

Illegal buildings demolished in Bhilai Township

Bhilai, May 26: The Enforcement Department and Land Section of the Town Services Department of Bhilai Steel Plant took action against three major encroachments in Sector 6 and Sector 10 of the township. About 40x60 square feet of concrete construction on Street 83, Sector 06, in which commercial activity was being conducted, has been demolished. Complaints were also made by street residents in the Collector Jandarshan after which the Collector has asked the Enforcement Department to take appropriate action. Thereafter, the Estate Court passed a decree and an order was issued to remove the illegal construction. Action was taken to demolish the building in



the presence of the Executive Magistrate and Police force. During the anti-encroachment proceedings, the illegal encroachers tried to create a scene, but due to the presence of heavy police force, the demolition work was conducted in a smooth way. In another case, two decrees were passed against the illegal encroachment made at

Sector 10 where two car and one motorcycle repair garage were operated in the parking lot in the A-Market of Sector 10. These illegal encroachments were also demolished with JCB in the presence of Magistrate and police force. About 100 police personnel, enforcement department, land department employees, officers, men and women security guards and women laborers conducted the demolition proceedings. The Enforcement Department of the BSP's Town Services Department will crack down further on land mafia and action against illegal occupants will continue. If needed, legal action will also be taken against land encroachers and illegal occupants.

Joint TUs stage demonstration for early wage revision

Bhilai, May 26: Leaders and members of INTUC, CITU, AITUC, HIMS, AICC-TU, LOIMU Ispat Shramik Manch and Steel Workers Union jointly staged a demonstration demanding 39 months arrears, night shift allowance, house rent allowance, quick decision on other pending issues of wage revision and wage revision of contract workers. They staged a protest on Friday at Equipment Square from 8:00 am to 9:00 am and warned the management that if their demands are not fulfilled, they will take tough steps in the next phase.

It needs to be mentioned here that a MoU was signed on October 22, 2021,



for the wage revision of SAIL workers, which would come into effect from January 1, 2017. The SAIL management had constituted a sub-committee and assured the union leaders to complete the wage settlement in three to four months. Despite protests, the SAIL management unilaterally imposed a ceiling on gratuity. Even after 19 months of MoU, no decision has been taken on

the issues including 39 months arrears of employees, night shift allowance, house rent allowance and other issues. The SAIL management also constituted a sub-committee for the wages of the contract workers, but till date the wage revision of the contract workers has not been done. Resentment among the workers is rising day by day due to delay in finalisation of these issues.

Eight trade unions of Bhilai jointly staged a demonstration on Friday to make the top authorities aware about the growing resentment. Describing this move of the management as an act of provoking the workers, the union leaders warned the SAIL management that if a decision on these demands is not taken by convening a meeting of NJCS at the earliest, then in the next phase, the trade unions will make an aggressive move. After the demonstration, the joint union handed over the memorandum addressed to the SAIL Chairman to Vikas Chandra, Deputy General Manager, IR Department.

Home Minister weighed with vegetables

● Chaupati and Pauni Pasari inaugurated in Risali



Bhilai, May 26: Durg Rural MLA and Home & Public Works Department Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu inaugurated the first Chaupati and Pauni Pasari of Municipal Corporation Risali. The Minister also distributed identity cards issued by the Municipal Corporation. On the occasion, the Minister also performed Bhumi puja of works worth Rs 2.91 crore.

Sahu said that he has been seeing Maroda for the last 45 years and today the picture of Maroda has changed. In the labour-dominated area, RMC has prepared the first Chaupati of the corporation to promote the business of the retail traders. Along with this, Pauni Pasari has been prepared for

the roadside vendors. After the constitution of Risali Corporation, efforts have been made for development in every field. The Home Minister inaugurated Pauni Pasari market established by Risali Municipal Corporation under the government's scheme.

The Corporation has allotted the platform of Pauni Pasari to the local people. Expressing their gratitude, the vegetable vendors weighed the Home Minister with vegetables and distributed the vegetables among common people.

After inaugurating the Pauni Pasari market, the Home Minister interacted with retail vegetable traders. He purchased drumsticks, cucumber, tomato and vegetables from the vegetable vendors in Pauni Pasari market.

Mayor Shashi Sinha, Speaker Keshav Banshore, State Congress Committee General Secretary Jitendra Sahu, Mayor in Council members Chandrabhan Singh Thakur, Govind Chaturvedi, Anup Dey, Sanir Sahu, Sonia Devangan, Chandraprakash

Singh Nigam, Ishwari, Parmeshwar, Block Congress Committee President Mukund Bhu, Corporators Rekha Devi, Mamta Sinha, Vinay Netam, Gajendri Kothari, Doman Lal Barle, Seema Sahu, Sarita Devangan, Vilas Borkar, Jamuna Thakur, Zaheer Abbas, Anil Kumar, Alderman Sandhya Verma, Sangita Singh, Shishir Sahu, Ajit Yadav, Santu Das, Mohd. Nizam and others were present.

Home Minister performed Bhumi puja and inaugurated the works including Ward 18

HYU to organise essay competition on environmental management

Bhilai, May 26:

Welfare, Hemchand Yadav University (HYU) informed that the last date for participation in this competition has been kept on June 01, 2023 at 17:00 hrs.

Dr Srivastava further revealed that an expert committee will be constituted by the Vice-Chancellor of the university to select the winners of the essay competition. This competition is being organised for two groups. In the first group, regular students and research scholars of colleges affiliated to the University will be included and in the second group any denizen from the 07 districts under Durg division- Durg, Rajnandgaon, Kabirdham, Bemetara, Balod, Khairagarh-Chhukhadan-Gandai, Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki can participate. Giving this information, Dr Prashant Shrivastava, Dean, Student

ing paper (Hindi/English) in the language (Hindi/English) by 17:00 hrs on June 01, 2023, to the University's email id events@durguniversity.ac.in. Participant has to send the essay in soft copy only, there is no need to send hardcopy to the university. This essay competition is completely free for all.

To make essay writing effective, participants can also use shadow pictures related to the subject in between essays. Commenting on any religion, community, caste, or any particular person or any political party etc in the essay will be completely prohibited. If found so, the entry of the concerned participant will be cancelled. 05-05 winners in both the groups will be rewarded by the university. There is no age limit for the participants of this essay competition.



**स्वतंत्र भारत के प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री
भारत रत्न
पं. जवाहरलाल नेहरू**

(14 नवंबर 1889 - 27 मई 1964)

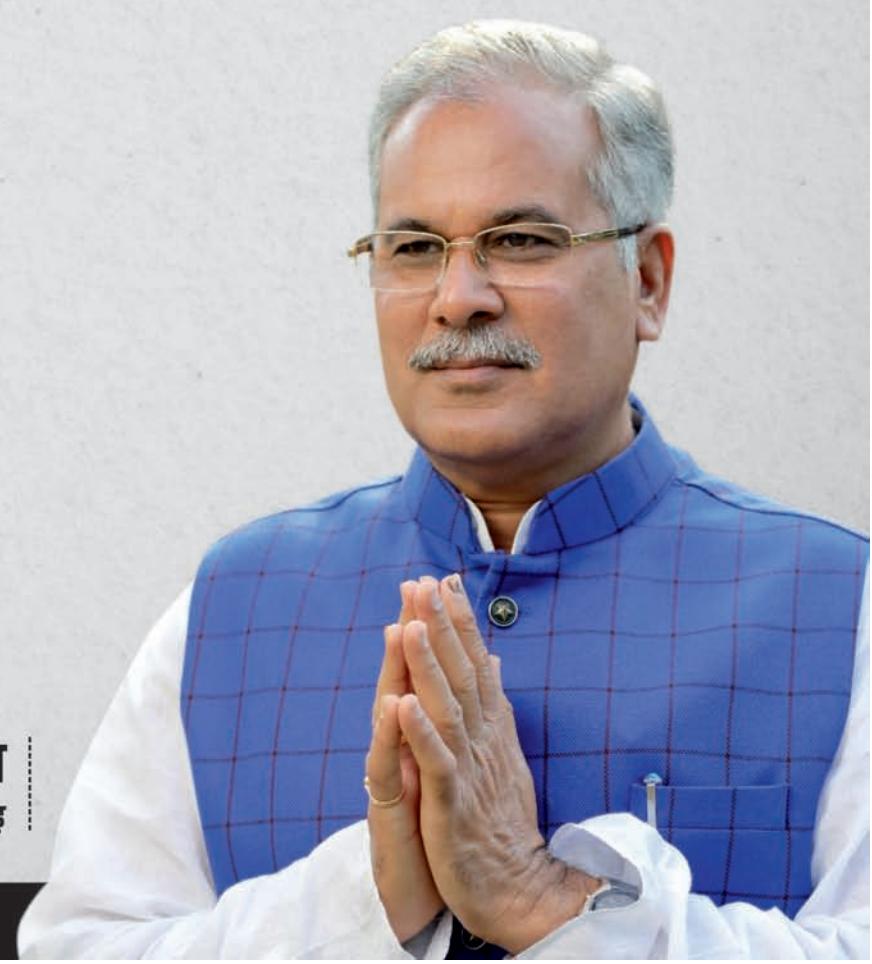
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नेहरू जी ने भारतीयता की गहरी समझ के साथ अपनी वैधिक सोच और समावेशी विचारधारा से एक सुदृढ़ लोकतंत्र और आधुनिक भारत के निर्माण के लिए ठोस कदम बढ़ाया। उनके वैज्ञानिक और प्रगतिशील दृष्टिकोण ने देश को एक स्वतंत्र और आत्मनिर्भर अर्थव्यवस्था के रूप में खड़ा कर दिया। उनके सिद्धांतों और मूल्यों पर चलते हुए हम सामाजिक न्याय और समरसता के साथ नवा छत्तीसगढ़ गढ़ रहे हैं।

