter," party's chief of communication, Jairam Ramesh wrote on X.

In a separate post, Ramesh said: "How the political climate has changed! In the all-party meeting, the BJD leader reminded the BJP President JP Nadda that the BJP's manifesto for the 2014 assembly elections in Odisha had promised special category status to the state."

Meanwhile, Jha said the JD(U) also raised the issue of floods at the meeting. "A large part of the state gets inundated every year. The water comes from Nepal; a dam was supposed to have been built over the Kosi river. The government should resolve this and find a way out," he said.

The JD(U) also put on record that it does not agree with the Uttar Pradesh government's order directing eateries to display names of their owners along routes of the kanwar yatra.

## Extensive measures in place for kanwar yatra

HT Correspondent

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**LUCKNOW/HARIDWAR:** A proposal for closing meat shops, setting up temporary hospitals, installing streetlights, and setting a specific time for the sale of liquor are among the extensive preparations made along the routes chalked out for the kanwar yatra across western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Uttarakhand from Monday.

The yatra begins Monday and will go on till August 19. During this time, hundreds of devotees will pass through the district to take water from the Ganga and other holy rivers to Shiva shrines.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Lucknow Police have made extensive security arrangements, including the use of CCTV cameras. "The month of Savan is starting from tomorrow. Tomorrow is the first Monday. We have spoken to the management committee of the temples. Traffic diversions and advisories have been issued in the city," said joint commissioner of police (law and order) Amit Verma.

He said that heavy vehicles are being stopped at checkpoints, and separate routes have been given for them so that there is no untoward incident with the



Pilgrims throng Har ki Pauri in Haridwar ahead of yatra.

traffic.

Meanwhile, the Varanasi Municipal Corporation (VMC) on Sunday ordered the closure of meat shops on the kanwar yatra route during the holy month of Sawan.

In Uttarakhand, the government has made arrangements for drone surveillance and temporary hospitals for nearly 50 million pilgrims. "Drone monitoring will be used for kanwar fair. Joint interstate police control room are also being established for better coordination, sharing of intelligence, traffic and other aspects by Uttar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan state police. Aerial monitoring of Mela zone through helicopter will also be done. Foolproof security arrangements are being put in place for peaceful conduct of the fair," said senior superintendent of police (Haridwar) Pramendra Dobhal.

## SC TO HEAR PLEAS AGAINST EATERIES' ORDERS TODAY

**NEW DELHI:** A clutch of petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court challenging directives from the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments that require eateries along the kanwar yatra route to display the names, addresses and mobile numbers of their owners and staff.

The petitioners include TMC MP Mahua Moitra, political commentator Apoorvanand Jha, columnist Aakar Patel, and the non-profit Association of Protection of Civil Rights.

These directives, purportedly aimed at respecting the dietary preferences of Hindu pilgrims and maintaining law and order, have sparked a political controversy with several Opposition leaders condemning the directives as an overreach of government power and for encouraging discrimination on the grounds of caste and religion. The Opposition also raised concerns about the potential for communal tensions. Meanwhile Moitra's petition argued that these directives compel proprietors of eating establishments to disclose personal information under the pretext of respecting pilgrims' dietary preferences. "The impugned directives violate multiple constitutional rights, and outsource the State's obligation of maintaining law and order," states Moitra's petition. HT

{ AIRBUS HELICOPTERS IN TIE-UP WITH TASL }

## 8 sites shortlisted to make H125 choppers

Rahul Singh

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**MARIGNANE (FRANCE):** Airbus Helicopters has shortlisted eight locations in India for setting up a production line for the H125 chopper, the fourth such facility in the world, in partnership with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), and the company has projected a demand for 500 helicopters in the country and south Asia during the next 20 years, senior Airbus officials said on Sunday.

The single-engine H125's final assembly line (FAL) in India will be the first for a civil helicopter in the private sector.

"The final assessment of the locations is on. We will soon make the announcement on where the H125 will be built in India. The factors that will guide the decision include how attractive the location is to our employees, its suitability for industrial activity, and the logistics ecosystem," said Olivier Michalon, executive vice president, global business, Airbus Helicopters.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the new facility is expected around the year-end, and the Airbus-Tata combine will initially produce 10 helicopters a year, with production being ramped up as orders grow, he said. The H125 will be also



The single-engine H125's final assembly line (FAL) in India will be the first for a civil helicopter in the private sector.

exported to south Asian countries.

Michalon's comments came during an interaction with Indian journalists at the Airbus Marignane helicopter facility, which is outside Marseille and was opened in 1939, where he spoke about the partnership with TASL, the potential India's helicopter market holds, and how the H125 fits into the picture.

The partnership between the two companies to assemble the helicopters in the country, aimed to push the Make in India model, was announced in January 2024 during talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron to deepen strategic ties. India and

## Myanmar nationals in Manipur camp demand release

**IMPHAL:** Around 100 Myanmar nationals staying in a detention centre in Manipur have launched a hunger strike, demanding their release.

Superintendent Sorokhaibam Bhadraka of Manipur Central Jail said that the Manipur Jail authorities do not have the authority to release them as they were penalised by the court under Section 14 of the Foreigners Act. He, however, said that the detainees were being taken care of as per the rules.

## Army deployed to deal with landslide in Karnataka

**BENGALURU:** Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah visited National Highway 66 near Ankola to oversee rescue operations following a devastating landslide last week and directed officials and rescue teams to expedite their efforts as heavy rains continue to batter the region.

Siddaramaiah further said that 44 military personnel have joined the rescue operations, with the Navy assisting from day one.



Mohan Majhi

## THE BIJU PATNAIK AWARD WILL NOT BE RENAMED, SAYS CM AMID SLUGFEST

Debabrata Mohanty

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**BHUBANESWAR:** Two days after the Odisha sports and youth services department renamed the Biju Patnaik Sports Award, chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Sunday said there will be no change in the title of the state's premier sports award for lifetime achievement and outstanding performance.

"The sports award was instituted in the name of Biju (Patnaik) babu and no such decision has been taken to change its name. In his long illustrious political career, Biju babu's contribution in the political and social sphere for Odisha and the country will always be remembered," Majhi told reporters at Lok Seva Bhavan.

"My government respects the sons of the soil and therefore, there will be no change in the title of the sports award named after Biju Patnaik," he added, noting that he came to know about the renaming from the press. After addressing the press, Majhi visited Naveen Niwas to meet Biju Patnaik's son and former chief minister Naveen Patnaik.

The opposition BJD and Congress had attacked the ruling BJP in the state over the notification issued by the state sports and youth services department on Friday over the renaming of the award.

"Biju Patnaik was not just a person, he was an institution. He is an asset of the country. The government should not do things that would distress the people of the state," BJD legislator Arun Sahoo said.

The award, presented on National Sports Day on August 29, is given in eight different categories.

(The writer is in France at the invitation of Airbus)

## NUMBER THEORY

# Fiscal prudence and its fallout on the central govt's political capital

By Roshan Kishore

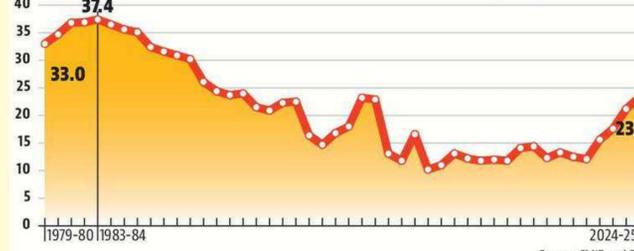
The first of this two-part pre-budget series looked at the tax performance of the Modi government in the last 10 years and argued that the post-pandemic performance had achieved a creditable performance, increasing the tax-GDP ratio without resorting to raising the indirect tax burden. The concluding part of this series will look at the spending pattern of the government between 2019 and 2024 and explore its possible political economy fallout.

### 1 The most important change in the government's spending was the rise in share of capital spending

The share of capital expenditure in the central government's total spending is expected to stay above the 20% mark in 2023-24 and 2024-25 according to Revised Estimate and Budget Estimate numbers available in the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) database. The last time these

numbers were in this ballpark was two decades ago. The government's capex push has played a major role in not just boosting short-term growth, but also laying the ground for fixing India's supply side gaps on the infrastructure front which is absolutely essential for long-term growth.

#### Capital exp as a share of total spending by Centre

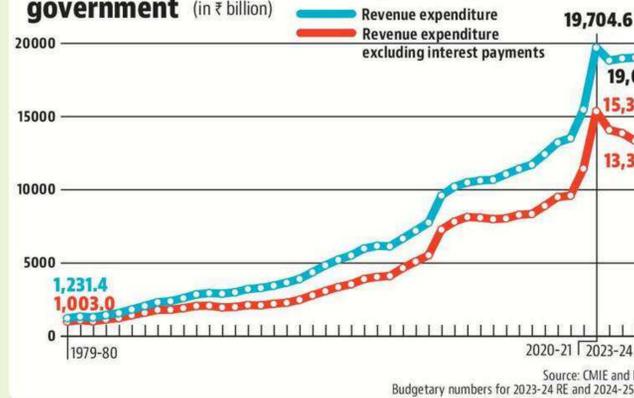


### 2 But this came at the cost of a sharp decline in revenue spending

That a rise in share of capital spending will lead to a concomitant decline in revenue spending share is a tautology. However, what is worth examining is whether this decline was proportional or a fall in real spending. There are greater chances of a political fallout if the latter turns out to be true. A good way to check whether this has happened is to look at the inflation adjusted - HT has used the inflationary component between GDP at current and constant prices to make this adjustment - trend in capital and revenue spending of the central government. The data highlights a very interesting and unprecedented pattern in the spending cycle of the central government. Inflation adjusted revenue spending shot up sharply in the pandemic year and has, by and large, stabilized at that level in the period after that. Of course, its share in GDP, because the latter has

been growing, has come down. However, if one were to take out interest payments from the revenue spending head, we see an absolute decline in real terms. Interest payments are basically going towards servicing past debt rather than supporting current period consumption. From a political economy perspective, a fall in real spending will also lead to a really sharp fiscal consolidation. It is worth underlining the fact that such a sharp fiscal consolidation was seen - CMIE has data from 1979-80 onwards - and is unprecedented in India's economic history. This is bound to have generated some economic pain and therefore political discontent. To be sure, inflation adjusted revenue spending, even after excluding interest payments is much higher than what it was before the pandemic struck and even what the pre-pandemic trajectory suggested.

#### Inflation-adjusted revenue spending of central government (in ₹ billion)

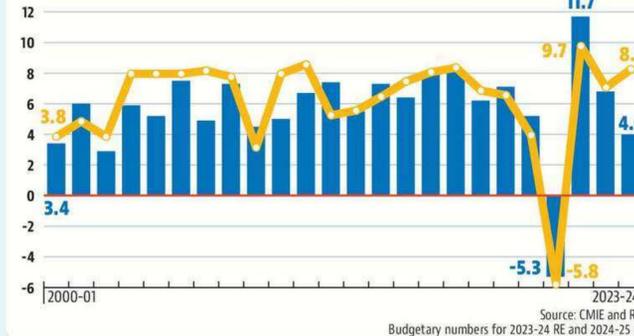


### 3 This fiscal consolidation came when pvt consumption growth was among the weakest ever

This was the most important political economy factor in the government's fiscal plan before the 2024 elections. Prioritising capital spending over revenue spending, not letting the fiscal deficit go out of control even in the aftermath of the pandemic's shock, beginning the process of a gradual but still sharp fiscal consolidation when coupled with a monetary tightening (to be sure, this is not a decision by fiscal policy) are all policies aimed at boosting long-term growth and macroeconomic stability. But they came at a time when the economy was seeing a K-shaped recovery, thriving on the income and spending of the rich rather than the not-so-well-off. Given the fact that

the non-rich have a higher propensity to consume, this manifested itself in a weak private consumption growth which in real life must have meant a struggle or even erosion in consumption levels at the bottom of the economic pyramid. The fact that private final consumption growth was just 4% in 2023-24 against the overall GDP growth rate of more than 8% shows this clearly. Long-term growth considerations aside, the election results show that this might have come at a great political cost to the BJP. Will the budget tweak the interim budget's framework to rebalance politics and economics? This is the biggest question as far as tomorrow's budget is concerned.

#### PFCE and GDP growth



This is the last of a two-part pre-budget series. The first part looked at the government's tax performance in the last 10 years.

# PM Modi calls for promotion of heritage at Unesco WHC meet

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**NEW DELHI:** Heritage is not just history but a shared consciousness of humanity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday, even as he underlined that India's ancient centres of culture not only held touchstones of a vibrant past but also presented a unique vision of development.

In his address at the opening ceremony of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) at the Bharat Mandapam in Delhi, Modi said that whenever one looks at historical sites, "our mind rises above current geopolitical factors".

"It is India's clarion call to the world to come together to promote each other's heritage and amplify the spirit of human welfare, encourage tourism and create more job opportunities through the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting," he said.

India is hosting the key Unesco event for the first time, from July 21 to July 31. Modi was joined on the dais by the UN agency's director general Audrey Azoulay, external affairs minister S Jaishankar and culture minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, among others.

Modi also announced a \$1 million (₹8.37 crore) contribution for the Unesco World Heritage Centre.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in Delhi on Sunday.

"India has also started a certificate programme for world heritage management for young professionals. I am sure that the cultural and creative industry will become a big factor in contributing to global growth," he said.

The meeting is being attended by more than 2,000 delegates from over 150 countries.

The WHC meets once a year and is responsible for managing all matters pertaining to world heritage sites and deciding on sites to be inscribed on the

UNESCO World Heritage List.

Before inaugurating the meeting, Modi and Azoulay visited the exhibitions at the venue. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which is co-hosting the event, also displayed over 350 artefacts that have been brought back to India over the past decade from various countries.

These are cultural artefacts that were either stolen, smuggled or taken out of the country at some point in the past. "This return of ancient heritage artefacts is a

display of global generosity and respect for history," the PM said.

Applauding WHC, Modi said hosting the programme is "a matter of pride for India", highlighting that Assam's Moidams have been recommended for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

The PM also said that in India, one can find a piece of heritage from every point in history. Delhi, for instance, he said was the centre of thousands of years of heritage and one can find a

historical monument at every step of the way. He gave the example of the Iron Pillar in Qutub Minar complex built by emperor Chandragupta II.

"Just 15km from this venue is the 2,000-year-old Iron Pillar of Delhi, which has been rust-resistant and gives a glimpse of India's metallurgical prowess in the past. India's heritage is not merely history, but also science", Modi said.

He also noted that India's heritage is witness to the journey of top-notch engineering, mentioning the 8th century Kedarnath temple at an altitude of 3,500 metres.

He also said that heritage has often been ignored in the pursuit of development.

Elaborating on efforts taken in preserving heritage in the last 10 years, the PM mentioned the construction of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and modernisation of the ancient Nalanda University campus.

He also touched upon the cooperation by India in helping conserve heritage in the global South outside the country.

"We believe in the motto 'Not me, but us'. With this in mind, we are helping in the conservation of sites like Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Cham Temples in Vietnam, and Stupa in Bagan, Myanmar."

## SC to hear over 40 pleas amid NEET-UG controversy today

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**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court will hear petitions related to the controversy surrounding the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate) or NEET-UG on Monday.

According to a cause list uploaded on the top court's website, a bench comprising Chief Justice Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra will hear more than 40 pleas.

On Saturday, the National Testing Agency (NTA) released city and centre-wise results of NEET-UG 2024 on the directions of the Supreme Court. The NTA has also sought transfer of cases pending against it in various high courts to the apex court to avoid multiplicity of litigations.

An analysis of NTA's data on NEET-UG by HT showed that coaching hubs in cities like Jaipur and Sikar in Rajasthan, Delhi, Bengaluru in Karnataka, Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, and Kottayam in Kerala, dominated the merit list.

The results, which were declared on June 4, sparked controversy when 67 candidates achieved perfect scores of 720. Questions were raised when it was revealed that some of these students attempted the exam at the same examination centre.

Similarly, another controversy stemmed from the grace marks awarded to 1,563 stu-



The NTA has sought transfer of cases pending against it in various high courts to top court.

dents due to loss of time. Last month, the Supreme Court cancelled the results of these students. These students were later allowed to sit for a retest. Only 52% of the 1,563 candidates appeared for the paper.

After the results of the medical entrance examination were released on June 4, protests have swept the country against the alleged irregularities in NEET-UG 2024, which also includes paper leaks as well.

The Central Bureau of Investigation was roped in to investigate the larger conspiracy in the paper leaks. So far, CBI has arrested 21 people in connection with six cases registered by the federal probe agency.

Last week, CBI detained four students from AIIMS Patna on suspicions that they helped solve the NEET-UG question paper. The probe agency has also arrested two people for allegedly stealing question papers.

1 DEAD, 1 INJURED IN SEPARATE CASES OF SHOOTING IN MANIPUR: POLICE

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**IMPHAL:** One person was killed while another sustained injuries in separate shootings in Manipur, police said on Sunday.

Officials said that a man was shot dead in Manipur's Imphal East district on Saturday. The deceased has been identified as RK Prithibi, a former cadre of the underground outfit Kangleipak Communist Party-Peoples' War Group (KCP-PWG), who claimed responsibility for the attack.

The outfit stated in a press release that Prithibi was given capital punishment for missing the outfit's name to engage in extortion.

In a separate incident, another man was found with bullet injuries to both legs on Friday night in Manipur's Thoubal district. Police said the person has been identified as Md Salam. He was later rushed to the hospital for treatment.



Indian students at Akhaura check post on Tripura border, after they escaped from violence-hit Bangladesh.

## Amid civil unrest, over 900 students escape to India from Bangladesh

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**NEW DELHI:** At least 905 students from Bangladesh colleges, who are fleeing the country amid the civil unrest, crossed the border into India on Sunday at various integrated border check posts in West Bengal and Tripura, officials from the Border Security Force (BSF) said.

People aware of the matter said that while a majority of the students are Indian nationals, who were studying at medical colleges in Comilla, Dhaka and Brahmanbaria districts of Bangladesh, students from Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh have also crossed the border.

Over the last four days, at least 1,912 students, who had valid documents and identity papers, entered India through the border in West Bengal and Tripura. At least seven of them were Bangladesh nationals, four were from Bhutan, and 221 were from Nepal, officials said. The others are Indian students who were either hostellers or lived as paying guests near their colleges, officials added. The students told officials that they were escorted by police and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) till the border.

The Bangladesh government has imposed a strict curfew with a "shoot at sight" orders issued to police to quell the civil unrest that has claimed 133 lives.

BSF, which guards the India-Bangladesh border, has set up help desks at various integrated check posts across the border states and are coordinating with Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) officials.

More than 4,500 Indians have fled B'desh: MEA

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**NEW DELHI:** More than 4,500 Indian nationals and nearly 540 citizens of Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives have returned from Bangladesh with the assistance of Indian authorities following violent protests against job quotas in the neighbouring country.

The Indian high commission in Dhaka has been arranging security escort for safe travel of Indian nationals to land border crossing points, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said.

The ministry had said on Friday that there were an estimated 15,000 Indians, including around 8,500 students, in Bangladesh.

"We have information that there are nearly 8,000 students enrolled in the medical colleges," a senior officer monitoring the rescue said.

Tripura frontier's inspector general, Patel Piyush Purushotam Das said, "The law and situation is a concern for BSF as we are entrusted with guarding the border. We will ensure that criminal elements do not take advantage of the situation."

### { BULLET TRAIN PROJECT }

## Construction begins on India's first underwater rail tunnel



The project is inching towards the mouth of Thane creek, where a portion of it will pass below the creek.

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**MUMBAI:** The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has begun work on the construction of India's first underwater rail tunnel for the high-speed rail corridor connecting Mumbai with Ahmedabad.

Officials said that work on the first dual rail line underground tunnel for the ₹1.08-lakh-crore rail project is now inching towards the mouth

of Thane Creek. A portion of it will pass below the creek. The NHSRCL engineers have created a one-of-a-kind 'T' intersection from the Additionally Driven Intermediate Tunnel (ADIT) at Ghansoli in Navi Mumbai that connects it. At 110 metres, it is also the deepest point of the 21-km-long tunnel.

The ADIT acts as an entry/exit point and is perpendicular to the main tunnel. One half goes towards BKC (below Thane Creek) while the other approaches Shilphata in Thane.

In less than a month, 120 metres towards BKC and 110 metres on the Shilphata end have been dug, for which 218 blasts using gelatin explosives have been carried out. "We are doing this work very carefully, using the New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM), as there are buildings and other structures around. Despite heavy rains, our work continues at this site," said an NHSRCL engineer.

This work is expected to be completed by December this year.

INDIAN ELECTION STUDY REVEALS

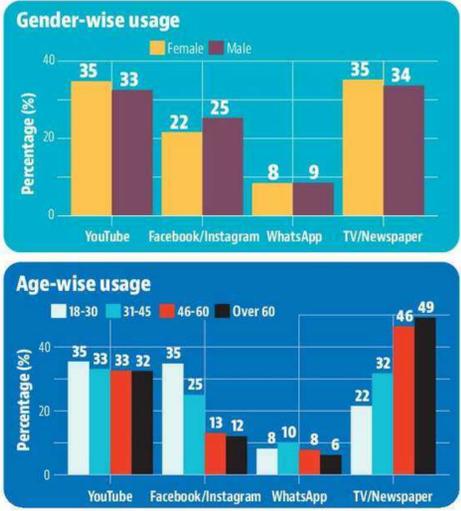
# How media shaped poll views

Neelanjan Sircar  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The recently concluded elections unfolded in an increasingly diverse and complex media environment. According to the Indian Election Study conducted by the Data Action Lab for Emerging Societies (DALES) over the 2024 polls, more than three in five users used a social media news source other than traditional media (television or newspaper), and nearly a quarter of users did not use traditional media at all for news. With a diverse array of sources and viewpoints, citizens have access to more and more information upon which to base their voting decisions. But media usage isn't limited to just political information. Media shapes views on the economy and society at large, and even on events such as the Ambani wedding. And these issues, in turn, shape social and political attitudes.

Access to media sources, social media in particular, is uneven. Many people do not have access to a mobile phone or a smartphone for personal use — even if their household has one — that is required for regular use of social media. To understand the contours of a shifting media space, it is useful to focus on a population that demonstrably has access to a mobile phone and plausibly to social media at large. In order to put some data to the problem, Artha Global's Centre for Rapid Insights (CRI) conducted a national telephonic survey across 15,260 covering 421 of India's 543 parliamen-

## Decoding the news flow



ary constituencies, asking the question, "What is your primary source of news?" The National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) was used to adjust the results to make representative claims across age and gender in households that own a mobile phone. Overall, we found that nearly the same percentage of people use YouTube as their primary source (33.6%) as television and newspapers (34.4%), although the poorest respondents, those in households without a two-wheeler or four-wheeler, report a higher rate of television and newspaper as a

primary source (39.1%). A smaller but significant share of people use Facebook or Instagram (23.5%), with very few people using peer-to-peer social media such as WhatsApp or Telegram for news (8.5%). This is consistent with the recently released Digital Report 2024 by the Reuters Institute, which finds the popularity of Facebook dropping with an increasingly important role for platforms that can showcase short videos such as YouTube. Furthermore, the shift towards YouTube in the news space speaks to a preference for demand-driven, curated con-

tent as opposed to the peer-to-peer recommendations of Facebook or WhatsApp. When we disaggregate the data by age group, we find some striking trends. YouTube is universally popular, with the use of YouTube as a primary news source relatively consistent across all age groups. But younger age groups have noticeably shifted away from traditional media, with those aged 18 to 30 using YouTube (35.4%) to a much greater extent than television or newspaper as a primary source (21.5%).

By contrast, the oldest population in our sample — those over 60 — use YouTube (32.5%) to a much lesser extent than traditional media (49.2%). We do see much higher usage in the younger groups on Facebook or Instagram, likely reflecting the growing popularity of Instagram as a source, with those aged 18 to 30 using Facebook or Instagram (34.8%) to a much greater extent than those above age 60 (12.1%). As wealthier and younger populations start to shift away from television and newspapers, the future for traditional media looks grim, possibly prompting many media houses to re-package their offerings for social media.

The inequality of media access by gender is apparent in our response patterns, with only 19% of those who respond to all survey questions being women. But the good news is that conditional on having mobile phone access, our data shows that men and women have relatively similar media consumption patterns (in fact,

women avail of YouTube at slightly higher rates than men). As I have argued with co-authors Sumitra Badrinathan and Devesh Kapur, the demand-driven nature of social media combined with personal access to mobile phones allows women to avail of information of their own choosing, unlike a television which can be controlled by the male head of household — and this allows women to form independent, informed opinions that can have genuine social and political consequences.

This is something that we may already be seeing with different political parties cultivating bases of female voters. The demand-driven nature of social media content combined with demographic shifts in media consumption patterns will allow citizens to access diverse information than ever before.

*This is the latest instalment in a new series that uses insights from rapid polling across the country on topical issues. The polls are run by the Centre for Rapid Insights (CRI), based at Artha Global. Neelanjan Sircar is its director.*

*The polls have a sample of about 13,000 to 15,000 households across India covering 421 of 543 Lok Sabha constituencies. NFHS data is then used to re-weight the data to be representative of households with mobile phones down to the assembly constituency level. The estimations themselves are done using the technique of multilevel modelling, which helps account for different caste, wealth, and spatial demographics in the measurement.*

## Heavy rains lash Mumbai



People wade through a waterlogged street in Mumbai on Sunday. The coastal city and its suburbs received over 100mm of rainfall in 10 hours till Sunday evening, inundating roads in many areas, diverting flights, and affecting local train traffic on a Central Railway section between Dadar and Matunga stations.

## Massive uproar in K'taka after IT firms propose 14-hour daily shift

HT correspondent  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**BENGALURU:** The Karnataka IT firms' proposal to extend the working hours of employees from 12 hours to 14 hours a day has triggered massive uproar with labour unions calling it an "attack on the basic right of any worker to have a personal life".

Currently, the Karnataka Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1961, allows up to 12 hours of work time, which comprises a 10-hour shift and 2-hour overtime. However, representatives of the Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology-enabled services (ITES) sectors recently held a

meeting with state labour minister Santosh Lad, officials from the Department of Labour and IT-BT ministry and proposed an amendment to the current Act to legally extend working hours to 14 hours (12 hours + two hours of overtime).

If implemented, the extended working time — 70 hours a week — will have the biggest impact on Bengaluru, the state capital known as the IT hub of the country.

Confirming the meeting, Lad said: "A proposal of extending the work hours to 14 hours has come in. Discussions are still going on."

According to the members of the Karnataka State IT/ITES Employees Union (KITU), who attended the meeting held last

week, they vehemently opposed the proposal following which the labour ministry has agreed to have one more round of discussions over the matter. "This amendment comes at a time when the world is recognising the negative impact of longer working hours on productivity and well-being. More countries are enacting laws to ensure the right to disconnect," it said.

During the meeting, KITU members also pointed out studies on the health impact of extended working hours among IT employees. "The Karnataka government, in their hunger to please their corporate bosses, completely neglects the most fundamental right of any individual, the right to live," they said.

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With increasing life style changes, early onset of health disorders such as Diabetes, High BP, Heart Attack & Failure, Kidney & Liver Damage, Paralytic Strokes, Obesity - Excessive weight, Allergies, Arthritis, Osteoporosis, Forgetfulness, Depression etc is now very common. Most of these conditions can be avoided or delayed by modifying lifestyle and adding supplements to diet. We have a few Preventive Health Profiles consisting of various Blood and Urine tests, results of which may help your PHYSICIAN monitoring your health status and ageing process rather objectively.