”

**नेहरू जी की पुण्यतिथि पर
सादर स्मरण एवं विनम्र श्रद्धांजलि**

भूपेश बघेल
मुख्यमंत्री, छत्तीसगढ़



CM pays courtesy call to AICC National President

Meeting in context
VS polls on May 27-28

To attend NITI
Aayog meeting on
May 29



Raipur, May 26: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel left for Delhi in the morning and reached there in the afternoon and attending a private programme, would take night halt today. He paid courtesy call on AICC National President Mallikarjun Kharge in Delhi. It is notable here that meeting of CM and PCC Chief has been called in Delhi in context of the forthcoming VS elections and this meeting will be held on May 27 and 28. On May 29, CM Baghel would be attending the

NITI Aayog meeting to be held in Vigyan Bhawan, in Delhi. In this meeting PM Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah will be present and CM is expected to meet both of them. In this day-long meeting, Chief Ministers of all the states have been called. This meeting of NITI Aayog is held once in a year. In this the states submits achievements of



With summer at its peak, the passengers are thronging the water booth at the railway station to quench their thirst here on Friday.

EVERY DROP COUNTS

Cong to win 300 LS seats in 2024 LS polls: CM

Raipur, May 26: The winning with thumping majority in the Karnataka Assembly polls, lot of self-confidence has been developed in Congress party and they are anticipating the same results in the next LS polls as well. In this regard, CM Baghel made a big claim saying that UPA would win more than 300 votes in the LS 2024 polls.

It is notable here that in the 2019 LS polls, Congress was reduced to just 52 seats. According to EC statistics, Congress had fielded its candidates in 412 LS seats.

Prior to the LS polls, there is VS poll in the Chhattisgarh state and the CM Bhupesh Baghel's government is going to complete its five year term this December end. The party claims that this time also the people of the state would



vote them to power and they would form the government.

As per Election Commission statistics, in 2018 Congress emerged as the biggest party winning 68 VS seats out of total 90 VS seats and the BJP was limited to just 15 VS seats. In addition to this, Mayawati's BSP won two VS seats and JCC-J of Ajit Jogi won five seats in the VS polls.

But Congress has maintained its winning streak in the last five VS by-polls in the last four years as well and are in majority in most of the Municipal corporations and other urban and rural bodies in the state.

NIT Raipur Alumni shine in Civil Services Examination

● Public & Media Relations Cell

(Metallurgy, batch of 2017) got AIR 753.

Aakash, speaking earlier, said he wasn't initially inclined towards civil services in college, but doing a rural landscape project in his hometown Kawardha changed that, and led him to believe that he could help bring about change. He said he was uniform in his efforts, reformed his methods and delivered at the right time. He advised aspirants to not overthink about the end outcome, and to eliminate distractions. This is the second

time Aakash cleared the exam. He got into the Indian Police Service in his first attempt, and chooses to continue there.

Divya Pant, struggling to find her place in the corporate world, wanted to do something tangible and make an impact. She took a leap of faith, quit her job and started preparing for the exam. She wasn't able to clear prelims in the first attempt, got into the Indian Postal Service in the second attempt, and finally secured an excellent rank in the third attempt.

NIT Raipur congratulates these achievers for clearing the prestigious and demanding exam, and wishes them All the Best for their future endeavours.

Remembering her exciting journey, she thanked her family and friends for cheering her up throughout, and emphasised the importance of keeping faith in oneself. She also advised aspirants to avoid making their preparation too convoluted, and to remember that UPSC is just a part of life and not the whole of it.

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Twelve SPs, 3 Addl. SPs given fresh posting

Raipur, May 26: The state government has issued fresh posting orders to SPs of 12 districts in the state including that of Surguja, Durg and Bemetara. In this list the additional SPs too have been affected. As per the list issued, SP Kabidham- Lal Umed Singh has been appointed as SP of Balrampur district; SP of Bemetara- I Kalyan Elesela as SP of District Surajpur; SP Manendragarh-

Chirmiri -Bharatpur TR Koshima as Commandant 2nd Battalion CAF, Sakri, Bilaspur; SP Surajpur- Ram Krishna Sahu as Commandant 13th Battalion- CAF, Korba; SP Durg- Abhishek Pallav as SP Kabirdham; SP Balrampur Mohit Garg as Commandant 19th Battalion CAF Jagdalpur; SP Surguja- Bhavana Gupta as SP-District Bemetara.

Further in the list, SP Kanker

Salah K Sinha has been transferred as SP Durg; SP Kondaigon- Divyang Kumar Lalji Bhai Patel as SP Kanker; SP Dantewada Siddharth Tiwari as SP District Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur; SP Sukma Sunil Sharma as SP District Surguja; Addl. SP (Operations) District Sukma Chavhan Kiran Gangaram as SP Sukma; SP district Mohana-Manpur-

Ambagarh Chowki- Yeduvali Akshay Kumar as SP Kondagaon; Addl. SP Raipur-Gaurav Rampravesh Rai as SP Dantewada; Addl. SP Kanker Ratna Singh as SP District Mohala-Manpur- Ambagarh chowki.

Upper Secretary Manoj Shrivastava has issued orders in this regard and information has been given through CMO's official Twitter handle.

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against them in AP, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, TN and Telangana. The name of three accused are Emanual and Polinus originally from Nigeria and Augustine Benin is from India. Emanual S/o Nebuaf (33), R/o Nigeria and present address is House and Gali No. 8, Sainik Vihar Colony, Mohan Garden, Thaan Ranholi Delhi; The second accused is Polinus S/o Afzor (34), R/o Nigeria and present location is same as above and third is Augustine Benin, S/o Ododeh (49), R/o same as above.

In this case a woman from Raipur had filed a report in Pandri Thana that she has been cheated of Rs 13.55 lakh and on which the Raipur police took prompt action and nabbed all the three foreign citizens from Delhi. The accused are having total of 19 cases filed

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Ch'garh Mahtari is a symbol of state's identity, self-respect, and pride: CM

CM Baghel unveils the statue of Ch'garh Mahtari at the Collectorate

Jagdalpur, May 26:

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel unveiled the statue of Chhattisgarh Mahtari in the premises of the Collectorate office in Jagdalpur. He adorned the statue of Chhattisgarh Mahtari with a garland and paid reverence to her. This district office holds the distinction of being the first in the division to house the statue of Chhattisgarh Mahtari.

After the unveiling ceremony, Chief Minister Baghel stated that Chhattisgarh Mahtari represents the identity, self-respect, and pride of Chhattisgarh. He emphasized that installing the statues of Chhattisgarh Mahtari in all districts will help people learn about the state's culture. It is our mission to provide future generations with ample opportunities to un-



derstand and appreciate our local festivals and folk traditions. He further highlighted that the government is working diligently to promote the state's culture. Traditional festivals such as Teejapora, Akti, Hareli, and Chher-Chhera are organized on a large scale. Today, Bore-Basi is renowned throughout the nation, and initiatives like the Tribal Dance Festival, Rejuvenation of Devgudi, and Adivasi Parab Samman Nidhi have brought honour to the tribal communities.

Minister of Industries Kavasi Lakhma, Bastar MP Deepak Baij, President of Bastar Development Authority Lakheswar Baghel, Vice President of Bastar Development Authority Vikram Mandavi, Parliamentary Secretary Rekhchand Jain, MLA Narayanan Chandan Kashyap, Former MP Nand Kumar Sai, Mayor Shafira Sahu, Chairperson of Municipal Corporation Kavita Sahu, Vice-Chairman of Indravati Basin Development Authority Rajeev Sharma, Chairman of Renewable Energy Authority Mithilesh Swarnakar, Commissioner Shyam Dhadwe, IG Sundaraj P., Collector Vijay Dayaram K, Senior Superintendent of Police Jitendra Meena and other public representatives were present on the occasion.