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HbA1c	Direct Bilirubin	Triglyceride	Phosphorus	RDW	Vitamin B12
Microalbumin	SGPT	HDL Chol	LDH	MCV	Iron Deficiency
Kidney Fn Tests	SGGT	Non HDL Chol	PTH	MCHC	Iron
Urea	SGGTP	LDL Cholesterol	Hemogram/CBC	MCH	Allergy
Creatinine	Alk Phosph	VLDL Chol	TLC	ESR	Screening
Uric Acid	Total Protein	Chol Ratios	DLC	Thyroid Fn Tests	Total IgE
Sodium	Albumin	CRP	TRBC Ct	Free T3	Urine Routine
Potassium	Globulin	Homocysteine	Platelet Ct	Free T4	
Chloride	Alb/Glob Ratio		Hemoglobin	TSH	

**Other Available Profiles**

Basic	Diabetic	High BP	50 plus	65 plus
Glucose Fasting   Hemogram   Iron   Kidney Function Tests   Liver Function Tests   Lipid Profile   Thyroid Function Tests   Bones & Joint Related Tests   CRP   Urine Routine & Microscopic	HbA1c (Glyco Hb), Microalbumin with Glucose Fasting   Hemogram   Iron   Kidney Function Tests   Liver Function Tests   Lipid Profile   Thyroid Function Tests   Bones & Joint Related Tests   CRP   Urine Routine & Microscopic	Homocysteine (BP & Stroke Related) with Glucose Fasting   Hemogram   Iron   Kidney Function Tests   Liver Function Tests   Lipid Profile   Thyroid Function Tests   Bones & Joint Related Tests   CRP   Urine Routine & Microscopic	This profile consists of tests offered under the Comprehensive 30+ Profile with additional Tests for MEN Testosterone   Total & Free PSA*   AFP* Tests for WOMEN CA-125*   AFP* *Cancer Markers	This profile consists of all the tests covered under the Comprehensive 50+ Profile with NT ProBNP Test (screening test for Heart Failure)

**Important:** If you are interested in getting any of these profiles done, you may please consult your Physician or come to the laboratory in a Fasting state (10 to 12 hours after dinner). You will have to submit a Blood and Urine sample. The test report consisting of test results, brief interpretation and limitations wherever applicable, can be collected by 5:00 pm. It is possible to send a softcopy of the results by e-mail on request. Patients must consult their treating Physician for interpretation, further investigations and management. Self-interpretation & self-medication are strongly discouraged.

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**IT IS** for general information that I Navpreet Singh Alang son of Kulwant Singh resident of H.No.C-46, Neelambar Apartments, Capt. Satish Marg, Pitampura, Saraswati Vihar, Delhi-110034, declare that name of my father & my mother has been wrongly written as Kulwant Singh Alang & Amarjeet Kulwant Singh in my Passport No.R2601482. The actual name of my father & my mother is Kulwant Singh & Amarjeet Kulwant Singh, respectively which may be amended accordingly.

**I, BHAVANA**, W/o Amit Kumar Johri, resident of 9, Ashoka Enclave, Dayalbagh, Agra, have changed my name from Bhavana to Bhawna Johri. Henceforth I would be known by the name of Bhawna Johri for all future purposes.

**I, ASHISH** Mangal S/o Sh Anup Kumar Aggarwal, R/O E-10, Ground Floor, Lajpat Nagar - 1, Delhi - 110024, have changed my minor son's name from Abeer Mangal to Viraj Mangal for all future purposes.

**I, BHAVANA**, W/o Amit Kumar Johri, resident of 9, Ashoka Enclave, Dayalbagh, Agra, have changed my name from Bhavana to Bhawna Johri. Henceforth I would be known by the name of Bhawna Johri for all future purposes.

**I, ASHISH** Mangal S/o Sh Anup Kumar Aggarwal, R/O E-10, Ground Floor, Lajpat Nagar - 1, Delhi - 110024, have changed my minor son's name from Abeer Mangal to Viraj Mangal for all future purposes.

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Online bids are invited for sale of different Lots of damaged plant & machinery, building shed items, automobile parts & electrical cables and their estimated weight is about 279757 Kg. on basis of Rate per Kg. for "Whole Lots" and "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", belonging to Mobility Solutions Ltd., Unit # 1, Village Alamgir, Ambala-Chandigarh Highway, Lajpur, Distt. Patiala-160055, Punjab. Bids can be done at portal <https://www.indiaengineerin.com/multibid> after submitting the earnest money for each Lot separately or lumpsum Rs. 11,00,000/- (Rupees Eleven Lakh) for all lots (as per Auction Form), in favour of M/s Mobility Solutions Ltd., payable at Chandigarh, on or before 5.00 P.M. 12.08.2024 at the address given below. The E-Auction will be conducted from 03:00 PM onwards on 13.08.2024. The participants may participate in any one lot or all lots depending upon their discretion, subject to requisite Earnest Money Deposit. Details of items and their location and its Terms & Conditions of E-Auction can be obtained at free of cost, which are available at site and the following address:  
A) M/s Synise Technologies Ltd., 14th Floor, Antriksha Bhawan, 22, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110001. Contact for Registration & participation in E-Auction: Mr. Ashish, 9811907274/ Mr. Lalit, 9773836114 E-mail : lalit@synise.com  
B) Rohit Kumar & Co., Insurance Surveyors, 507, Indra Prakash, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi - 110001. Mobile Nos. : 09871904532, 09810109369 e-mail : rohits4@gmail.com  
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# Cong alleges removal of 'ban' on govt staff from joining RSS events

**HT Correspondent**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress on Sunday cited a purported government order issued last week to claim removal of a "ban" on the participation of government employees in the activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which is the ideological fountainhead of ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. The veracity of the purported government order, which was shared by Congress leaders on X, could not be ascertained immediately.

Congress general secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh posted an office memorandum, dated July 9, purportedly issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension pertaining to the "participation of the government servants in the activities of RSS".

"The undersigned is directed to refer to the OM (office memorandum)... dated 30.11.1966, OM No.

## SHARING THE PURPORTED GOVT ORDER ON SOCIAL MEDIA, CONGRESS LEADERS SLAMMED THE BJP-LED GOVT

7/4/70-Est.(B) dated 25.07.1970 and OM No. 15014/3(S)/80- Estt.(B) dated 28.10.1980 on the above subject. 2. The aforesaid instructions have been reviewed and it has been decided to remove the mention of Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (R.S.S.S) from the impugned OMs dated 30.11.1966, 25.07.1970 and 28.10.1980," the purported order said.

In a post along with the picture of the order, Ramesh said, "Sardar Patel had banned the RSS in February 1948 following Gandhi ji's assassination. Subsequently, the ban was withdrawn on assurances of good behaviour. Even after this

the RSS never flew the Tiranga in Nagpur." "In 1966, a ban was imposed - and rightly so - on government employees taking part in RSS activities."

Tagging the July 9 order on X, BJP's Amit Malviya said, "The unconstitutional order issued 58 years ago, in 1966, imposing a ban on Govt employees taking part in the activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has been withdrawn by the Modi Govt." He added that the order shouldn't have been passed in the first place.

HT could not independently verify the authenticity of the order dated July 9. The order was also not listed in the Office Memorandum section of the DOPT website. No senior officer from DOPT commented on the matter. Members of the Central Secretariat Services Forum, an umbrella group of central government employees posted in different ministries, too, said: "We will see if it is genuine. We will check this on Monday morning..."

# { GREENPIECE } EXTREME HEAT CONDITIONS POSE HUGE CHALLENGE BEFORE MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES

**Bharati Chaturvedi**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** There's an ongoing, intense heat in the Middle East, from Bahrain to Saudi Arabia to the UAE. In Dubai, the warnings claim it feels like 60 degrees Celsius. In Bahrain, where I just visited, it is touching 50 degrees Celsius. The largely concretised urban spaces radiate heat even late in the night, making it impossible to walk outdoors.

Unlike us in India, in these countries, it is very hard for anyone to survive without air conditioning and intense cooling. They don't have cooler climatic conditions. And that is the challenge the Middle East must address.

As oil-producing countries, they depend on this resource for cooling.

Ironically, fossil fuels are also the reason for causing the climate crisis that eventually is leading to this extreme heat facing the countries.

With the intense, all-year sunshine, these countries can securitise their energy, and hence their increasing cooling needs, with solar. From large solar farms to smaller systems, an array of solar energy production systems are likely to be able to reduce the current dependence on fossil fuels.

This is a strategic move for two reasons.

First, because their own dependence on fossil fuels, now seen as an important contributor to climate change, is reduced and helps them become future-ready.

Second, while they may continue to export oil to run the economy, their own dependence could spawn new renewable energy models that can set off a new business model for other parts of the region.

These intense temperatures cannot be managed by business as usual. It is time to take a whole new look at the solutions.

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

# SENIOR IAS OFFICER'S DISABILITY QUOTA REMARKS STIR ROW

**Aanchal Poddar**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Senior IAS officer Smita Sabharwal on Sunday questioned the need for a disability quota in the All India Services (AIS).

Taking to X to speak about whether there was a need to have a disability quota, the senior IAS officer who belongs to the Telangana posted: "As this debate is blowing up - With all due respect to the differently-abled, does an airline hire a pilot with disability? Or would you trust a surgeon with a disability? The nature of the #AIS (IAS/IPS/IFoS) is field-work, long taxing hours, listening first hand to people's grievances, which requires physical fitness." The remarks come in the wake of allegations of misconduct against IAS probationer Pujja Khedkar who is accused of misusing the disability and OBC (non-creamy layer) quotas to secure her candidature in the exam.

Reacting to the statement, MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said, "This is such a pathetic and exclusionary view to have..."

# 14-yr-old dies of Nipah in Kerala, govt sends team

**Rhythmka Kaul**  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** A team of specialists from the Centre will provide Kerala assistance with case investigation and technical support after a 14-year-old boy died of Nipah virus infection in the south Indian state, the Union health ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

"A multi-member joint outbreak response team from the National 'One Health Mission' of Union Health Ministry will be deployed to support the state in investigating the case, identifying epidemiological linkages, and providing technical assistance," the ministry said.

Nipah virus infection is a zoonotic disease that spreads between animals and people. Fruit bats are the host for the virus. The virus can cause mild-to-severe disease, rapidly progressing from respiratory infection symptoms to encephalitis (brain swelling) that leads to coma or death. An estimated 40-75% of people infected with the virus die.

The Nipah virus case was detected in Malappuram district of Kerala. The 14-year-old boy exhibited AES (acute encephalitis syndrome) symptoms, the health ministry said. He was admitted to a health-care facility in Perinthalmanna before being transferred to a referral centre in Kozhikode. He later succumbed to the disease. His samples were sent to the National Institute of Virology in Pune, which confirmed the Nipah virus infection.

The Centre has advised the Kerala government to conduct active case search in the family of the confirmed case, the neighbourhood, and areas with similar topography.

In addition, at the state's request, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has sent monoclonal antibodies for patient management. A mobile BSL-3 (bio-safety level 3) laboratory for testing additional samples from contacts has also arrived in Kozhikode.

**MAHATRANSCO E-TENDER NOTICE (2<sup>nd</sup> Call)**  
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MSETCL SRM invites online RFx (e-Tender) from the Registered Contractors for MAHATRANSCO E-Tendering (SRM) website for below mentioned work.

E-tender No./ RFx No. 7000032324 Name of Work : "2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Replacement of existing 0.35 ACSR Sheep conductor by High Performance conductor and replacement of existing suspension tower by 30 Tension tower at Loc. No. 626 & 632 along with additional 1 No. of tower between Loc. No. 636-639 for height rising & replacement of 2 Nos. of tower at Loc. No. 648 - 649 of 220 kV Apta - Taloja, 220 kV Apta - Kalwa and 220 kV Kalwa - Taloja line under EHV PC O&M Zone, Vashi." Estimated Cost: Rs. 51,59,33,810.00. Tender Fees : Rs. 25,000/-+ GST.

Date for Sale and Submission of the e-Tender Documents: From 22.07.2024 @ 15.00 Hrs to 05.08.2024 @ 15.30 Hrs. For detailed information visit our website: <https://srmtender.mahatransco.in> - **Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER, EHV PC (O&M) Zone, Vashi**

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**E-TENDER CORRIGENDUM-2**

The last date of the bid submission of E-Tender for "Construction of 132 GIS Switching Substation for RVNL at Rishikesh and 132 kV GIS Switching Substation for RVNL at Ranihat (Srinagar)" against Tender Specification no. PTCUL/C&P/J/E-Tender/SS-01/2024-25" is hereby extended upto **02.08.2024 15:30 Hrs.** For more details please visit e-tender website [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) (tender id no. 2024\_PTCU1\_72478\_1) and for e-tender notice our website [www.ptcul.org](http://www.ptcul.org). All other terms and conditions shall remain same.

For any assistance on E-Tendering, please contact +91-8899890000 Ro no 1255/HQPU/ptcul dated 20.07.2024 **Superintending Engineer (C&P)**

"Save Electricity in the Interest of Nation"

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The following e-tender is published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to login to [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) and quote against the tender. Manual Quotation will not be entertained for the tender.

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Date of tender Closing : **13.08.2024 at 14.45 Hrs**/Opening on **13.08.2024 at 15.00 Hrs.** Hindi Version of the above advertisement is available in [www.icf.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.icf.indianrailways.gov.in)

**Dy.Chief Mechanical Engineer/Fur-III**

# Have fun with facts on Sundays

Catch the latest column of

**HT TWTW**  
THE WEEK THAT WAS

A quiz on the week's development.

**HT** FIRST VOICE. LAST WORD.

**Hindustan Times**

**I STILL LIVE WITH THE TAG OF CHEATER, CASANOVA: RANBIR KAPOOR**

**HT City**

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Office of Chief Engineer, (O&M), Kumaon Zone, 220 KV S/S Campus, Kamaluganija, Haldwani-263139 Corporate ID U40101UR2004G0028675 Mob. No. 70 88117917

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- Preventive maintenance of 220/132KV Circuit Breakers at 400KV Substation, Kashipur under 400KV O&M Division, PTCUL, Kashipur against E-Tender Specification No. CE(O&M)/PTCUL/HLD/09/2024-25, TENDER ID (2024\_PTC21\_73772\_1)
- Providing, fixing and installation of electric fencing at 132KV Substation Rannagar under O&M Division, PTCUL, Kashipur against E-Tender Specification No. CE(O&M)/PTCUL/HLD/10/2024-25, TENDER ID (2024\_PTC21\_73774\_1)

For more details please visit E-Tender Website [www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) and E-Tender information is available at PTCUL Website [www.ptcul.org](http://www.ptcul.org). For any assistance on E-Tendering, please contact +91-8899890000

**Chief Engineer (O&M)** Kumaon Zone

LETTER NO. 1523/CE(O&M)/PTCUL/HLD/E-Tender  
DATE: 20.07.2024 "Save Electricity in the Interest of Nation" PTCUL, Haldwani

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI (ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 1956 AND IN THE MATTER OF TULIP TELECOM LIMITED (IN LIQN.)**

**IN C. P. No. 329/2013**

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Dated this 22nd day of July, 2024

**Sd/- (S. MEENAKSHI) OFFICIAL LIQUIDATOR ATTACHED TO THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI 8<sup>th</sup> FLOOR, LOK NAYAK BHAWAN, KHAN MARKET, NEW DELHI - 110 003. Phone No. 011-24693393 Fax : 24693314**

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## OPINION

The  
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ESTABLISHED IN 1924

{ OUR TAKE }

## Decoding the Trump show

Emerging as the frontrunner, Trump offers three distinct avatars of himself and his party

At the Republican National Convention last week, there wasn't one Republican Party but three, and not one Donald Trump but three, in attendance. The first Republican Party was America's Grand Old Party in its responsible avatar. Trump deserves credit for not mounting an angry campaign after the attempt on his life just days earlier, instead urging unity in a fractured nation. His moving reconstruction of the shooting was used by the Republicans to project a more humane side to their presidential candidate and push a narrative of how he shouldn't have been "politically persecuted", much less got shot. This was meant to cement the base and reach out to the swing voters likely struck by Trump's instinctive show of strength and determination seconds after the shooting. All of this is legitimate politics, and the Republicans won't miss the opportunity to expand the tent — especially when the Democrats are divided over Joe Biden's candidature.