RED (WR-II & OS) interacted with guardians and GEM participants

Bilaspur (Lara), May 26:

- 1275 stations marked for modernisation
- Includes 49 stations of SECR

Bilaspur, May 26: Ministry of Railways has formulated a new policy for modernization of stations called "Amrit Bharat Station" scheme. Under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, continuous development of stations has been envisioned from a long-term perspective. This plan is long-term master according to the needs of the station. It is based on the preparation of the plan and the implementation of the elements of the master plan. With this plan, 1275 railway stations of the country will be modernized and developed. 49 stations of South East Central Railway are included under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. It includes Bilaspur, Raigarh, Baradwar, Champa, Naila, Aklatara,

Korba, Uslapur, Pendra Road, Baikunthpur Road, Ambikapur, Anuppur, Shahdol, Umaria, Bijuri, Brajrajnagar, Belpahar, Anuppur, Shahdol, Umaria, Durg, Bhilai, Power House, Bhilai, Balod, Dalli Rajhara, Bhanupratappur, Sarona, Maroda, Mandir Hassaud, Urkura, Bhilai Nagar, Bilha, Nipania, Bhatapara, Hathband, Tilda Newra, Raipur, Balaghat, Chandaftor, Chhindwara, Gondia, Rajnandgaon, Dongargarh, Bhandara Road, Nainpur, Itwari, Kamthi, Mandlaftor, Sewni, Tumsar Road, Vadsa, Amgaon etc. stations are included. These stations include 30 in Chhattisgarh, 9 in Madhya Pradesh, 8 in Maharashtra and more 2 stations of Odisha are included. Attention will also be given to better information system for passengers at stations, such arrangements are also included in this master plan. Apart from this, the roads will be

widened by removing unwanted structures near the station. Standardized signage, footpaths and well-planned parking areas. Women and disabled people are also taken care of in this scheme. Adequate number of toilets for women and disabled persons will be constructed at stations of all categories. Under this plan, high-level platforms will be constructed at all categories of stations. Stations etc. will be equipped with local art and cultural elements to provide a pleasant experience for the passengers. All these tasks are completed with the help of skilled professionals will be done. The main objective of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is to modernize important stations of the South East Central Railway and increase passenger-centric facilities. Along with the introduction of new facilities in the stations, the old facilities will also be developed.

Under the Amrit Bharat Station scheme, South East Central Railway will try to improve all those im-

Posting of newly-appointed Asst Directors of the DPES

Raipur, May 26: Ten newly-appointed Assistant Directors of the Department of Planning and Economic Statistics have been posted in various offices in the state. The list includes

Mr. Rahul Rajput who has been posted to the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar, Mr. Debojit Das to the District Planning and Statistics Office Koriya, Ms. Shivani Shukla to District Office Dantewada, Mr. Sagar Sahu to District Office Durg, Mr. Vikas Dhruv to District Office Balodabazar Bhatapara, Mr. Mukesh Thakur to District Office Balod, Mr. Rupesh Kumar Nag to the Directorate of Economics and Statistics Nava Raipur, Mr. Dinesh Kumar Dewangan to District Office Bastar, and Mr. Venkatesh Marval to District Office Balrampur. The aforementioned officers have been posted until the next order with the salary matrix level 56100 and a timely dearness allowance for a probationary period of 3 years.

On this occasion Uma Tripathy, President (Arpita Mahila Samiti, WR-II), Diwakar Kaushik, Executive Director (Lara), Akhilesh Singh, GM (Operation & Maintenance), Rajeev Ranjan, GM (Fuel Management), Samarendra Kumar Roy, GM (Operation), Ravi Shankar, GM (Project Construction), Kanhaiya Das, AGM (HR), office bearer of Prerita Mahila Samiti children and their parents were present.

Apex Committee Meeting on Water and Cleanliness Mission concludes

Raipur, May 26: An apex committee meeting, presided over by the Principal Secretary Mr. Amitab Jain, on the state's water and cleanliness mission concluded in the Mantralay Mahanadi Bhawan yesterday. In the meeting, detailed discussions were held on work executed under water supply schemes in accordance with the Jal Jeevan Mission and the Annual Action Plan 2023-24. The Principal Secretary gave instructions to the officers for the continuous monitoring of schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission that have been completed. The Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief

Minister, Mr. Subrat Sahoo, also attended the meeting. In the meeting, approval was granted for the proposal to make amendments in pre-bids on the tenders invited for group water supply schemes, according to the vendors' suggestions.

The Director of Jal Jeevan Mission Alok Katiyari, Mission Director of Swachha Bharat Mission Effat Ara, and the officers of the Finance Department, Department of Public Health Engineering, and Department of Public Relations were present during the meeting, which was conducted through video conferencing.

Teachers have always been dedicated to nation building: V-C

Lecture series on Madhav Rao Sapre organized in CU



Bilaspur, May 26: A lecture was organized by the Rajbhasha Cell on the topic 'Bharatiya and Sapre ji' in the Rajat Jayanti Sahagam of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (a Central University) on May at 11.30 a.m. on 25 May 2023. The main speaker of the program was Dr. Sushil Trivedi, Chairman, Madhav Rao Sapre Research Center and the event was presided over by Honorable Vice-Chancellor of the University Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal.

Presiding over the lecture, Vice-Chancellor of the University, Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal recalled the contribution of Madhav Rao Sapre in nation building and said that teachers have always been devoted to nation building. He added, "Instead of referring to others, we should do such work that

people refer to us. Our dedication and sacrifices today will play an important role in the building and upliftment of the nation tomorrow". Professor Chakrawal reminded all to perform their duties honestly and sincerely. Dr. Sushil Trivedi, Chairman, Madhav Rao Sapre Research Center, Raipur said that the renowned writer Makhanlal Chaturvedi has referred to the period from 1900 to 1920 in Hindi literature as Dwivedi and Sapre era. Madhav Rao Sapre worked to spread the spirit of na-

tionalism in the society through journalism. Earlier, the program started with lighting of the lamp and garlanding the idols of Maa Saraswati and Baba Ghasidas. The guests on the stage were welcomed by presenting books. Rajbhasha Adikari, Mr. Akhilesh Tiwari delivered the welcome address. Special guest, Dr. Sudhir Sharma, Secretary of Madhav Rao Sapre Research Center, Raipur also presented his views. The guests were honored by presenting mementos. In the end, vote of thanks was delivered by the Registrar Prof. Manish Srivastava and the program was conducted by Shri T.P. Singh, Assistant Registrar Academic Section. Deans, heads of departments, officers and teachers of various schools were present in the programme.

As a Corporate Social Responsibility - Community Development activity, GEM is being conducted at Lara from 17 May to 12 June 2023 comprising of 40 girl chil-

dren in the age group of 10-11 years from 9 surrounding villages are participating in this residential workshop being organized by NTPC Lara in township. It is a four weeklong free of cost residential training pro-

gramme. Expert trainer from Hero Mind Mine is providing training to the children. After four weeks of training, the children will present their learnings in the valedictory function.

Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM) is a flag-

ship Corporate Social Responsibility initiative of NTPC Limited, focused on the development of girl child of rural area reading in the government schools of nearby NTPC projects and stations.

Forestry experts and officials from various states shared insights on groundwater conservation initiatives undertaken in their respective states.

The workshop also highlighted the use of geoinformatics in resource management.

This technology proves highly beneficial for mapping forest areas, determining boundaries, and selecting suitable locations for constructing water structures underground water conservation programmes. National CAMPA Authority CEO Subhash Chandra expressed his views on soil and water conservation during the workshop. The workshop provided information on the Van Dhan Yojana, tree plantation, and LiDAR technology, and extensive discussions were held on soil and water conservation measures.

National Workshop on Soil and Water Conservation

Workshop sheds light on strategies for effective soil and moisture conservation

tion on approximately 36,000 acres of private land under the scheme.

Under the scheme, interested landowners of all social classes will be eligible to avail of its benefits. Additionally, government, semi-government, and autonomous institutions seeking to undertake plantation activities on their own land will also be eligible. Similarly, private educational institutions, trusts, non-governmental organizations, panchayats, and land leaseholders interested in conducting tree plantations on their land will be considered eligible. The primary objective of

Humble Tribute to the Martyrs of Jhiram Valley in Bilaspur

Bilaspur, May 26:

'Jhiram Tribute Day' was observed today at the Divisional Commissioner Office and the District Office. On this occasion, a two-minute silence was observed in the memory of the martyrs of Jhiram Valley. A decade ago, on May 25, 2013, many senior political leaders and security personnel of Chhattisgarh were martyred

Tributes paid to the martyrs of Jhiram Valley

Bemetara, May 26: Jhiram Tribute Day was observed at the Collectorate in Bemetara, where heartfelt tributes were paid to the public representatives senior officials, and soldiers of the security forces who lost their lives in the tragic incident at Jhiram Valley of Bastar. District Collector Shri Padum Singh Alma, administered an oath to the officers and employees, urging them to strongly oppose all forms of Naxalism and violence and work towards making Chhattisgarh a

symbol of peace once again. Additional Collector Dr. Anil Bajpai and Shri Chhannu Lal Markandi, Deputy Collectors Shri Dhranjali Markam, Shri Bhupendra Joshi, Shri R.K. Sonkar, Shri Hira Gavarna, and Ms. Pinky Manhar, along with officials and employees of the district office were also present. Similarly, humble tributes were paid to the martyrs of the Jhiram Valley at the district headquarters as well as at the tehsil and development block level offices.