Then, there was the second Republican Party, and second Trump, radically different, if only in parts, from the GOP and President of the past in three ways. The first is hard borders to secure America against what Trump repeatedly has termed the "invasion" from the south. The second is a return to domestic manufacturing, reducing dependence on China, and creating jobs at home, by raising tariffs, taking on corporates if needed and even wooing unions. And the third is a narrower conception of America's interests outside its borders, with its allies taking on more responsibility. Interestingly, a lot of this is born from the anger against the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, both started by an older Republican dispensation. These too are legitimate political issues where different sides can agree or disagree and find a way out.

And then, there was the third Republican Party, and third Trump that should worry both Americans and the world. The narrative on securing borders often descends into outright bigotry in the manner Trump portrays immigrants — and this can easily turn into violence. It also ignores the benefits of immigration to the United States. Trump's "drill, baby, drill" rhetoric and dismissal of climate policies as a "green new scam" is offensive amid a climate crisis. And there is the issue of him having rejected the result of a legitimate election. The world, however, may have to learn again to deal with all the three avatars of the party, and the man.

## In UP, an overreach in the name of faith

Uttar Pradesh's directive to eateries along the Kanwar Yatra — a pilgrimage undertaken by Shiva devotees — route to display the names of proprietors exemplifies unnecessary State intervention. The state police had originally issued the directive, saying this would avoid "confusion" among the faithful. It had to make compliance voluntary after opposition parties and even allies of the ruling party in the state criticised it as communal dog-whistling. Soon after, the chief minister's office made it mandatory. Copycat moves by the Uttarakhhand government and the Ujjain local government will only push normalisation of such divisive moves in the name of faith.

Policing small businesses in the name of faith is not just discriminatory but also undermines people's confidence in the State. The UP government has been over-enthusiastic in projecting itself as a champion of the faith of the majority. A few years ago, it banned the sale of meat and non-vegetarian food along the Kanwar routes, citing religious sentiments of the pilgrims. But the fallout of such bans for small businesses can't be ignored. Given meat and related businesses see a preponderance of certain communities, this becomes discriminatory by action, if not intent. The latest intervention will not only deepen divides along religious lines, but also caste lines given that many related prejudices continue to prevail.

This is not to argue against religious sensitivities of the pilgrims. But the fact is Kanwar Yatras have been happening for decades without needing such diktats. Over the years, eateries and other businesses and the pilgrims, and by extension, different communities, would have worked out arrangements that take into account matters of faith. The State's involvement is not only wholly extraneous but also complicates matters for the larger social fabric.

## Alimony ruling ends disparity, not diversity

India's diversity and inherently plural character are virtues to be preserved and celebrated. But the country would not be any less culturally diverse if the access to justice is secularised

Seventy-five years after India got a modern Constitution, its courts are still called upon to decide whether an Indian woman who happens to belong to a religious minority should be entitled to subsistence under a secular law.

On July 10, a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court held that a divorced Muslim woman was entitled to maintenance under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, which entitles a wife to claim maintenance from her husband if she cannot maintain herself.

The issue ought to have been settled after the landmark ruling of a constitution bench of the Supreme Court in *Danial Latifi v. Union of India* where the court upheld the right of a divorced Muslim woman to maintenance beyond her *iddat* period and in the context of Section 125 of the Code confirmed that a man

could not, on the pretext of personal law, be allowed to get away by giving his wife less than what she is entitled to under secular law.

In that case, the court was considering the constitutional validity of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, which was enacted to placate the clergy after the uproar over the *Shah Bano* case, which granted maintenance to a divorced Muslim woman under Section 125 of the Code. The 1986 Act was, on the face of it, a beneficial legislation but really intended to limit the rights of a divorced Muslim woman by confining maintenance to the *iddat* period and no further.

However, interpreting the Act liberally and in favour of the rights of a destitute woman, the court held that the maintenance could not be limited to the *iddat* period, thereby interpreting it at par with the general law.

Despite this ruling that should have settled matters, errant husbands seeking to deny their divorced wives maintenance take recourse to personal law over secular law because the former leans in their favour.

How long will our courts be burdened with the myriad issues that arise from conflicts between personal law and a modern Constitution? Issues ranging from mainte-

nance, divorce, guardianship, adoption, succession and inheritance involve an interplay between personal law and secular law and are brought to court most often by hapless female litigants.

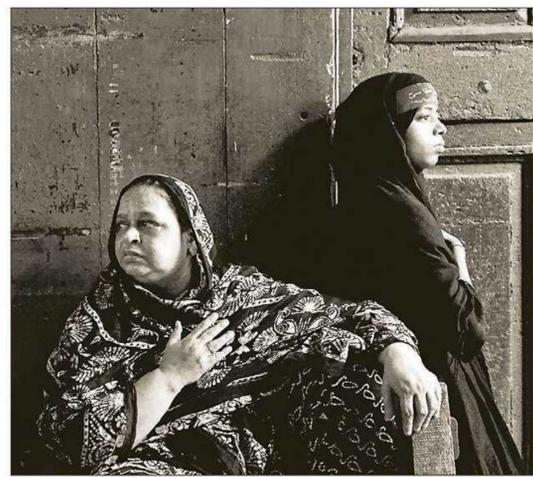
Vested interests seek to justify the supremacy of personal law in the name of religion. Indeed, India's diversity and inherently plural character are virtues to be preserved and celebrated. But would India be any less culturally diverse if the access to justice is secularised?

Access to justice is a facet of the fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution and must be ensured equally to all citizens regardless of religious affiliation. In India, depending on which religious community one belongs to, marriage can be a sacrament or a contract.

Indian marriage ceremonies are accompanied by an incredible range of practices and rituals — *saptapadi*, *nikaah*, *anand karaj*, and church weddings — all abundant and happily coexist. That diversity is unmatched anywhere in the world.

But it is one thing to celebrate diversity in rituals and festivities, and quite another to leave people to the mercy of jarringly divergent and discriminatory processes when they need to secure justice.

Take the example of the different



It is one thing to celebrate diversity, and quite another to leave people to the mercy of jarringly divergent processes for securing justice

processes involved in obtaining a divorce. When a member of the Parsi Zoroastrian minority seeks divorce, the matter is relegated to a jury trial — one of a kind in India. The grant of a divorce for a Parsi couple hinges on the verdict of a jury gathered from members of a dwindling community. The process can be excruciatingly long and cumbersome.

That apart, should it really be up to the rest of the community to decide, and dirty linen washed amidst one's peers?

For Hindus, on the other hand, divorce is subject to specified grounds under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. But even here, the process in the family court for a contested divorce is long and painful.

For Muslims, notwithstanding the abrogation of instantaneous triple

*talaq*, following the Supreme Court's verdict in the *Shayara Bano* case, the process remains unilateral at the instance of the husband and is over in three months without recourse to a court of law for a wife not desiring divorce.

Is it not anachronistic under a modern Constitution to have such different strokes for different folks? Can disparity not be erased without eroding diversity? A skillfully and sensitively crafted Uniform Civil Code should aim to do just that. Had that task been accomplished in time Shah Bano would not have had to go to court in 1978, nor Shayara Bano in 2016.

Madhavi Goradia Divan is senior advocate, Supreme Court of India. The views expressed are personal

## Teachers missing from higher education reform

Imagine a railway junction half a century ago. Steam engines were deployed for local jobs, such as pulling a set of bogies from one train and joining them with another. Up and down the platform they went, blowing their loud whistle and releasing clouds of steam. Their gigantic wheels would struggle and start moving in one direction, then in the opposite direction. This scene appears to capture the present condition of higher education. It has been the site of numerous reforms over the last two decades. Some of these appear to have become stable, but systemic discomfort is still there. A prime example is the semester system. Generations of planners have recommended it as the best solution to our lethargic annual calendar. Those of us who have experienced the semester system in a Western university were impressed by its logical curricular flow. But then, syllabus-making in our country is seldom well thought out. Like those present at a *havan*, all concerned toss in their favourite topics. The students' burden is nobody's concern. Haste is also a constant factor. I remember a senior university official advising a group of hesitant teachers, "Take a pair of scissors and chop the present syllabus into two — that's all." Approval for the patchwork was granted with dispatch. The main objective was to shift to a new calendar. Critical voices were seen as anti-reform.

The semesterised calendar is now so well established that it may sound pointless, even heretical, to question its efficacy. There are no studies to show whether the break up of the old annual calendar has enhanced learning. Ask a student, and the usual answer you get is that there isn't enough time to go deep into anything. The number of official holidays is a special feature that sets the Indian semester system far apart from its counterpart in Western universities. Apart from the frequency of holidays, the continuation of the old exam system has proved a major anomaly. In the West, the teacher offering a course is responsible for evaluating student performance. Historically, teachers in India were distrusted in assessing their own students impartially. The annual exam ensured the confidentiality of the paper and the evaluator. It was a delicate and cumbersome system to

manage. Accomplishing it once a year — without paper leaks — was challenging enough for the exam branch; doing it for two semesters has proved very difficult indeed. Compromises have been made in all aspects, and a sense of hurry to cover the syllabus is palpable.

Evidently, the semester idea is a transplant. Like many other transplants, it demanded careful adjustment to the climate and soil of its new habitat. This necessary requirement could not be fulfilled because a key player — the teacher — was neither convinced nor involved. We can see this today in the case of a bigger reform in Kerala. Following central universities, Kerala has introduced a new four-year, semesterised undergraduate course with a dispersed syllabus. Several teachers have expressed serious doubts about the conditions under which such a major change in the system is being pushed through. Once again, we see a phenomenon that many universities have witnessed earlier.

Instead of teachers being taken on board, they are being marginalised. Ideally, teachers should be at the forefront of any educational reform, but that rarely happens in our country. This may be one major reason why reforms prove, quite often, detrimental to standards. In Kerala's neighbouring state of Karnataka, the four-year course was introduced earlier and is now being withdrawn after a review.

Within half a century, university teachers have lost their say in shaping policies in higher education. The magic bullet of semester-wise break up of the curriculum is now being considered for secondary education. Once again, we don't know how teachers might feel about it. In a rare professional autobiography, professor MA Khader has narrated his trajectory as a teacher. He conveys serious doubts about the system's capacity today to attract the young towards teaching and enjoying it. Who can contradict him? Teacher eligibility tests attempt to select the best, but cynicism among the recruited sets in early.

As a backlog of reforms builds up, even minor changes face greater inertia. In the ethos prevailing today, it is difficult to persuade anyone in authority that teachers are the crucial factor for the success of educational reforms. They alone can bring classroom realities into policy discussions. When they oppose something, they need to be heard, not forced to accept a change. Despite the bureaucratic character that our universities and colleges acquired during the colonial period, teachers have struggled to humanise the system and make knowledge meaningful to the young.

The higher education system is in a fragile state today. Many of its strengths and attainments have been frittered away. The crisis of quality is pervasive, and the decline of standards is hard to hide under the rhetoric of innovations. A wide chasm has grown between teachers and those who run institutions. In a vast number of colleges and departments, crucial decisions are not in the hands of teachers, nor is sufficient time and deliberative space allotted to such decisions. The result is predictable: Ill-considered reforms pile up, and the hope of improvement fades.

Krishna Kumar is a former director of NCERT and the author of *Smaller Citizens*. The views expressed are personal



When teachers reject a change, they must be heard, and not forced to accept it

{ POPE FRANCIS } HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

I hope, according to the ancient tradition, the Olympics will be an opportunity to establish a truce in wars

{ STRAIGHTFORWARD }

Shashi Shekhar



## Crisis of over-confidence corrodes BJP's discipline

Something is brewing within the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). If it is a Union minister whose utterances spark a frenzy of debates at one time, it is a deputy chief minister whose statement grabs media attention at another. Has the BJP's talisman — its discipline — started to fray with the party failing to achieve the expected victory at the general election?

The party needs serious brainstorming, but the BJP brass is too busy mud-slinging. Remember the Kalyan Singh saga when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister (PM)? The BJP received a drubbing in Uttar Pradesh (UP) in the general election of 1999 after Singh's differences with Vajpayee surfaced. Soon, Singh was replaced as chief minister of the state. The party lost UP sometime after the assembly election in 2002 and returned to power only 15 years later. It was also out of power at the Centre for 10 years. Since 2017, the BJP's Yogi Adityanath has been the state's chief minister. The party retained power in the assembly elections in 2022, rallying behind Adityanath. Against this backdrop, the BJP believed it would win at least 75 seats in the general elections in the state. But it did not. Why?

The following account from Robertsganj parliamentary constituency in UP may help find an answer. Just ahead of the election, as I was travelling on the forested Renukoot-Varanasi route, I met a bunch of tribal women goatherds near Hathi Nala. I struck up a conversation with them and asked them to list the changes they had seen over the past 10 years due to the state government's actions. They said they had received piped water connections at their homes. On the question of who these women planned to vote for, they said it was "the flower," referring to the lotus symbol of the BJP. When asked whether they knew who the country's Prime Minister was, one of them pointed to a picture of Narendra Modi printed on a newspaper I was holding. But here came the catch. A candidate from Apna Dal, an NDA ally, was contesting the election in their constituency on the cup-and-saucer symbol. How would these uneducated women have found the flower if they searched for it on the EVM? Did these women return feeling let down by the EVMs at the election? Probably yes, as Rinki Kole, the NDA candidate, was defeated by more than 125,000 votes.