Tribute paid to martyrs of Jheeram Ghati in Kanker

Kanker, May 26: A commemorative event was held today to honour the public representatives, senior officials, and soldiers of the security forces who lost their lives in the tragic incident at Jhiram Valley. Additionally, homage was paid to all those who have been martyred in the past and more recently due to acts of Naxal violence. A moment of silence lasting two minutes was observed as a mark of respect for the martyrs. During the ceremony, Mr. S. Ahirwar, the Additional Collector, administered an oath to the officers and employees of the district office. They were urged to firmly uphold the values of non-violence and tolerance, to denounce all forms of Naxalism and violence, and to work towards restoring Chhattisgarh as a land of peace.

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Parliament temple of democracy: Sumitra Mahajan

● Oppn's inauguration row unnecessary

Indore, May 26:

The Parliament is a temple of democracy and partisan politics should not be played over it, former Lok Sabha speaker and senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Sumitra Mahajan said on Friday amid the decision by several opposition parties to boycott the opening of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The ceremony to inaugurate the new Parliament building on Sunday will begin with an early morning havan and a multi-religion prayer followed by a formal opening in the Lok Sabha by the PM.



As many as 25 parties are expected to attend the inauguration of the new Parliament building on Sunday even as 20 opposition parties have decided to boycott the event. "I think MPs of opposition parties cannot (morally) oppose the new Parliament building. The opposition members who are opposing the inauguration of the new Parliament building used

to often complain to me during my tenure as Lok Sabha Speaker (between 2014 and 2019) that they were finding it difficult to sit in the House due to lack of space," Mahajan told PTI. Terming the controversy on who should inaugurate it as "unnecessary". Mahajan said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an MP as well as Leader of the House in the Lok Sabha. "Party politics should not be brought into every subject. We should rise above party politics on some occasions. The Parliament is the temple of democracy and we should look at the inauguration of the new Parliament House from this perspective," said Mahajan. The new Parliament complex can accommodate higher number of members and has

enhanced facilities when compared to the old one, said Mahajan, who was Lok Sabha MP from Indore for eight consecutive terms between 1989 and 2019. "In the old Parliament, some MPs were jokingly called pillar victims because their seat was right behind the pillars. That is why I used to allow them to come forward and speak in the House," the former speaker said. Mahajan said she could not remember from which door to enter and from which to exit when she became MP for the first time in 1989, adding she had taken a picture of herself near a fountain in Vijay Chowk at the time so that the magnificent circular Parliament structure was visible in the background.

PM Modi considers new Parliament building his 'estate', says Sena (UBT)

● Asks if Advani invited for its inauguration

Mumbai, May 26:

The third G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting held in Srinagar was "very successful" and this will contribute to boosting of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and help in "allaying any fears" in the minds of visitors in future, a top official said on Friday.

Addressing reporters here, Union Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh also said that during the TWG meet held from May 22-24, G20 member countries, invited countries, and international organisations gave inputs and feedback on the GOA Roadmap for tourism as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals and G20 Tourism Ministers' Declaration. There two documents were the two key de-

CONVOCATION CEREMONY



Students celebrate during their convocation, at Patna Women's College, in Patna, Friday, May 26.

BRIEF

12 dead

■ Jaipur: At least a dozen people died and several were injured in separate incidents due to heavy rain in Rajasthan's Tonk district, an official said on Friday. Accompanied by gusty winds, heavy rain battered several places in the district on Thursday night, leading to the loss of human lives and damage to houses. Tonk District Collector Chinmoyee Gopal said the injured persons have been admitted to different hospitals in the district.

Coronation anniversary

■ Mumbai: Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais on Friday flagged off the 'Sahastra Jal Kalash Yatra' between Mumbai and Raigad Fort ahead of the 350th coronation anniversary celebrations of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj scheduled for June 2. Bais, accompanied by state Minister of Cultural Affairs Sudhir Mungantwar, performed the 'Sahastra Jal Kalash Pujan' and witnessed a demonstration of martial arts presented by children and youth at Raj Bhavan here.

Man booked

■ Shahjahanpur (UP) May 26: A 19-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly beating up two dogs here, police said on Friday. A purported video of the incident surfaced on the internet on Tuesday where a youth was seen mercilessly beating two dogs with sticks. Superintendent of Police P S Anand told PTI.

Success of G20 meet in Srinagar will boost tourism in J-K: Union Tourism Secy

● Alay fears in minds of visitors

New Delhi, May 26:

The third G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting held in Srinagar was "very successful" and this will contribute to boosting of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and help in "allaying any fears" in the minds of visitors in future, a top official said on Friday.

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liverables of the tourism track meet in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, and Singh said, G20 members have broadly reached an agreement on the five interconnected priority areas green tourism, digitisation, skills, tourism MSMEs and destination. These priorities are key building blocks for accelerating the transition of the tourism sector and achieve the targets for 2030 SDGs. "Some members will give their suggestions in writing by today, and then the final draft will be prepared," he said. The final versions of the documents will be placed in the fourth TWG meeting and Ministerial meeting, slated to take place in Goa next month. The GOA Roadmap and a ministerial communiqué endorsing it will be released after the last meeting of the G20 tourism working group that will take place from June 18-22.

Twenty opposition parties, including the Congress and the Sena

Odisha Police submits charge sheet in ex minister's murder, finds ASI responsible

Bhubaneswar, May 26:

The former Odisha health minister Naba Kishore Das was gunned down by assistant sub-inspector of police Gopal Das due to personal grudge and anguish in stable mind, according to the police charge sheet in the case submitted on Friday. Gopal Das is the lone accused in the January 29 incident and the murder was a result of past enmity. Charges have been framed under sections 307 (attempt to commit murder), 302 (murder) and the Arms Act, it said. If proved in court the ASI may face prison term ranging from ten years to life behind bars and is liable to be fined.

The ASI had allegedly opened fire at the ex-minister at Brajrajnagar Gandhi Chowk when he was on an official visit in Jharsuguda dis-

trict.

The court turned down its request to take him to National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences in Bengaluru for evaluation.

It referred to the report by the medical board comprising experts from the state-run SCB Medical College and Hospital which suggested that Gopal Das was mentally sound.

The ASI had allegedly opened fire at the ex-minister at Brajrajnagar Gandhi Chowk when he was on an official visit in Jharsuguda dis-

trict.

The charge sheet said the accused meticulously planned and executed the murder alone. There was no conspiracy or support from anyone else. The narco test and layered voice analysis confirmed that the police officer had pulled the gun due to personal grudge, it said.

"After evaluation of all evidences - oral, documentary, medico-legal, cyber forensic and ballistic opinion, it is clear that the accused Gopal Das had developed personal grudge and anguish against deceased minister Naba Kishore Das. He felt threatened by the minister and his supporters and feared for his life. Gradually, he made up his mind to commit murder," the charsheet said.

The ASI had allegedly opened fire at the ex-minister at Brajrajnagar Gandhi Chowk when he was on an official visit in Jharsuguda dis-

Andhra Pradesh CM kicks off week-long housing plots distribution scheme

● For over 50,000 poor women

Amaravati, May 26:

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday kicked off a week-long programme to distribute housing plots for 50,793 eligible poor women at Venkatapalem village in Guntur district within Amaravati area. Besides the housing plots, the Chief Minister has also launched the programme to hand over Andhra Pradesh Township And Infrastructure Development Corporation (APTIDCO) houses to 5,024 beneficiaries which were constructed at a cost of Rs 444 crore in the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) region. For the land given to the poor, documents for plots worth up to Rs 10 lakh will



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy during an event to distribute houses to women beneficiaries, in Amaravati, Friday, May 26.

be given away, including photographing and geo-tagging each of the beneficiary in her own plot, spread across 25 layouts and 1,400 acres located in Tadikonda and Mangalagiri Assembly constituencies. These plots created by the government amending the CRDA Act to facilitate allotment of house sites for the poor. "This festi-

val of distributing lands to 50,000 families is a legendary moment in the history of the state as well as the country as the state government took up a long legal fight to give land to the poor by even going up to the Supreme Court. We are witnessing this moment right here in Amaravati," Reddy said.

He is slated to visit Washington DC, New York and San Francisco. The Congress leader will likely address Indian Americans, meet lawmakers at the US Capitol, and interact with members of think tanks, Wall Street executives and university students during his stay. The magisterial court, in the forenoon, reserved its order on Gandhi's plea for grant of NOC after hearing submissions of his lawyers and Swamy. Swamy opposed the application, saying it was "devoid of any merit" and insisted the passport should be issued only for one year and renewed every year thereafter.

FARMERS PROTEST



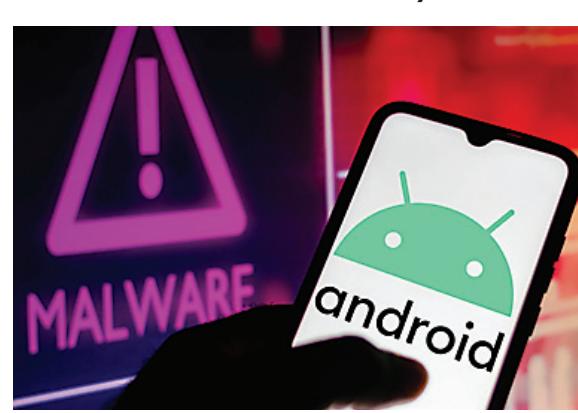
The Rubber farmers under the banner of Kerala Karshaka Sangham take part in a protest march to Raj Bhavan, in Thiruvananthapuram, Friday, May 26.

'Daam' virus steals call records, reads history from Android phones

● Central agency issues advisory

New Delhi, May 26:

An Android malware called 'Daam' that infects mobile phones and hacks into sensitive data like call records, contacts, history and camera has been found to be spreading, the national cyber security agency has said in its latest advisory. The virus is also capable of "bypassing anti-virus programs and deploying ransomware on the targeted devices", the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team or CERT-In said. The agency is the federal technology arm to combat cyber attacks and guard the cyber space against phishing and hacking assaults and similar online attacks. The Android botnet gets distributed



through third-party websites or applications downloaded from untrusted/unknown sources, the agency said. "Once it is placed in the device, the malware tries to bypass the security check of the device and after a successful attempt, it attempts to steal sensitive data, and permissions such as reading history and bookmarks, killing background process-

said. The malware, it said, utilises the AES (advanced encryption standard) encryption algorithm to code files in the victim's device. Other files are then deleted from the local storage, leaving only the encrypted files with ".enc" extension and a ransom note that says "readme_now.txt", the advisory said.

The central agency suggested a number of do's and don'ts to avoid getting attacked by such viruses and malware. The Cert-In advised against browsing "untrusted websites" or clicking on "un-trusted links". Caution should be exercised while clicking on any link provided in unsolicited emails and SMSes, it said. Install and maintain updated anti-virus and anti-spyware software, it suggested. It also suggested that users should be on the lookout for "suspi-

Ukraine harasses Russian border regions, Russia strikes Dnipro clinic

Kyiv, May 26:

Russia's southern Belgorod region bordering Ukraine came under attack from Ukrainian artillery fire on Friday, authorities said, hours after at least one nighttime blast rocked a Russian city in a region next to the annexed Crimea peninsula. The Kremlin's forces, meanwhile, struck a clinic in Dnipro, in central Ukraine, killing one person and wounding 16, including two children, Ukrainian officials said. Also, a Russian S-300 missile hit a dam in the Karlivka district of Ukraine's eastern Donetsk province, placing nearby settlements under threat of severe flooding. The Belgorod town of Graivoron, some 7 kilometres (4.5 miles) from the Ukrainian border, was under fire for several hours, with four houses, a store, a car, a gas pipeline



In this handout photo made available by National Police of Ukraine, a Polyclinic is engulfed in flames following a Russian attack in Dnipro, Ukraine, Friday May 26.

and a power line damaged, Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported.

Closer to the border, a recreation centre, a shop and an uninhabited house sustained damage in the village of Glotovo. There were no casualties, according to Gladkov. The Belgorod region was earlier this week the target of one of the most serious cross-border attacks from Ukraine since the war began 15 months ago.

Details of the raid were murky, as Russia blamed the Ukrainian armed forces but two Russian groups said they were involved, with the aim of bringing down Russian President Vladimir Putin. Unconfirmed local reports said Friday's explosion in Russia's southern city of Krasnodar, in the region of the same name bordering Crimea, was caused by drones. Witnesses told local media they heard

something like the sound of a moped and then two explosions. Krasnodar Mayor Yevgeny Naumov said a residential building and an office building were damaged but there were no casualties. Drone attacks against Russian regions on the border with Ukraine have been a regular occurrence since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February last year, with attacks stepping up last month. Earlier this month, an oil refinery in Krasnodar was attacked by drones on two consecutive days. In another apparent incident of Kyiv's forces harassing Russia, Ukraine's defence ministry on Thursday published footage that appeared to show an unmanned drone boat attacking Russia's Ivan Khurs reconnaissance ship in the Black Sea. The video did not show the drone hitting the ship.

Strong earthquake shakes eastern Japan; no tsunami warning

Tokyo, May 26: A strong earthquake shook Tokyo and other areas of eastern Japan on Friday, but no tsunami warning was issued.

The magnitude 6.1 quake was centred off the east coast of Chiba Peninsula at a depth of 44.5 kilometres, the US Geological Survey said.

Strong shaking was reported in Chiba and Ibaraki prefectures, but the USGS said there was little chance of serious damage or fatalities. Kyodo News service said no problems were reported at the Tokai No. 2 nuclear power plant in Ibaraki. A strong earthquake hit central Japan on May 5, killing at least one person and injuring more than 20 others. Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone nations. A massive 2011 quake in the country's northeast caused a devastating tsunami and nuclear plant meltdown.



Republic of Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi, right, and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend a welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, Friday, May 26.

Sri Lanka hopes for single digit inflation by year-end: Central Bank Governor

Colombo, May 26:



certainly be a single digit

by the fourth quarter of this year with the measures that we have implemented." Commenting on the restrictive measures taken by the government to deal with the catastrophic economic crisis will help reduce the country's hyperinflation to single-digit by the year-end. Weerasinghe who took over the economic recovery process at the height of the crisis last year said that short-term painful measures were vital to restore the long-term stability of Sri Lanka's economy. Addressing a symposium on entrepreneurship organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) here on Thursday, he said, "We have taken very decisive measures to curtail and prevent inflation rising, which went to the peak of 70 per cent. Now it is under 30 per cent. It will

nesses and entrepreneurs," he said. He said the current restrictions on imports are gradually being relaxed, and some restrictions on capital transactions will also be relaxed which will facilitate businesses in the near future.

Weerasinghe headed the negotiations with the IMF for the USD 2.9 billion bailout received in March this year and is currently busy in the process of restructuring debt with international partners and private creditors to meet the September deadline of the IMF review.

"In the short run, such measures are imperative to prevent the devastating impact of rising inflation and economic instability to restore economic conditions that are essential for economic stakeholders including the busi-

nesses and entrepreneurs," he said. He said the current restrictions on imports are gradually being relaxed, and some restrictions on capital transactions will also be relaxed which will facilitate businesses in the near future.