The women had also told me that no one had canvassed them for votes, and there were

rumours that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh members and party workers had geared down election campaigning efforts.

A strong organisation can be undermined by the lethargy of overconfidence and blind dependence on one leader. The BJP suffered this outcome.

Here's another story from central India, where I met a BJP candidate. "Bhai Sahab, I have to just break the record of the previous candidate," he told me. I asked him what made him so confident of a victory. "Modi ji's 'craze' is such that even you will win the election if you are placed in my position," he replied. There is no room for slumber like this in politics. The election results have given the BJP an opportunity to correct its mistakes. It has the means, the time, and a capable leadership to do so.

The party will need to prevent its chinks from showing, and it also needs to lift the morale of its workers. In the past decade, a large number of new members joined the BJP, but allegations of corruption cloud the reputation of many. They still hold key positions, nurturing the notion that joining the BJP was the sole option for those opposing the party to avoid action from central investigating agencies. It is true that some from other parties have contributed to the BJP's victory, but the gamble has backfired. The recent by-elections to 13 assembly seats offer evidence. The BJP won only two of these seats. Nearly everyone who had switched sides was defeated. Workers' perception that outsiders were snatching their rights is a key factor contributing to their indifference. Also, the BJP will need to improve how it communicates its message. The party did not receive the expected results as it became mired in the debate over the Constitution. Despite repeated denials by senior leaders, this narrative could not be effectively countered.

And lastly, the most crucial factor. Without doubt, PM Narendra Modi remains the nation's most popular leader, and the BJP has accomplished much over the past 10 years in terms of public welfare works.

The presence of a popular leader and these achievements are adequate to handle this wobble. However, the party needs to put a stop on its gabby leaders and sharpen its message.

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

# The final days: How Biden, aides blew it

Joe Biden has become the first sitting president to stand down from a possible re-election since Lyndon B Johnson in 1968

Reuters  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**WASHINGTON:** US President Joe Biden's decision to end his re-election campaign on Sunday followed a series of strategic missteps by his campaign team and White House aides that amplified concerns that the 81-year-old president wouldn't be able to win in November's election, or run the country for another four years.

Biden's halting performance at the June 27 presidential debate against Republican candidate Donald Trump, pushed even some of his closest allies to question whether he could endure a full campaign, and added gasoline to a smoldering Democratic party movement questioning the wisdom of his second term.

Within days, Biden went from the party's figurehead to a liability. He became the first sitting president to stand down from a possible re-election since Lyndon B Johnson in 1968.

These were some of the key moments that led to Biden's downfall.

## THE DEBATE COUP: APRIL TO JUNE

Biden himself set the debate in motion, after he told radio show host Howard Stern in April that he'd debate Trump, despite worries from some of his Democratic allies that a debate might do little to improve his chances or even cast an unflattering light on him.

Some Biden aides thought they had scored a coup in agreeing to a June debate. They worked with broadcaster CNN to shape the rules in what they thought was their favour and agreed on May 15 to two debates, including the first on June 27.

An earlier debate would



US President Joe Biden stops as he leaves to take a question after speaking on a vaccination update from the State Dining Room at the White House, in Washington, DC, on April 6, 2021. AFP

serve Biden well, some aides thought, convincing voters that there was no other anti-Trump option in the race, but also cushioning the blow of any mediocre performance by the president.

The format — no audience to pump up Trump's punchlines, no third-party candidates, moderators they could trust and a mute button on the microphones — would, they thought, favor Biden's style.

## JET LAG — JUNE 4 TO 27

Biden flew to Europe twice and to the West Coast over a 14-day period before taking just a few days to rest at his vacation home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

Biden was tired and dragging by the end of the travel, according to several people who observed him during this period.

He and his aides headed to Camp David for focused prep sessions on June 21, where they peppered Biden with details, then followed up with mock

debates for the better part of seven days.

## A BAD NIGHT — JUNE 27

In CNN's Atlanta studios, Biden stumbled over his words and lost his train of thought. His delivery, appearance and voice drew the immediate attention of reporters, who asked his aides for an explanation.

Officials told reporters as the debate was underway some new information: Biden was sick with a cold, they said.

Biden's hoarseness would improve as the debate went on but his disjointed answers took voters, donors and Democratic officials by surprise. One Democratic strategist called it "a disaster".

Trump, 78, repeated a series of well-worn, glaring falsehoods during the 90-minute debate, including claims that he actually had won the 2020 election. Biden failed to refute them, leaving sentences and thoughts unfinished.

Trump jabbed Biden for being incoherent: "I really don't

know what he said at the end of that sentence. I don't think he knows what he said."

## FALLOUT — JUNE 27 TO JULY 2

"I know I'm not a young man, to state the obvious," Biden said the day after the debate, admitting a poor performance. "Nearly fell asleep on stage," he said on July 2.

Calls for Biden to step down would start in the hours after the debate. Calls from Biden aides to worried Democrats facing re-election campaigns who saw their political futures flashing before their eyes, wouldn't start until days later.

Some lawmakers started to break ranks, starting with US Representative Lloyd Doggett on July 2, and then gathering steam.

Angry donors told Biden's aides they would need to see a turnaround in the candidate's performance. Senior Democrats and Biden allies also began to hint at changes to the ticket.

House of Representatives

Democrat Jim Clyburn — a kingmaker of sorts within the Democratic Party who was instrumental in Biden's 2020 win — said on July 2 that he would back Vice-President Kamala Harris if Biden did depart and suggested the idea of a "mini-primary" if Biden stepped aside.

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a long-time Biden ally, said it was legitimate to ask whether Biden's performance in Atlanta was an "episode" or a condition. She also hinted that Biden would need to examine his choice to say in the race.

## THE DAM BREAKS — JULY 5 TO 8

Biden would fail to quiet the chorus of dissent.

In his first major interview after the debate, on July 5, Biden told ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos that only the "Lord Almighty" could cast him from the race.

More worrying to some Democrats, Biden said he could accept remaining in the race

and losing to Trump "as long as I gave it my all and I did as good a job as I know I can do."

Thirty-six Democratic US lawmakers and one independent who caucuses with the Democrats would ultimately call for Biden to step off the ticket over the 24 days that followed the debate.

## NATO SUMMIT, POLLS — JULY 9 TO 12

Biden tried to move on. He gave interviews, held a press conference and gave stern speeches on the campaign trail as well as at the Nato summit of US allies.

But the events sometimes raised more concerns than they quelled.

At the Nato summit during the second week of July, Biden mixed up the names of his Vice-President Harris and his Republican rival Trump, and those of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose countries are at war with each other.

Polls showed Biden trailing other Democrats in many of the key states and districts Democrats need to win in November, though polls nationwide continued to point to a close race.

Biden was unmoved, still believing he was the best candidate to face Trump, that he could rebound from this setback as he has so many times before, a view reinforced by a close circle of aides.

## TRUMP RALLY SHOOTING — JULY 13

Trump was shot while giving a speech in Pennsylvania. The bullet grazed his ear, bloodied his face, and photos of the former president holding up his fist in defiance were shown widely.

Republicans spoke of divine providence, unifying around their candidate. Democrats worried if their own chances were cursed, seeing only a narrower path to any victory in November.

Days later, Biden got Covid while campaigning in Nevada. Recovering at his Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, home, he would be left with time, alone and in isolation, to decide whether and how to end his campaign.

# 'I took a bullet for democracy': Donald Trump

Agence France-Press  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**MICHIGAN:** Donald Trump, holding his first campaign rally on Saturday since surviving an assassination attempt, rejected concerns that he is a threat to America's democratic system, triumphantly telling the crowd: "I took a bullet for democracy."

"I'm not an extremist at all," the newly crowned Republican presidential nominee continued at the rally in swing state Michigan, dismissing his reported links to Project 2025, a shadow manifesto from figures close to him that has been characterised by opponents as an authoritarian, right-wing wish list.

In the fiery but typically rambling speech, the Republican ruffed on his headline immigration views, espoused falsehoods about migrant crime, and repeated his baseless claim that Democrats "rigged" the 2020 election.

And he evoked the seconds after a gunman tried to kill him at a rally in Pennsylvania, when, bloodied and surrounded by Secret Service agents, he raised a fist and yelled for his supporters to "fight!"

The crowd in Grand Rapids chanted the word back to him multiple times on Saturday, though some appeared to tire of the lengthy address after 90 minutes and began heading to the exits.

The rally represented a moment remarkable by any measure, with Trump back on the campaign trail exactly one week since the assassination attempt. He wore a new, smaller, flesh-coloured bandage over his right ear, grazed in the attack by a 20-year-old gunman who also killed one bystander.

But Trump, after his near-death experience, ignored his self-declared pivot to unity and launched into the divisive rhetoric that has marked his political career.



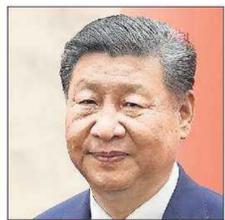
Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally at the Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Saturday. AFP

He hurled insults and invective, calling President Joe Biden "stupid" and a "feeble old" man, and branding Vice-President Kamala Harris "crazy" and "nuts". Security was tight inside Van Andel Arena, amid questions over Secret Service lapses at the Pennsylvania rally — though there were few visible signs of enhanced law enforcement in Grand Rapids.

Saturday was Trump's debut campaign appearance with running mate JD Vance, a 39-year-old US senator from Ohio who could help win over critical swing states like Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Vance warmed up the crowd, taking a swipe at Harris.

"I did serve in the United States Marine Corps and build a business. What the hell have you done, other than collect a check?" he said of the former US senator and California attorney general.



Xi Jinping REUTERS

## CHINESE PREZ UNVEILS PLANS TO FIX DEBT CRISIS FACING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

**BEIJING:** President Xi Jinping unveiled sweeping plans to bolster the finances of China's indebted local governments, as the ruling Communist Party announced its long-term blueprint for the world's second-largest economy.

China's top leader mapped out measures for fixing the debt crisis facing regional authorities in a near-2,200 character resolution published by the official Xinhua News Agency on Sunday. Those plans centered around shifting more revenue from the central to local coffers, such as by allowing regional governments to receive a larger share of consumption tax.

Xi's proposals mark the "third major taxation and fiscal reform" in recent history, said Ding Shuang, chief economist for Greater China and North Asia at Standard Chartered Plc. He cited the 1994 move to increase central governments' share of revenue over regional authorities, and a string of decisions starting in 2013 that allowed localities to issue bonds on their own, as the other major shifts.

Xi presided over a twice-a-decade conclave in Beijing this month, where some 400 senior officials endorsed his vision for advanced manufacturing to propel China's \$17 trillion economy.

Policymakers are under pressure to resolve local governments' 66 trillion yuan (\$9.1 trillion) hidden debt crisis and rebalance the economy, as foreign leaders accuse Beijing of using exports to compensate for weak demand at home. BLOOMBERG

# Nepal's premier wins trust vote, secures 2/3rd majority

Press Trust of India  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**KATHMANDU:** Nepal's Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli won a crucial floor test in parliament on Sunday with more than two-thirds of lawmakers voting in his favour, nearly a week after he was sworn in to lead a coalition government in the 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.

Oli, 72, required 138 votes to pass the floor test in the 275-member lower house of parliament. "I declare that the motion of the Vote of Confidence tabled by Prime Minister Oli has been endorsed with a majority," announced Speaker Devraj Ghimire after the counting of votes.

According to Nepal's Constitution, Oli needed to secure a vote of confidence from parliament within 30 days of his appointment. He was sworn in last Monday as PM for the

fourth time. 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.

Oli said that the agreement between the two major parties was part of the two largest parties' efforts to address the country's pressing issues.

"We [the two parties] com-



PM Khadga Prasad Oli arrives for a vote of confidence in parliament in Kathmandu, on Sunday. AP

pete in our ideologies, but there are instances of collaboration between the Congress and the UML," he said.

"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.

Meanwhile, the Supreme

Court on Sunday forwarded a petition challenging Oli's appointment as PM to a constitutional bench, citing the need for a 'serious constitutional interpretation'. This happened hours after advocates — Deepak Adhikari, Khagendra Prasad Chhapagain and Shailendra Kumar Gupta — filed a petition at the apex court, arguing that Oli's appointment was unconstitutional and sought a mandamus order to annul it.

Inspector DF Pace told reporters at the scene that at least 25 to 30 spent shell casings were found at the scene. He said the man pronounced dead at the scene had been shot at close range and appeared to have been targeted.

## AT LEAST 3 DEAD IN 'EXCHANGE OF GUNFIRE' IN U.S.

Associated Press  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**PHILADELPHIA, U.S.:** Three men were killed and at least six other people wounded in an early morning shootout at a gathering in west Philadelphia, authorities said.

Police said more than 100 people were present in the Carroll Park neighbourhood when gunfire broke out just after 2am (local time) on Sunday. Police said their preliminary information indicated "an exchange of gunfire between multiple parties" and shell casings of more than one calibre were recovered.

A 33-year-old man was pronounced dead at the scene and two other men aged 23 and 29 were pronounced dead later at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, police said in a statement. Their names weren't immediately released. A 26-year-old woman and five men ranging in age between 27 and 30 were listed in stable condition, police said.

Inspector DF Pace told reporters at the scene that at least 25 to 30 spent shell casings were found at the scene. He said the man pronounced dead at the scene had been shot at close range and appeared to have been targeted.

# Yemeni rebels claim 6 killed in Israeli port strike, vow retaliation

Agencies  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**HOEDEIDA, YEMEN:** The death toll from an Israeli strike on Yemen's rebel-held port of Hodeida climbed to six, Houthi health authorities said on Sunday, as the rebel group's leader threatened an escalation in attacks.

Saturday's strike on the port, a key entry point for fuel and humanitarian aid to war-ravaged Yemen, is the first claimed by Israel in the Arabian peninsula's poorest country, about 2,000 kilometres away. It killed six people and injured 83, many of them with severe burns, the rebel-run health ministry said in a statement carried by Houthi media. Three people remain missing, it said.

Israel said it carried out the strike in response to a drone attack by the Houthis on Tel Aviv which killed one person on Friday.

On Sunday, Houthi chief Abdul Malik al-Houthi said the strike would lead to "further escalation and more attacks targeting Israel".