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G-20 Summit in Srinagar

Unveiling the Potential of Jammu and Kashmir

Hosting the prestigious G-20 meeting in Srinagar marks a momentous milestone for Jammu and Kashmir, elevating the region's status and opening a window of opportunities. This global event has not only captured international attention but has also effectively showcased the immense potential of Jammu and Kashmir as a premier destination for international events and tourism. By convening the G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting, Jammu and Kashmir has the unique opportunity to highlight its exceptional performance, unparalleled hospitality, and create an ambiance poised to significantly boost tourism growth. The outcome of this gathering is expected to attract a greater influx of domestic and international tourists, fostering continued development and promotion of the tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir. The G-20 tourism group summit has propelled Jammu and Kashmir into the global spotlight, promoting the region as a safe and attractive tourist destination. The presence of delegates from G-20 countries highlights the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and tourism opportunities the region has to offer. This exposure can lead to increased tourist arrivals, both domestic and international. The government's commitment to enhancing the tourism sector in Jammu and Kashmir through world-class infrastructure and discussions on foreign direct investment signals a promising future. Investments in infrastructure development, including transportation and accommodation facilities, will create a more appealing and comfortable environment for tourists. This, in turn, can generate employment opportunities for the local population and stimulate the region's economy through increased spending by tourists and the growth of related industries. The G-20 tourism group summit also provides a platform for cultural exchange and collaboration. Jammu and Kashmir has the opportunity to showcase its rich cultural heritage, traditions, and local cuisine to international visitors. Collaborating with international tourism organizations and governments can bring valuable expertise, best practices, and investments to support the region's tourism sector. The focus on sustainable tourism within the G-20 group aligns with global efforts to promote responsible travel. Jammu and Kashmir can benefit from adopting sustainable tourism practices, ensuring the long-term viability of the sector while preserving the region's unique attractions. Beyond tourism, the G-20 summit in Jammu and Kashmir serves as a platform to highlight the positive changes and transformations in the region since the abrogation of Article 370. It showcases the improved security situation, infrastructure development, promotion of tourism, and overall socio-economic initiatives undertaken in the region. By hosting this international event, the government demonstrates confidence in the stability and progress of Jammu and Kashmir, attracting global attention and investment. The summit brings together leaders from major economies, allowing for interactions, idea exchange, and collaboration possibilities. It presents networking opportunities, building partnerships, and establishing connections with potential investors, tour operators, and tourism stakeholders from around the world. The G-20 summit has highlighted the investment potential of Jammu and Kashmir, showcasing economic stability, business-friendly policies, and investment opportunities to attract foreign direct investment. The successful organization of the G-20 summit in Srinagar is a testament to the collaborative efforts of the Union Government and the Lieutenant Governor's administration. Their proactive measures, coordination with international partners, logistical arrangements, security provisions, and infrastructure development have been crucial in ensuring a smooth and successful event. Their dedication to the development and progress of Jammu and Kashmir is evident in making this event possible. The G-20 summit in Srinagar has laid a solid foundation for showcasing the "Naya Jammu and Kashmir" on the global stage. With a growing footfall of tourists, the region is poised to experience a significant surge in international and domestic visitors. The development of infrastructure, including an international airport, riverfronts, and ultra-modern heritage markets, coupled with the celebration of cultural diversity and breathtaking locations, positions Jammu and Kashmir to attract a record number of tourists in the coming years. As Jammu and Kashmir moves forward, the success of the G-20 summit serves as a catalyst for future endeavors. The Union Territory is well-positioned to harness its potential, attract investment, and diversify its economy. With the establishment of world-class infrastructure, the promotion of sustainable tourism practices, and the continued support of the government, Jammu and Kashmir can truly become a global tourism hub, welcoming visitors from every corner of the world.

China's Investment Propaganda

Rathin Kumar Chanda

China, the most populated country in the world, has displayed a remarkable entrepreneurial spirit and a strong inclination towards investment in various sectors globally. The country's investment priorities have not been limited to a specific sphere or concentrated sector. In fact, investment has become an integral part of their propaganda, contradicting the principles of communism and adopting a more capitalist approach. China's strategic move, known as the Bamboo Curtain, has played a crucial role in enhancing its immunity and establishing a self-reliant position. This has allowed China to challenge other countries and emerge as a significant player in the global arena. China has embraced different forms of communism theory and practice, abandoning the traditional manifesto of communism to build a competent and forward-thinking economy. The younger generation in China focuses on practical observations rather than adhering strictly to theoretical communist principles. Recognizing their status as a third-world country and the competition posed by developed Western nations, China has taken a contrasting path to communism. China has pursued direct and indirect investments worldwide, expanding its export trade while maintaining a substantial trade surplus. For instance, the trade deficit between China and India stands at \$2 million, providing China with a commanding position in the market while adhering to international norms and protocols. China has carefully crafted its trade policy, utilizing marketing strategies to silently introduce its products into various markets. By offering competitively priced products with attractive designs and convenient handling, China has gained popularity among consumers without significant advertising costs. Through this approach, China has effectively ousted competitors from the market in sectors such as electronics, engineering, computer peripherals, and more, with products ranging from lighting and laptops to televisions and toys. China's investment propaganda has focused on silently and steadily spreading its products worldwide, employing a marketing strategy that has proven successful. The country's efforts in the silent revolution of its products, without solely prioritizing profit, have resulted in the achievement of their investment goals.

MONSOON PREPARATIONS



A vendor sells raincoats during rain ahead of monsoon season, in Kochi, Friday, May 26. A slight delay is expected in the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala and it is likely to arrive by June 4, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tuesday.

How China is increasing its influence in central Asia

STEFAN WOLFF



As part of global plans to offer an alternative to the west

As G7 leaders were preparing for their recent summit in Japan, China's president Xi Jinping hosted his central Asian counterparts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Central Asia is critical to China's attempts to build an alternative to the US-led liberal order that is unquestionably dominated by Beijing and in which Russia will, at best, be a junior partner. In his opening address, Xi outlined his "vision of a China-central Asia community with a shared future". This will rest on four principles: mutual assistance, common development, universal security and everlasting friendship. While the relationship between China and central Asia is often framed in terms of security and development, it also has a political side. This is all evident in the initiatives to create more regional cooperation launched at the summit in Xi'an.

These propose links between Chinese ministries and government agencies and their counterparts in central Asia, increasing educational and cultural exchanges, and creating mechanisms like the Central Asia China Business Council. All of these are likely

to further consolidate of China's dominant regional role.

In return, China will insulate the mostly authoritarian leaders of central Asia from western economic and political pressure to move towards democracy and protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity against any Russian adventurism.

Summit achievements

The summit resulted in a staggering 54 agreements, 19 new cooperation mechanisms and platforms, and nine multilateral documents, including the Xi'an declaration.

Even if one were to discount most of these as having uncertain prospects of actual implementation, there can be no doubt about China's regional significance. According to UN statistics, for example, the volume of trade in goods between China and the five countries of the region rose from a mere USD 460 million three decades ago to more than USD 70 billion in 2022 a 150-fold increase.

Historically, Russia was the main partner for central Asia, harking back to the Soviet period and the first decade after its break-up. But Moscow can no longer match the value of Chinese investments and construction contracts in central Asia, which now totals almost USD 70 billion since 2005.

China takes over from Russia

A shift towards China is also reflected in the declining importance of Russia's regional integration project the Eurasian Economic Union in comparison to China's massive global Belt and Road Initiative. This programme of infrastructure investment was launched by Xi in Kazakhstan in 2013 and has since drawn the region closer to China not just economically

but also politically.

The Belt and Road Initiative featured prominently in the Xi'an declaration, explicitly linking it to national development strategies in central Asia. Transport connections remain at its heart.

The countries at the summit recommitted to a China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway, to highways from China to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and to transport infrastructure for trans-Caspian trade routes using seaports in Kazakhstan and in Turkmenistan.

This focus on transport infrastructure in, and importantly across, central Asia highlights how important the region is for China's attempts to diversify its trade routes to Europe away from Russia. It also means that China, for now, will continue to use infrastructure development and trade to recruit more partners for its alternative international order.

The Russian "northern corridor" is now largely closed as a result of Ukraine war-related sanctions. So the route often referred to as the middle corridor has regained importance not only for China but also, crucially, for the G7 countries.

However, the middle corridor, which begins in Turkey and continues via Georgia and through central Asia, would be risky for China as a sole alternative. Its capacity is low (currently only about 5% of the northern corridor) because goods have to cross multiple borders and switch several times between road, rail and sea.

Afghanistan's role

Another alternative with similar geopolitical significance is transport through Afghanistan to the Arabian Sea via the Pakistani port of Gwadar. In the long term, a trans-Afghan route is in the interest of both China and central Asia.

It would contribute to (but also depend on) stability and security in Afghanistan. And it would reduce China's exposure to the risks associated with the existing route along the China-Pakistan economic corridor; especially those arising from the ongoing Taliban insurgency in Pakistan.

In light of this, China and its central Asian partners committed to developing the transport capabilities of the Uzbek city of Termez, on the border with Afghanistan. China also now has an official position on the Afghan issue and Afghanistan was name-checked by Xi in his speech at the summit. So more regional engagement there is to be expected.

Despite the obvious risks associated with Afghanistan, China is likely to include a trans-Afghan trade route in its plans.

This is also evident from the fact that Beijing appears reluctant to engage with Russia and Iran on their international north south transport corridor. Both Russia and Iran face heavy international sanctions and recent tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan cast further doubt on the long-term viability of this route.

The enthusiasm with which the five central Asian presidents have welcomed these initiatives indicates the extent to which they are keen to embrace China. It remains to be seen, however, how sustainable, or popular, an approach this is in light of the considerable and widespread anti-China sentiment in the region.

(Writer is Professor of International Security, University of Birmingham)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Uncertainty Surrounding Rs 2,000 Notes

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 notes from circulation, raising questions about the distinction between demonetization and mere withdrawal. Although the notes will remain legal tender for the time being, individuals may hesitate to accept them due to concerns about future difficulties in depositing or exchanging them. The duration for which these notes will retain their legal status remains uncertain, despite the RBI's directive to "deposit and/or exchange these banknotes on or before September 30, 2023." The lack of clarity surrounding the fate of Rs 2,000 notes adds to the prevailing uncertainty in this matter.