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said the rebels'



Flames and smoke rise from the site of an Israeli airstrike at the port of Hodeida, Yemen, on Sunday. REUTERS

"response to the Israeli aggression against our country is inevitably coming and will be huge".

On Sunday, the Israeli military said it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen towards the Red Sea resort town of Eilat, noting that "the projectile did not cross into Israeli territory".

Saree said the rebels had fired ballistic missiles towards Eilat, the latest in a string of Houthi attempts to hit the port city. In Hodeida, firefighters struggled on Sunday to contain the blaze as thick plumes of smoke hung above the city, an AFP correspondent reported.

## { SOUTH KOREA } GRAFT CASE INVOLVING A \$2,200 LUXURY HANDBAG

# First lady grilled over graft, stock manipulation

Agence France-Press  
letters@hindustantimes.com

**SEOUL:** South Korea's first lady Kim Keon-hee has been questioned over allegations of stock manipulation and graft involving a \$2,200 luxury handbag, the prosecution said on Sunday.

The questioning comes as the opposition calls for a special probe into the first lady, who has been under scrutiny for accepting a Dior bag in violation of government ethics rules, and for her alleged role in a stock manipulation scheme.

Prosecutors conducted "face-to-face questioning" of Kim on

Saturday, the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office said in a statement.

Hidden camera footage released last year appeared to show Kim accepting a \$2,200 luxury designer handbag, an act that was later dubbed the "Dior bag scandal" by local papers.

The scandal hit President Yoon Suk-yeol's already-low approval ratings, contributing to a stinging defeat for his party in general elections in April as it failed to win back a parliamentary majority.

Such a gift would violate South Korean law, which bans public officials and their



President Yoon Suk-yeol and first lady Kim Keon-hee AP

spouses from accepting anything worth more than \$750.

Kim's aide told investigators earlier this month that the first lady told her to return the bag

on the same day she had received it, but she had forgotten to, according to Yonhap news agency.

In his first remarks on the bag scandal in February, Yoon dismissed it as a "political scheme" and said his wife had accepted the bag only because it was difficult for her to refuse it.

But he later apologised in a rare press conference in May, describing his wife's acceptance of the bag as "unwise".

It is not the first time Kim has faced public scrutiny. During Yoon's presidential campaign, she was forced to apologise over falsified credentials.

# AM Green plans to invest \$1 billion in biofuel foray

The company's plans include stake buys from Fortum Oyj and Chempolis Oy

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**NEW DELHI:** AM Green is planning to invest \$1 billion for its second-generation, or 2G, bio-fuels foray by setting up two bio-ethanol plants, marking a new venture for the renewable energy company.

The company also plans to acquire 50% stake in Assam Bio Refinery Pvt. Ltd from Finnish companies Fortum Oyj and Chempolis Oy—a biotechnology firm—in which Fortum, a Finnish state-run power utility, holds a stake.

AM Green, set up by Mahesh



The company also plans to acquire 50% stake in Assam Bio Refinery. STOCKIMAGES

Kolli and Anil Kumar Chalamalasetty who founded the Greenko Group, has already signed the exclusivity agreements for the above-mentioned transactions, the people cited above said on the condition of anonymity.

"The exclusivity agreements for acquiring Fortum Oyj and Chempolis Oy's stake in Assam Bio Refinery Pvt. Ltd, and also Chempolis Oy has been inked by AM Green. AM Green plans to expand in this space and in addition to Assam Bio Refinery, set up two more such plants in the country," one of the two people cited above said.

AM Green plans to manufacture 2G biofuels from non-food

biomass such as plant materials and animal waste. First-generation biofuels are produced from sugar, starch, corn, wheat, and broken rice, and 3G biofuel comes from micro-organisms such as bacteria and algae.

The Assam JV will use 300,000 tonnes of bamboo every year to produce 50,000 tonnes of bioethanol, 19,000 tonnes of organic compound furfural, 11,000 tonnes of acetic acid, and 144 gigawatt hours of green energy.

Chempolis is also the licensor of the 2G biofuel technology for the world's first such plant producing cellulosic ethanol and bio-based chemicals

from bamboo. Investors in Chempolis include Finnish investment and asset management group Taaleri Plc.

AM Green President Mahesh Kolli and Fortum India president Sanjay Aggarwal declined comment.

A Fortum Oyj spokesperson in an emailed response said, "As a stock listed company, we do not comment on market rumours or speculations."

"In August 2023, Fortum announced that it would assess strategic options, including potential divestments, of its Circular Solutions businesses. The businesses comprise the operating, maintaining and developing of Fortum's recycling and waste assets, the battery recycling business as well as turbine and generator services and bio-based solutions. Chempolis is part of the bio-based solutions," the Fortum Oyj spokesperson said in the email. "As there are various businesses within, the scope there might be different for different businesses. There is no certainty whether the assessment will result in any transaction, and Fortum will inform the market, if and when appropriate."

# Budget may stay on fiscal consolidation trajectory

Subhash Narayan & Rhik Kundo  
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**NEW DELHI:** Tuesday's Union budget will stick to the path of fiscal consolidation, while continuing targeted welfare spending, two people aware of the matter said, despite expectations that the National Democratic Alliance government will open the spending spigots after the election setback in June.

Targets and allocations made in February's interim budget are unlikely to change much in most sectors; however, agriculture, health, rural economy, infrastructure and welfare could see a renewed push, the people cited above said on the condition of anonymity, as the government works to maintain growth in the face of external and inflationary challenges.

"Major numbers and targets presented in the interim budget will likely be maintained," one of the two people said. In its interim budget for FY25, the government had raised allocation for infrastructure by 11% to ₹1.1 trillion. This may be increased slightly given the increased focus by the infrastructure-related ministries, the person added.

"If the intention was to go



Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Finance Minister. MINT

with different numbers, more liberal numbers would have been presented in the interim budget," added the second person.

A finance ministry spokesperson and the Union finance secretary didn't respond to emailed queries.

The government had proposed fiscal deficit targets of 5.1% for FY25 and 4.5% or less by FY26.

"The 5.1% fiscal deficit target for FY25 may be bettered slightly on the back of higher-than-expected revenue growth and in the absence of any shock developments resulting in higher expenditure," the first person said.

On 23 May, Mint reported that

a chunk of the dividend bonanza from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may be utilized to improve the fiscal deficit target for FY25 from 5.14% of gross domestic product (GDP) to 4.9-5%. The RBI dividend for FY24 was ₹2.11 trillion, up 141% from the previous year.

Experts said additional revenues may be utilized to bump up public and private consumption.

"The budget should continue to focus on supporting growth through infrastructure expansion, but provide effective incentives for the rural economy. These may include additional provisions for MGNREGA, PM Awas Yojana, and higher transfers under Kisan Samman Nidhi," said D.K. Srivastava, chief policy adviser, EY India.

"As compared to the interim budget, it is expected that the government will have access to additional revenues to the tune of nearly ₹1.5 trillion from tax and non-tax revenues. This may increase revenue expenditure growth over and above what was provided in the interim budget, while maintaining capex growth, or increasing it marginally. Some subsidies may have to be increased and additional allocations are also expected in defence, health, education and agriculture," Srivastava added.

# HERO MOTOCORP PLANS TO ROLL OUT AFFORDABLE EVs IN FY25

Press Trust of India  
feedback@livemint.com

**NEW DELHI:** Eyeing leadership in the electric two-wheeler segment, Hero MotoCorp is looking to roll out affordable models in the current fiscal, according to CEO Niranjan Gupta.

The country's largest two-wheeler maker is also hopeful of the debut of its electric range in the international markets.

Addressing shareholders in the company's Annual Report for 2023-24, Gupta said the two-wheeler major has a roadmap to scale its electric vehicle business rapidly.

"We want to build leadership in EV, and in order to do that, we will be creating a very powerful EV product portfolio, augmenting the VIDA V1 Pro that we have today," he noted.

The company will be launching products in the mid-and affordable segments this fiscal, Gupta said.

Hero MotoCorp's VIDA electric scooter range is priced between ₹1-1.5 lakh, including state subsidies.

Hero MotoCorp Executive Chairman Pawan Munjal said together with Ather Energy, VIDA has established India's largest public-charging infrastructure for two-wheeler EVs.

Additionally, the partnership with Zero Motorcycle will facilitate the development of new EV motorcycles targeted at a distinct customer segment, thereby expanding the overall market size, he added. "I am particularly pleased to witness VIDA V1's rise as one of the leading electric scooters in India, and I anticipate its future launch in global markets, where it is poised to become a significant player as well," Munjal noted.

Hero MotoCorp has already expanded the presence of its EV scooter VIDA from three to over 100 cities. "There is path-breaking innovation underway at our state-of-the-art R&D Centres at CIT Jaipur and Tech Centre Germany to create a winning portfolio in all segments," Gupta informed shareholders.

## Income tax returns and trading income

Different types of equity trading have different tax reporting rules. Intraday trades are classified as speculative business income, whereas F&O is non-speculative and is allowed to set off losses even against capital gains. Taxpayers should be careful in picking the right ITR form and declaring the trades under the right income head

Compiled by Shipra Singh  
shipra.singh@livemint.com

	F&O	Intra-day trading	Delivery based stocks trading	Business
<b>ITR Form</b>	ITR-3	ITR-3	Capital asset ITR-2	ITR-3
<b>Turnover</b>	Profit + loss	Profit + loss	No. of shares sold x sale price per share	Turnover
	> ₹5 crore*	> ₹5 crore*		> ₹5 crore*
<b>Audit</b>	Opted out of presumptive taxation in last 5 years	Opted out of presumptive taxation in last 5 years	No audit	Opted out of presumptive taxation in last 5 years
<b>Tax rate</b>	Tax slab	Tax slab	15% STCG; 10% LTCG	Tax slab
<b>Expenses to claim</b>	Demat charges, brokerage, depreciation on laptop and mobile**, trading software fee, subscription to websites, courses or publications to learn trading, and office rent, electricity and staff, if any		Demat charges, broker commission; STT can't be claimed	Demat charges, brokerage, depreciation on laptop and mobile used, trading software fee, subscription to websites, courses or publications to learn trading, and office rent, electricity and staff, if any

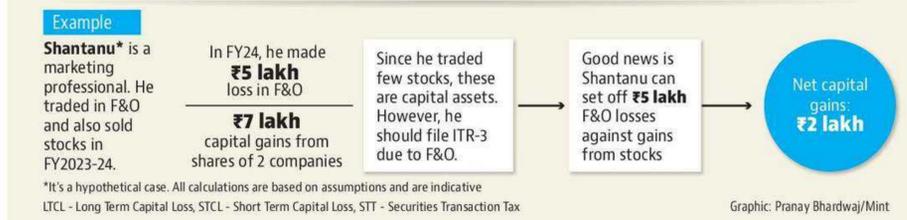
### How to set off losses in trading

Trading income where loss made	Setting off loss			
	Under the same head	Salary	Interest, dividends, other incomes	Capital gains
F&O	✓	✗	✓#	✓#
Intra-day trading (speculative business)	✓	✗	✗	✗
Capital loss	STCL	✗	✗	✓
	LTCL	✓	✗	Yes, but only LTCG

#Allowed only within same year; not subsequent years if loss carried forward Source: Mint research, Varsity by Zerodha

**Stock trading** → **Business** - When multiple trades done in a year and it's your primary income  
 → **Capital asset** - When few trades (<10) done in a year

\*When 95% payments are done digitally; else turnover threshold is ₹2 crore  
 \*\*All indirect expenses, like depreciation on gadgets, subscription, etc. should be related to carrying out the business



## Holiday home clubs under govt lens

Dhirendra Kumar  
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**NEW DELHI:** The consumer affairs ministry is planning to introduce guidelines with penalties for holiday home clubs that fail to provide what they promise, two persons involved in the process said.

The government is exploring different ways to check unethical trade practices by some holiday home clubs that lure new consumers with the promise of superior amenities, but fail to provide them, the first person said on condition of not being named.

"Instead, these clubs often offer these facilities to higher-

paying non-member guests and prioritize private, non-member bookings over those of permanent members," the person added. "It falls under unethical trade practices, and the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has the mandate to act against it."

Section 89 of the Consumer Protection Act 2019 states that creating false or misleading advertisements can result in imprisonment for up to two years and a fine of up to ₹10 lakh. Subsequent offences attract imprisonment up to five years and fine of up to ₹50 lakh.

Having received numerous complaints through the

National Consumer Helpline (NCH) against holiday home clubs, the ministry is reviewing these grievances and plans to shortly bring in guidelines and penalties to curb such unethical practices, the first person said.

The membership cost of holiday home clubs ranges from ₹3 lakh to ₹1 lakh for 25 years. Initially, consumers are required to pay 25% of the agreed-upon membership fee upfront, while the remaining 75% is paid through EMIs. The basic offer is a 7-night stay per year at any property, either local or international, for free, along with a 25% discount on food during the stay.

## MORGAN STANLEY, GOLDMAN INVEST IN \$1 BILLION VEDANTA QIP

Press Trust of India  
feedback@livemint.com

**NEW DELHI:** Mining conglomerate Vedanta Limited raised ₹8,500 crore (over \$1 billion) through Qualified Institutions Placement (QIP) of 19.31 crore equity shares at an issue price of ₹440 per share, according to a stock exchange filing by the company. The issue, which closed on July 19, implied a discount of 4.61% to the floor price of ₹461.26 per equity share.

In a stock exchange filing, Vedanta said it sold 19.31 crore shares to raise ₹8,500 crore.

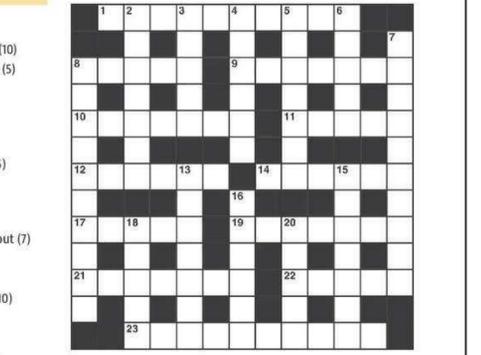
Some of the marquee investors that have been allotted shares through the QIP include Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), Goldman Sachs AMC, Nippon Mutual Fund, SBI Mutual Fund, UTI Mutual Fund, ICICI Mutual Fund, Aditya Birla Mutual Fund and Mirae Mutual Fund. Various funds run by Nippon MF were allotted 9.11% of the total issue size, while funds managed by Morgan Stanley and SBI MF received 8.62% and 7.88%, respectively.