MK Nair Raipur

Meri life App: Boon for environmental protection

The launch of Meri LiFE app to encourage youth participation in tackling climate change is a welcome move. The app will promote mindful utilisation instead of wasteful consumption. The application will foster a nationwide movement, demonstrating the power of citizens in saving the environment. The impacts of simple actions in daily life can be understood, which can have a larger climate impact. The app is an marketplace where young people can explore their interests, find Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability focused opportunities that match their interests, and sign up to act on issues that matter the most to them. App will act as an India led global mass movement that will nudge individual and collective action to protect and preserve the environment. The Meri LiFE Portal enables ministries and institutions to upload event reports and track the progress of the mass mobilization drive.

Dr.Vijaykumar H K, Raichur, Karnataka

Women Triumph

The UPSC Civil Services Exam 2023 results were declared, and an extraordinary feat unfolded. Titled "Women Triumph: UPSC Civil Services Exam 2023 Results Embrace Gender Equality," this year's outcome witnessed a remarkable surge of female candidates. Breaking the shackles of male dominance, all four prestigious positions were secured by women. Ishita Kishore, after her third attempt from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi, emerged as the topper. Garima Lohia from Koirinal College, Delhi, Uma Harathi from IIT Hyderabad (Civil Engineering), and Smriti Mishra from Miranda House College, Delhi, followed closely. Of the top 25 candidates, 14 were women, showcasing their exceptional abilities. Out of 933 qualifiers, 320 (35%) were women, triumphing over the absence of a 33% reservation for women in Parliament. We extend heartfelt congratulations to the UPSC topper and commend the 41 individuals with benchmark disabilities nationwide.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee, Faridabad

Empowering Parliament: Unleashing the Power of Debate and Discussion



Yash Pal Ralhan

The impending inauguration of the new Parliament building on May 28th should be a moment of national pride and unity. However, it is disheartening to witness the controversy that has unfolded, with 20 opposition parties opting to boycott the event. As a concerned citizen, it is evident that these political maneuvers are nothing more than preparations for the upcoming parliamentary elections in March 2024. It is crucial to hold individual Members of Parliament accountable for their actions, as

they are the representatives of the people. Let us reflect on four pertinent examples that illustrate the divergent attitudes between individual members and their respective political parties. In the past, the Akali Dal resorted to tearing pages of the Constitution to highlight their demand for separate Sikh identity. Even Parkash Singh Badal, a five-time Chief Minister of Punjab, participated in this act. Badal, in a press conference, acknowledged that parties sometimes make difficult decisions, and members must adhere to party directives, regardless of personal disagreement. Similarly, during the era of the Third Front, Jyoti Basu was proposed as a Prime Ministerial candidate, but the Communist Party of India (Marxist) refused to support his nomination. This led to Basu being labeled the "near Prime Minister." Once again, the party's instructions superseded individual aspira-

tions. In another instance, Somnath Chatterjee, while holding the position of Speaker in the Lok Sabha, defied his party's demand for resignation. He rightfully asserted that as a constitutional office-bearer, party instructions did not apply to him, and he continued his tenure as Speaker.

Even the current Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, a member of the Janata Dal (United), did not resign despite the absence of a political alliance between his party and the Bharatiya Janata Party. His commitment to his constitutional role prevailed over political affiliations. Considering the current political landscape, it is worth noting the declining fortunes of these parties. The Communist Party of India (Marxist), which ruled for 34 years, now has zero representation in the state assembly. Similarly, the Akali Dal, once a prominent force, now only

holds three seats in the assembly. The future of the Janata Dal (United) appears uncertain due to its ever-changing political alliances. Unfortunately, the past few parliamentary sessions have been marred by disruptions and chaos, even over trivial matters. If this trend continues until March 2024, it will cast a shadow on the functioning of Parliament.

At a time when India is hosting the G20 conference, such unhealthy political activities tarnish the country's image globally. It is crucial to examine the underlying reasons for the opposition's agitation. It is regrettable that the inauguration of the new Parliament building has become a subject of controversy. The objection raised by the opposition, particularly the Congress, stems from the fact that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, rather than President Droupadi Murmu, will be inaugurating the building. While there is merit in the argu-

ment that the President should be accorded this honor as a constitutional component of Parliament, it is essential to rise above these differences and focus on the true essence of a parliament.

A parliament is not defined solely by its physical structure; it is defined by the quality of debates and discussions that take place within its walls. It is the forum where government policies and programs are thoroughly deliberated before being transformed into legislation. When concerns are raised regarding the effectiveness of Parliament, the government bears a moral responsibility to empower and dignify this institution, ensuring that it genuinely represents the aspirations of the Indian people.

In the face of this controversy, it is imperative for all political stakeholders to prioritize the greater good of the nation over personal or party interests.

BRIEF

CII President



New Delhi: TVS Supply Chain Solutions Executive Vice Chairman R Dinesh has assumed office as the President of CII for 2023-24, the industry body said on Thursday. He takes over from Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman and Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv Limited. ITC CMD Sanjiv Puri takes over as President-Designate of CII for the year 2023-24. The National Council of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), at a meeting on Thursday elected new office-bearers for the year 2023-24. Rajiv Memani takes over as Vice President of CII for the year 2023-24.

Clean Energy



New Delhi: The 14th Clean Energy Ministerial will be organised in Goa in July to accelerate the development and usage of green energy. Power Minister R K Singh said on Thursday. Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) was established in 2009 as a high-level global forum to promote the advancement of clean energy. India is one of the founding members of CEM. The coordination support for the CEM is provided by a multi-lateral CEM Secretariat based in Paris, France.

Smart port

Mumbai: The government plans to develop the country's premier container port Jawaharlal Nehru Port as a fully smart port within one year, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said. Speaking at the 34th anniversary and annual award distribution ceremony of the JNPA, the Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways said the government wants the facility to compete with the best ports in the world.

Govt attempting to link tax collected at source with tax deducted at source: CEA

New Delhi, May 26:



The government is attempting to link tax collected at source for payments made by individuals with tax deducted from their income sources, a move that will help in ensuring cash flows of the individual taxpayers are not impacted, according to a senior official. The move also comes at a time when the government is set to impose a 20 per cent Tax Collection at Source (TCS) on certain international spends from July 1.

Generally, TCS is the tax collected by a seller at the time of sale of goods or services while Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) is the amount levied as tax by the government. The government has exempted transactions up to Rs 7 lakh from the TCS, providing relief to small taxpayers. So, bulk of the transactions made by most will

not be covered under 20 per cent TCS, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran has said. Defending the decision, he said, "And it (government) also attempts to link the TCS with your TDS such that if there are TCS payment made by you it has to reflect a lower TDS."

Such that it simply is a matter of making sure that you are not affected from a cash flow perspective." It will also provide a huge amount of relief for people who are concerned about this annoyance or irritation of seeing this TCS apart from TDS, he said at industry body's

event on Thursday. The 20 per cent TCS levy on international credit card spends is to come into force from July 1. Facing backlash, the finance ministry last week, exempted up to Rs 7 lakh spend from the TCS ambit.

"The exemption was done... The pass through of TCS into TDS deduction will also make sure that ordinary taxpayers do not see impact as far as they are concerned," he said. Further, CEA said one point of view is that all that "you needed was to levy 1 per cent or 5 per cent so that you can track it". But there are people

who are happy to stay out of tax net by even paying 1 per cent or 5 per cent. So there has to be a deterrent effect as well, he noted. According to him, data is available with the government that do point out that this mechanism has been not just abused by a small set of people but the volumes involved are fairly substantial.

Currently, overseas medical treatment and education expenses up to Rs 7 lakh a year is exempt from TCS. A 5 per cent levy is charged on expenses exceeding Rs 7 lakh. For those who have availed education loans, the rate of TCS is 0.5 per cent.

FINANCIAL RESULTS



Anish Shah (L), Managing Director & CEO, M&M Ltd, Manoj Bhat, Group CFO, M&M Ltd. and Rajesh Jejurikar (L), Executive Director and CEO, Auto & Farm Sector, M&M Ltd at the announcement of the company's financial results for the fourth quarter, in Mumbai, Friday, May 26.

Forex reserves drop by USD 6 billion to USD 593.48 billion

Mumbai, May 26:

India's foreign exchange reserves dropped by USD 6.052 billion to USD 593.477 billion during the week ended May 19, RBI said on Friday. The drop in the kitty has snapped two consecutive weeks of increases. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had increased by USD 3.5 billion to take the overall quantum just shy of USD 600 billion. In October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments. For the week ended May 19, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, declined by USD 4,654 billion to USD 524,945 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI on Friday.

Need to correct compliance burdens for businesses: Kamath

Mumbai, May 26:

Veteran banker K V Kamath on Friday said there is a need to correct "compliance burdens" for businesses in the country and also reduce litigations. Kamath, who now chairs the government-promoted National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID), said that the government needs to reduce the litigation and concerns on tax laws at a greater speed. "...the level of compliances and compliance burden that needs to be corrected," he said addressing an event organised by industry body Ficci here. He later elaborated that the government itself has identified issues on the compliances front when it spoke



about simplification of various procedures for businesses.