## { THE CROSSWORDS }

### CRYPTIC CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Cleaners appear to put fellows off (10)
  - Shoot for almost the whole season (5)
  - General protection away from the wind (7)
  - To be sparing is of no avail (7)
  - Girl needing daily refreshment (5)
  - Confirm if a try is made correctly (6)
  - A track made by mountaineers (6)
  - He keeps on accumulating endless unhappiness (5)
  - Time of day for smoothing things out (7)
  - A model workplace (7)
  - Give a rough estimate (5)
  - Priest very disposed to obstinacy (10)
- DOWN**
- Serious article grasped by a man (7)
  - Bird - but not birdie (5)
  - Worn-out shoe? (6)
  - They're unnecessary pointless but still pointed (7)
  - Said to have remained sober (5)
  - Sat and gave new privileges for some people (10)
  - Yet it's enough food to go round (6,4)
  - Skin specialist (7)
  - A hole in ten unusually high (7)
  - Educational award made in 60 minutes (6)
  - Cleaner oar (5)
  - Sides and top cut off hedges (5)

## PUZZLE 16918 © Gemini Crosswords 2018 All rights reserved



### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS (16917)

**CRYPTIC**

C I N E M A I M P O S E  
O E O G A R N  
P R A I R I E P R I O R  
P T I O N L G O  
E T H I C E W E L A M B  
R C R A B I L I A  
M E M O R A B I L I A  
M N L N P  
I N D E X E S S E V E R  
K A T R I N H E L I  
A R O M A I R O N I E S  
D S Y P R L L O  
O B T U S E R E A S O N

**QUICK**

O F F I C E A F F A I R  
B L A H I N E  
S C A P U L A G L O O M  
E T I S V H M O  
S T R U T E X T R A C T  
S T I I L E  
C A T C H T H E E Y E  
P T I T A M  
I N D E X M A N M O G U E  
L I N E M  
F R A I L O N A R O L L  
E R E R R O P E  
R A T H E R S K I I M P Y

### QUICK CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Source of easy financial gain (5,5)
  - Wish for eagerly (5)
  - Story illustrating a moral (7)
  - The contrary (7)
  - Set of principles (5)
  - Stock of wine (6)
  - Helplessly dazed state (6)
  - In double degree (5)
  - Call in question (7)
  - Mitigate (7)
  - Precipitous (5)
  - Lose an opportunity (4,3,3)
- DOWN**
- Resuscitation (7)
  - Electro (5)
  - Silk hat (6)
  - An orange-coloured fruit (7)
  - Magnanimous (5)
  - Ability to command (10)
  - An absurd imitation (10)
  - Eternal (7)
  - Area of level high ground (7)
  - Saying nothing on subject (6)
  - The Muslim religion (5)
  - Material of artificial gems (5)

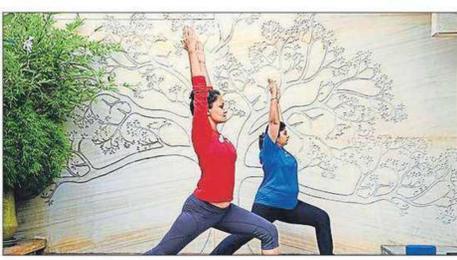
# Health goals make entry into employee appraisals

Devina Sengupta  
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**MUMBAI:** Indian companies are reorienting health insurance coverage for their employees to include extended benefits for household help, parents and parents-in-law, and are encouraging employees to set aside 10% of their annual objectives towards health goals, which in turn will impact their variable pay and bonus.

The move is designed to ensure that health benefits are not just a "feel-good" mechanism but are also designed to help curb employee attrition and measure performance.

Over the years, several measures have gained traction, including mandatory annual health check-ups, access to hospitals and therapists, insurance policies that look into a more fluid family structure where partners are included, and even



To manage attrition even when there is pressure on costs, firms are depending more on health benefits. MINT

gender surgeries. Now, things are being taken to a different level.

For instance, brokerage firm Motilal Oswal Financial Services has rolled out health and life insurance coverage for employees' household help and will also pay for the expenses incurred for vacations taken up by an employee's parents/par-

ents-in-law.

The company's chief human resource officer (CHRO) Niren Srivastava said that these non-monetary benefits are being offered from the new fiscal to employees who have spent at least five years with the company.

"About 15% of the employees, who meet the eligibility criteria,

can access them," Srivastava said. "We estimate that these measures will help us bring down attrition, which was about 52% in FY24, and about 40% in FY24. Early trends are very encouraging."

To manage attrition even when there is pressure on costs, firms are depending more on health benefits when counter offers for exiting employees and out-of-turn hikes impact their coffers.

Aditya Birla Health Insurance, for instance, will amalgamate employee health goals into performance metrics. This means employee performance reviews will take into account progress towards things like weight management, improved sleep patterns, or healthier eating habits.

"We are encouraging employees to take health goals as part of their performance appraisal process," said a senior executive

in the firm who wished to remain anonymous. "So far, the goals were operational ones, sales target, customer goals, etc., and although it is not compulsory, the company has recommended its 6,500 employees to take one."

While not being mandatory, health goals will be allotted maximum 10% weightage and those who achieve the goals will be "recognized" in the firm's quarterly/annual awards, etc.

While objective settings are not completed for all, at least 40-50% would have taken a health goal already, the executive said. "Those who have not taken a health goal, we will go back and again encourage them to take one."

Consultants who look after compensation and rewards note that it will take a while before these perks become part of an employee's negotiations with a firm.

## { WEATHER }

TEMPERATURE HIGH \* LOW

<b>MONDAY</b> Generally cloudy sky with moderate rain 35°C   28°C	<b>TUESDAY</b> Generally cloudy sky with moderate rain 34°C   26°C	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> Generally cloudy sky with moderate rain 34°C   26°C
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## ALMANAC

Today is 22th July 2024  
 • 15 Mithunam, 1446  
 • 01 Shrivana, Krishna  
 Paksha 01  
 • Samvat 2081  
 \*Sunset: Monday at 07:17 p.m.  
 \*Sunrise: Tuesday at 05:37 a.m.  
 \*Moonrise: Monday at 08:24 p.m.  
 \*Moonset: Tuesday at 07:22 a.m.

## TEMPERATURE IN FOUR METROS

Delhi 35°C   28°C	Mumbai 29°C   24°C	Kolkata 31°C   26°C	Chennai 35°C   27°C
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SPORT  PARIS OLYMPICS

In this series, we look at the bond between some of India's Olympics-bound athletes and their coaches and find out what makes them click

# Sift and the art of keeping it simple

One of India's brightest shooting medal prospects in 50m rifle 3 positions, Sift Kaur Samra heads to her first Olympics with a lot of belief and a coach who dreads her phone call

**Rutvik Mehta**  
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**MUMBAI:** This is how a recent phone conversation between Sift Kaur Samra and coach Deepali Deshpande, panned out. This was after the final national camp in Bhopal ahead of the Paris Games. The initial "all okay?" inquiry and affirmation from the coach and shooter out of the way, the chat veered to, well, Instagram.

Deepali: "Shouldn't you keep away from it now?"

Sift: "Arre ma'am, wohi toh ek interesting cheez hai meri life mein (it is the one interesting thing in my life)".

Deepali: Sift, you're going to the Olympics, and you're talking about Instagram!

Sift: Apna apna choice hota hai, ma'am. (To each their own)

The coach chuckled, and responded with an "enjoy", before they hung up.

"Just leave her to do things the way she wants to, and she will be fine," Deepali later says.

It's the Sift way — uncomplicated and unfiltered. One that has seen her evolve from being among the promising juniors to one of India's brightest shooting medal prospects in the three-year Olympic cycle. One with which she shot down the women's 50m rifle three positions world record score while grabbing the individual gold at last year's Asian Games. One that started out with a small objective of winning at least one national medal, and which has since morphed into an Olympic-sized hope.

Even after winning national medals, it was never about the Olympics-Olympics," Sift says. "It was to find those little steps to walk on and get there. Now that I'm here, it's a big thing."

Along came Deepali, the former rifle shooter and Olympian turned coach, to assist her through those steps, without taking away her individuality.

Sift first met Deepali in 2019. Her mother walked up to Deepali and asked her if she'd have a look at her daughter. She did. Deepali's national commitments — she was part of the Indian team's coaching group back then — and the approaching Tokyo Olympics meant she couldn't dedicate much time. Once Deepali began coaching her personally post Tokyo, the relationship kicked off.

Deepali was already working with other shooters — four of her trainees will compete at this Olympics — when Sift, the youngest and newest, joined in. "For me, it was a bit different with her, and I think it was the same for her too," Sift says. "Because with everyone else she had worked for years. I was very new to everything."

Sift was as free-spirited, if not more, back then as she is now. "She was more of a kid then," Deepali says. "But she had that ability to switch off and back on easily."

She also had the ability to juggle shooting and studies. When Sift cracked NEET and earned admission to a medical college, she was thrilled. So was Deepali. "I always tell other shooters also to not come into the sport thinking I just have to shoot, shoot, shoot. It just ends up as unnecessary pressure," Deepali says. "Sift came into shooting with a free mind. She didn't come with any baggage, and doesn't carry any even now."

Sift would eventually drop out of her academic path even as her shooting journey picked up. She swept individual and team medals at the 2022 Suhl Junior World Cup, an important validation in her last junior event. The junior-senior transition can be tricky in shooting. For Sift it was almost seamless, the key being her scoring consistency as a junior. "When the well-performing juniors try to repeat their scores in the seniors and it doesn't happen, they start faltering. That didn't happen with Sift," Deepali says.

A change of kit in early 2022 in a

sport highly equipment oriented helped Sift go "another level", says Deepali, and into a defining 2023 that comprised medals at the World University Games (WUG), fifth-place finish at the World Championships that secured a Paris quota and the individual gold-team silver Asian Games show.

"A lot of things worked in her favour — the shorter Olympic cycle, postponement of Asian Games," Deepali says. "In 2022 she was there, but not in that form. That one year gave her time."

Deepali worked on perfecting Sift's posture and improving her kneeling position to complement her stronger prone and standing. All through, Sift would have her own ideas, the catch for the coach being to put her point across before her mind was made up. "After that, it is like banging your head against the wall," Deepali laughs.

"Mein thodi si ziddi types hoon (I'm a bit stubborn)," Sift says. "I'll first listen to her, take some time to think over it and then offer my suggestions."

If she thinks it could work, Deepali will be game.

"Then she says: tum Punjab wale (you Punjabi folks) don't listen to me," Sift says, smiling. "I tell her, 'ma'am Punjab wale aise hi hote hai' (this is how we are)."

That goes for music too. Sift will want to blast her favourite Punjabi numbers during sessions in the range. Maharashtra's Deepali will want a number from 'Sairaa' thrown in at some point.

"I'm like, 'no, yehi chalegi' (this will play). I was born Punjabi: how is it possible that I listen to anything else?" Sift says, this time with a straight face.

Music battles aside, working with Sift has been "easy" for Deepali. She's disciplined, open-minded and dials her straight away when she feels the need to. Before her Asian Games golden act, for instance, "Suddenly, I wasn't feeling great on training day. I wasn't happy about certain things. So, I called her," Sift says.

It doesn't happen too often during competitions — "it's between me and my mind then" — but for those rare exceptions, Deepali is at her beck and call. The coach goes back to last year, when Sift wasn't happy with her shooting during a camp in France and was headed to the WUG via a quick stopover to India. "She said, 'ma'am you'll have to come and see'. I said, 'don't worry, I'll come, we'll fix it'," Deepali recalls. "She had to leave in the afternoon, so I took an early morning flight to Delhi, met her at the range at 9am and spent two hours fixing whatever needed to."

It might be hard to believe looking at the easygoing woman from a distance, but Sift does have her low days, she says. The call then goes to her close set of 2-3 friends, not the coach. Deepali respects that. "If they come to me, I talk not otherwise. Some of my other shooters do," she says.

Deepali did notice "serious pressure" on Sift's face in the initial rounds of the four-stage Olympic trials. Even then, she didn't push the envelope. "We just spoke like we normally do — about technique, what she needed to do."

Over the last couple of years, Sift has largely seen only the highs, going about her shooting seemingly without a care in the world. The Olympics are however an altogether different world. The first-timer wants to do much the same even there: smile and shoot.

"I'm going to enjoy it like my earlier two Games (WUG and Asian Games)," Sift says. "In both, I won gold. Hopefully, here too I do well."

Since Deepali will not be travelling to Paris, is she expecting another phone call before showtime?

"I hope not," Deepali laughs. "With Sift, a phone call is never good news."

I always tell other shooters also to not come into the sport thinking I just have to shoot, shoot, shoot. Sift came into shooting with a free mind. She didn't come with any baggage, and doesn't carry any even now.

DEEPALE DESHPANDE, Coach of Sift Kaur Samra



ILLUSTRATION: MALAY KARMKAR

**Athlete's corner**

**SIFT KAUR SAMRA**

Picked up shooting in Punjab and also cracked the NEET. Dropped out of MBBS after a year to focus fully on shooting.

Had a bright junior career, winning multiple medals at the 2022 Suhl World Cup while transitioning to the seniors.

Won a sensational Asian Games 50m rifle 3P gold last year with a world record score of 469.6 pts.

Goes into the Paris Olympics on the back of an individual bronze at the Munich World Cup last month, where she shot 452.9 in the final.



**Coach's corner**

**DEEPALE DESHPANDE**

A Mumbai-born rifle shooter, she was part of the 2002 Busan Asian Games silver-medal winning 10m air rifle team.

Qualified for the 2004 Athens Olympics in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions, finishing 19th overall.

Took up coaching and was part of the national group of coaches for the Indian contingent at the Tokyo Games.

Post Tokyo, she has personally coached several elite shooters, four of whom will be at the Paris Games.



**Over the years**

**2019:** Sift and Deepali first met in 2019 when the former's mother asked the then national coach to have a look at her.

**2021:** Once Deepali began coaching personally post the Tokyo Games, Sift joined her group of shooters.

**2023:** Sift medalled at World University Games, Asian Games and finished fifth at the Baku Worlds that earned a Paris quota.



Deepali terms her World University Games show as a turning point. "She shot really well amid some tough competition."

**2024:** Sift topped the high-pressure four-stage Olympic selection trials and won the Munich World Cup bronze.



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S. No.	Name of work	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rupee In Lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering
1	PD PWD Bageshwar Bituminous work in Km. 4, 5 and 6 of Runikhet -Gandhigram- Amtora Motor Road in District Bageshwar in Constituency Bageshwar under State Sector.	Rs. 5000.00+ 18% GST	₹ 3.85 Lakh	120 Days	15 Month (Including Rainy Season and Winter Season)	Class B & Higher in Road work in Central Govt./ Any state Govt./ Any Govt. Undertaking.

अधीक्षण अभियन्ता

**Office of Superintending Engineer**  
1st Circle PWD Almora

पत्रांक : 3416(1)/निविदा-01/2024-25 दिनांक : 20.07.2024

**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering)**  
**Short Term E-TENDER NOTICE**

The Superintending Engineer, 1<sup>st</sup> Circle, PWD Almora invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of Honourable Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from dated 22/07/2024 & onwards on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

S. No.	Name of work	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rupee In Lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Completion	Contractor's Category of Registration for tendering
1	PD PWD Almora Renewal work by SDBC in KM 78, 79, 80, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89 and 90 of Kathgodam (Ranibagh)- Bhimtal - Khutani-Padampuri- Dhanachuli - Paharpani- Shaharfatak - Mourmaula-Devidhura- Lohaghat-Pancheshwar (SH-10) Motor Road in Jageshwar Constituency District Almora.	5000.00 + 18% GST	₹ 5.80 Lakh	60 Days	06 Month (Including Rainy Season and Winter Season)	Class B & Higher in Road work in Central Govt./ Any state Govt./ Any Govt. Undertaking.

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# Team over stature, backing his picks: The Gambhir way

As skipper, he was firm yet fair, but bonding with players will be vital now, say ex-players, team mates

Vivek Krishnan  
vivek.krishnan@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** In the fortnight since Gautam Gambhir was confirmed as the new India men's cricket team head coach, the former opening batter has set a marker about wanting to do things his way. The decision to elevate Suryakumar Yadav as the T20I captain, rather than Hardik Pandya who was vice-captain in India's triumphant T20 World Cup campaign, has his imprint. He has also veered from recent convention by bringing in a foreigner, Ryan ten Doeschate of Netherlands, as an assistant coach. His choice for bowling coach, it is believed, is South African Mome Morkel.

This is not at all surprising once you delve deeper into Gambhir's personality by talking to his former teammates and ex-selectors, for the picture they paint is of a fiercely passionate individual who backs those he believes in all the way. It doesn't matter if he has to go against stalwarts like Bishan Singh Bedi and Chetan Chauhan, like he did in pushing for pacer Navdeep Saini, once content with starring in tennis-ball matches, to play for Delhi amid opposition over a decade ago. Saini, who belongs to Karnal, Haryana, went on to play for India in all formats. "I had never thought I could play (at this level), because I wasn't going to any academy. When Gautam bhैया saw me, he thought ladke mein dum hai aur talent hai (the boy has courage and talent). I have now played in the Ranji Trophy, IPL and for the India team. Whatever I'm playing today, it is because of him," Saini, who has played two Tests, eight ODIs and 11 T20Is, said.

In former India pacer Vivek Razdan's view, Gambhir was always thoroughly prepared for his meetings with the selectors. Razdan, 54, served as Delhi selector when Gambhir led the team to their last Ranji Trophy title in the 2007/08 season. "I always found him to be very sincere and focused," said Razdan. "He would

## Gambhir set for Lanka assignment

As a player, Gautam Gambhir was part of an Indian team that toured Sri Lanka often. As coach, Gambhir will return to the island nation for his first assignment in charge of the men's team

**FIXTURES**  
INDIA'S TOUR OF SRI LANKA

INDIA VS SRI LANKA

**GAUTAM GAMBHIR, HEAD COACH, INDIA**

- JULY 27** 1st T20I  
Pallekele, 7:00 PM
- JULY 28** 2nd T20I  
Pallekele, 7:00 PM
- JULY 30** 3rd T20I  
Pallekele, 7:00 PM
- AUG 2** 1st ODI  
Colombo, 2:30 PM
- AUG 4** 2nd ODI  
Colombo, 2:30 PM
- AUG 7** 3rd ODI  
Colombo, 2:30 PM

### THE GAMBHIR-LED COACHING STAFF

**Abhishek Nayar**  
former India all-rounder and former Netherlands all-rounder **Ryan ten Doeschate** as assistant coaches. Both players were part of the coaching staff when Gambhir was mentor of KKR in IPL 2024

It is understood that BCCI is in talks with former South Africa pacer **Morne Morkel** to be the bowling coach. Morkel and Gambhir have been previously together with Lucknow Super Giants in IPL and Durban's Super Giants in SA20

**Dilip Doshi** is set to continue as the team's fielding coach

attend meetings as a captain always with a plan in mind. It was never as if he just walked into a meeting and generally talked about things. I remember in the 2007-08 season, we got Sumit Narwal into the team on his recommendation and Delhi went on to win the Ranji Trophy. That was also the case later with Saini. There was a lot of resistance, but Gambhir stuck to his demand and to what he was looking for."

More importantly, Razdan said, Gambhir believed in giving players enough chances to prove their

mettle. "Gautam always had that knack of picking the right player at the right time, and always backing him. That is something I always saw in him."

Gambhir sticking to his opinion can be a double-edged sword; there is always a thin line between confidence and stubbornness to acknowledge the views of others. But Razdan found Gambhir to be reasonable in these matters. "You had to prove your point," Razdan said. "Just because you are a senior cricketer or selector telling him something, he won't do it. He

wants to put his side and he wants to listen to your side. We had an issue with the incumbent wicket-keeper during one of those seasons. There was a guy from age-group level who was coming up and it took us some time to convince him. He finally agreed."

According to Rajat Bhatia, who played under Gambhir's captaincy at state level as well as for Delhi Daredevils and Kolkata Knight Riders in IPL, the biggest challenge for his former teammate would be his equation with India's senior players. It's common knowledge

that Gambhir, 42, has had his run-ins with Virat Kohli in the past.

"Becoming the coach of the India team is a challenge for Gautam. The standard has been set with India now winning the T20 World Cup. Whether his appointment is a very good thing for Indian cricket, I'm not too sure. We have seen how his relationship with Virat has been and with other senior players as well. He has to manage that. Players cannot be made to feel uncomfortable. Leading a team as captain is different, but once you become the coach, how you make the players feel is very important," said Bhatia.

As captain, felt Bhatia, Gambhir took time to grow into his role. "As a captain, he slowly became very mature," said the former all-rounder. "It was not that he had the ability right from the beginning. When he was leading Delhi Daredevils at the start, I did not find him to be a good captain. But when he moved to KKR, he would consult other people but take his own decisions. Taking decisions is something that a good captain and coach should know how to take."

Other facets evident during Gambhir's playing career were his selflessness and ability to treat everyone alike. "Whenever Gautam bhai used to play for Delhi, he never played for his runs," said former India and Delhi pacer Parvinder Awana. "He would choose the wicket with the team's interests in mind. His intention was always that there should be a positive result rather than a draw. So, we used to play on turning tracks at Kotla and on green tracks at Roshanara."

As Razdan recalled, Gambhir would also give no leeway to the senior players in the Delhi team as captain. "One thing that I really appreciated about him is that the rules were the same for everyone," he said. "Back then, the rule for a young Ishant Sharma or Pradeep Sangwan would be the same as the rule for Virender Sehwag. So, when it comes to discipline and some of the other things, it was the same for all."

As India head to Sri Lanka for a white-ball series beginning July 27, you expect the poker-faced Gambhir to mould himself to a certain degree simply because the dynamics as a head coach are different. But to what extent, only time will tell.



Xander Schauffele celebrates after winning the British Open at the Royal Troon Golf Club. REUTERS

## Schauffele rides strong finish to win The Open

Agencies  
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

**TROON:** Xander Schauffele won the British Open on Sunday for his second Major of the year, delivering a masterpiece at Royal Troon with a 6-under 65 to overcome a two-shot deficit and give the Americans a sweep of the Majors for the first time since 1982.

Schauffele won the PGA Championship at Valhalla two months ago by making a 6-foot birdie putt on the final hole. In a final round set up for big drama — nine players separated by three shots at the start — Schauffele made it look like a nice walk along the Irish Sea.

He played bogey-free in a strong, chilly wind and pulled away with three birdies in a four-hole stretch early on the back nine to go from two shots behind to leading by as many as three. He

won by two shots over American Billy Horschel and Justin Rose, the 43-year-old from England who had to go through 36-hole qualifying just to get into the field. They were among four players who had a share of the lead at one point Sunday. They just couldn't keep up with Schauffele. No one could.

India's Shubhankar Sharma, tied 15th overnight, shot a final round one-over to finish tied 19th. Given the wind, heavy air off the Firth of Clyde and punishing nature of Royal Troon, Schauffele's 65 ranks among the great closing rounds in British Open history. Playing in the third-to-last group, he matched the round of the championship with a score that was just over eight shots better than the field average.

The 30-year-old from San Diego became the first player since Jordan Spieth in 2015 to win his first two majors in the same season.

**2nd** Xander Schauffele won the British Open for his second Major of the year

**1st** The 30-year-old Schauffele became the first player since Jordan Spieth in 2015 to win his first two Majors in the same season

**1982** Schauffele's win meant US golfers completed a sweep of all four Majors in a year for the first time since 1982

And he extended American dominance on this Scottish links as the seventh Open champion in the last eight visits to Royal Troon.

Rose closed with a 67 to finish second. Horschel, who started the final round with a one-shot lead, dropped back around the turn and birdied his last three holes for a 68 for his best finish in a major. The player Schauffele had to track down was Thriston Lawrence of South Africa, who birdied three of four holes to end the front nine with a 32. Schauffele was two shots behind when it all changed so suddenly. Schauffele hit a wedge out of the left rough on the 11th and judged it perfectly to 3 feet for birdie. He hit another wedge to 15 feet for birdie on the 13th, and capped his run with a 12-foot birdie putt on the par-3 14th.

Lawrence finally dropped a shot on the 12th and didn't pick up any shots the rest of the day.



Harmanpreet Kaur on her way to 66 versus UAE on Sunday. PTI

## India romp to big victory over UAE

Press Trust of India  
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

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

Sent in to bat, Kaur played contributed 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 semi-finals.

With two wins in as many games, India occupy the top spot in Group A with four

points and have a net run rate of +3.298.

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

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

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

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

**Brief scores:** India 201/5 in 20 overs (H Kaur 66, R Ghosh 64\*). United Arab Emirates 123/7 in 20 overs (D Sharma 2/23). **India won by 78 runs.**

## Shamsher: From Tokyo newbie to Paris linkman

Sandip Sikdar  
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**NEW DELHI:** June 18, 2021. Graham Reid had shocked the Indian hockey community by naming a six-match old Shamsher Singh in his Tokyo Olympics squad. The then chief coach backed the forward over experienced strikers Akashdeep Singh and Ramandeep Singh. Criticised but the Australian's belief in Shamsher's potential was firm.

Fast forward to August 5, 2021. The Indian team stood on the right flank of the Olympic podium at Tokyo's Oi Hockey Stadium, Shamsher standing in the middle with a gleaming bronze medal hanging from his neck. The questions had been answered. Criticism had given way to praise. The

perform accordingly," says Shamsher. "I have learnt a lot from our seniors in the last three years, seen a lot of ups and downs. I am confident of performing well even this time."

Rapid pace and peripheral vision while on the run with the ball were some of the qualities that impressed Reid and the selectors before he made his India debut. While he has retained those traits, he has learnt new ones as his game has developed.

Shamsher, and youngsters Abhishek and Sukhjeet Singh, have become adept in building the attack. Under Reid's successor Craig Fulton, Shamsher's role has slightly changed too. From an out-and-out forward, Shamsher has switched to the role of an attacking midfielder, becoming the link-

man between the midfield and frontline. And the alternate position has yielded results too, with the Punjab player providing several assists or earning multiple penalty corners (PC).

"Now I have a bigger role in the midfield. Perhaps it is my ability to read the game well and communicate during a match, especially during a press, that has made the coach put me in this position," said Shamsher, whose father is a farmer and mother a housewife.

"My ability to control passes from defence to the forward line, making that connection has worked. Also, my ability to receive and control aerial balls from the back and push it forward are probably my plus points which have handed me the role of the linkman."

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Shamsher Singh is a vital member of the Indian hockey team. HT

## Paes, Amritraj honoured



Leander Paes and Vijay Amritraj following their induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame on Saturday. GETTY

{ OLYMPICS WARM-UP } BASKETBALL

## James helps USA survive South Sudan scare

Agence France-Presse  
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

**LONDON:** South Sudan's basketball team nearly delivered a stunning upset to a United States team of NBA superstars on Saturday before losing 101-100 in an Olympics warm-up game in London.

LeBron James, 39, the all-time NBA scoring leader, registered a game-high 25 points, including the deciding points on a driving layup with eight seconds remaining at the O2 Arena.

South Sudan, who led 58-44 at half-time, took a late lead after an 8-0 scoring run and

were poised to pull off one of the greatest shocks in international basketball before James saved the day.

"The ending was good for us — just to feel that, to feel what it's going to feel like in Paris," US coach Steve Kerr said.

"Good experience for us. Good reminder that when we play against teams, it's the biggest experience of their lives and we have to expect everyone to play like that."

played for the NBA's Charlotte Hornets for the past three seasons, sank a three-pointer with 20 seconds remaining to put South Sudan into a 100-99 lead.

After James made the winning shot, South Sudan had one final possession but Carlik Jones missed a jumper with six seconds remaining and Wenyan Gabriel missed on two put-back attempts before the final buzzer.

"South Sudan was amazing," Kerr said. "I did not do a great job of preparing my team. We did not focus enough on what

they are capable of and that's on me.

"I think that really allowed South Sudan to gain confidence early.

"Once we turned it up in the second half, they had already knocked down a bunch of threes and were feeling really good about themselves."

It was James who sparked a 23-5 US run from late in the third quarter to early in the fourth. "We have to continue to take a step forward," said James. "A lot of these teams that we're playing have been practising either one month or months in advance and we have maybe two weeks together."



JT Thor, who has