When asked if it is impacting investor confidence, Kamath replied in negative, reasoning that the investor class will come wherever it sees value. Kamath said the foreign direct investment (FDI) flows have been impacted by the overall global sentiment where volatilities are leading to a deferment of decisions.

Equity markets rally for 2nd day; Sensex jumps 1 pc

Mumbai, May 26:

The rupee appreciated by 14 paise to 82.58 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, supported by foreign capital inflows and a positive trend in domestic equities. However, the elevated level of the US dollar against major currencies overseas restricted the upward movement in the domestic unit, forex traders said. The dollar index is trading above the 104 level on safe-haven appeal, as US President Joe Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy are reportedly close to reaching an agreement on the US debt ceiling. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.73 against the US dollar and settled at 82.58 (provisional), up 14 paise over its previous close.

The NSE Nifty climbed 178.20 points or 0.97 per cent to end at 18,499.35. From the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries jumped 2.79 per cent. Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, HCL Technologies, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Tata

Steel and Titan were among the other major gainers. Bharti Airtel, Power Grid and NTPC were the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai ended in the green. Equity markets in Europe were trading lower. The US market ended mostly with gains on Thursday. The Sensex climbed 98.84 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 61,872.62 on Thursday. The Nifty gained 35.75 points or 0.20 per cent to end at 18,321.15.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers on Thursday as they bought equities worth Rs 589.10 crore, according to exchange data. Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.24 per cent to USD 76.44 a barrel.

Air services from Kanpur to Delhi will begin soon: Scindia

Kanpur, May 26:



Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Friday said that air services from Kanpur to Delhi will begin soon.

Speaking at the inauguration of the new terminal building of Kanpur Airport, the Union minister said, "We have announced 59 new routes and 122 new routes will be announced in the future. We have the vision to connect Kanpur with Pantnagar, Aligarh, Moradabad and Shravasti."

There are currently 11 airports operating in the state, and 11 more airports will be started over the next three years. Uttar Pradesh will get 22 new

Amazon Prime captures joy of more through their new 'Sach Mein Too Much' campaign

Mumbai, May 26:

Enabling customers with an unparalleled combination of benefits, from shopping to entertainment, Amazon Prime is a valued membership, that ensures to deliver on the 'Joy of More' in each customer's life. The campaign premise urges customers to derive maximum value from their Prime membership. A plethora of benefits clubbed under one membership, Amazon Prime enables members to avail free one-day delivery on over 40 lakh products, shopping with "Prime offers every day" on one's favorite products like everyday home essentials as well as phones, clothing, home decor, beauty and more. The campaign adopts a unique approach

— with two sets of films — one talking to not-yet Prime customers highlighting 'One Membership, Many Benefits' while the other talks to existing Prime members reiterating the multiple benefits that they can enjoy with their Amazon Prime membership. The campaign revolves around moments of a couple with one set addressing the hard-hitting message of what's special about Amazon Prime membership, while the other set revolves around the life of a Prime member whose expectations have increased from everything around them. In this campaign, the Prime mascots, a memorable brand asset across Prime communications, have also evolved to become more diverse and inclusive.

HDFC Pension's assets under management cross Rs. 50,000 cr

Mumbai, May 26:

HDFC Pension Management Company Ltd., the fastest growing legacy Pension Fund Manager under the National Pension System (NPS) has crossed the milestone of Rs. 50,000 cr. of Assets Under Management (AUM) on May 15th 2023. Since its launch in 2013, the Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of HDFC Life Insurance Company Ltd., has grown at a fast rate (see table below). The AUM size has grown 400% in a span of thirty-three (33) months from a base AUM of Rs. 10,000 Cr. which was achieved in July 2020.

HDFC Pension is the fastest growing legacy Pension Fund Manager in

Bank of Maharashtra tops PSU lenders chart in profit and loan growth in FY23

Pune, May 26:

Bank of Maharashtra also recorded highest growth in profitability with bottom-line growing almost 126 per cent to Rs 2,602 crore during the year. State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has emerged as the top performer among public sector lenders in terms of loan and deposit growth in percentage terms during 2022-23. The Pune-headquartered lender also recorded highest growth in profitability with bottom-line growing almost 126 per cent to Rs 2,602 crore during the year. However, all the 12 public sector banks together recorded 57 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 1,04,649 crore in FY23, according to published yearly numbers of public sector banks (PSBs). In terms of percentage increase in gross advances,

BoM recorded 29.4 per cent jump in loans at Rs 1,75,120 crore as of March 2023. It was followed by Indian Overseas Bank and UCO Bank with 21.2 per cent and 20.6 per cent growth, respectively. However, in absolute terms, aggregate loans of the country's biggest lender SBI were nearly 16 times higher at Rs 27,76,802 crore. With regard to deposit growth, BoM witnessed 15.7 per cent rise and mobilized Rs 2,34,083 crore

at the end of March 2023. Bank of Baroda was second with 13 per cent growth in deposits (Rs 10,47,375 crore) while Punjab National Bank recorded 11.26 per cent increase at Rs 12,51,708 crore, according to the data.

BoM retained the top position in terms of garnering low-cost Current Account and Savings Account (CASA) deposits with 53.38 per cent followed by Central Bank of India (50.18 per cent).

HDFC Pension is the fastest growing legacy Pension Fund Manager in

India, under Retail and Corporate NPS segments with the highest number of subscribers (15,00,000+) as on 1st May 2023. Speaking on this milestone, Sriram Iyer – Chief Executive Officer, HDFC Pension said, "This is a very proud moment for us. We are delighted to have crossed this milestone of Rs. 50,000 cr. AUM and this validates our strong presence."

McLaren drives in hybrid sports car Artura in India at Rs 5.1 crore

New Delhi, May 26:



British luxury carmaker McLaren Automotive on Friday said it has launched hybrid sports car Artura in India with price starting at Rs 5.1 crore (ex-showroom). The company produces the cars at its UK-based facility and then ships the units to various locations, including India. The price of the car varies on the level of personalisation ordered by the customer. "Our impact in the Indian market in our first year has been outstanding, and we look forward to continuing to provide our customers with an exceptional service and the ultimate driving experience," McLaren

sions, and also the funding winter in the private equity and venture capital space. Private capital expenditure will start picking up once the corporate capacity utilisation crosses the threshold of 85 per cent, Kamath said. Kamath said industry captains are deferring their investment decisions till they see demand for their goods. However, he said that demand is not sluggish. He said sectors like steel and cement, which constitute the primary building blocks, will run out of capacity first and start investing. Kamath said he does not want to ascribe an alphabet to the recovery, as being V-shaped or K-shaped which illustrates inequities, but exuded confidence that India will experience long-term growth.

Equity markets rally for 2nd day; Sensex jumps 1 pc

Mumbai, May 26:

The rupee appreciated by 14 paise to 82.58 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, supported by foreign capital inflows and a positive trend in domestic equities. However, the elevated level of the US dollar against major currencies overseas restricted the upward movement in the domestic unit, forex traders said. The dollar index is trading above the 104 level on safe-haven appeal, as US President Joe Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy are reportedly close to reaching an agreement on the US debt ceiling. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.73 against the US dollar and settled at 82.58 (provisional), up 14 paise over its previous close.

The NSE Nifty climbed 178.20 points or 0.97 per cent to end at 18,499.35. From the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries jumped 2.79 per cent. Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, HCL Technologies, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Tata

CII Foundation announced the Woman Exemplar Award 2023 winners

Mumbai, May 26:

The CII Foundation announced the Woman Exemplar Award 2023 winners at the CII Annual Session. The award, given in the categories of Health, Education and Micro-enterprise recognises grassroots women leaders from rural and resource-poor backgrounds who are driving social change in their communities. The award was presented by Smriti Irani, Minister for Women and Child Development and Minority Affairs at a ceremony attended by senior leaders from the Government, Indian Industry, social development sector and media. The awards were given to Pushpa Shukla from Raipur; Chhattisgarh in the Education category; Zohmangaihi from Aizawl, Mizoram in the Health category; Archana Gokul Mane from Osmanabad, Maharashtra in the Micro-enterprise category. Each winner received a trophy, a certificate, and a cash award of Rs 3 lakh. Pushpa Shukla from Raipur; Chhattisgarh in the Education category grew up with a restrictive father. That, and other systemic challenges prevented her from becoming a doctor but she educated herself and was determined to provide equal opportunity to every tribal child, creating online tools and resources that benefited more than 10,000 students, 200 school headmasters, and over 1,600 assistant teachers. Her work in improving the foundational literacy levels of children has brought about a change in the Basic Education System of the state, benefiting close to 7.5 lakh beneficiaries directly and indirectly.

Ram Charan to encourage new talent with V Mega Pictures

Leading Tollywood star Ram Charan, who gained worldwide popularity with the Oscar-winning RRR, has joined hands with his friend Vikram Reddy of UV Creations, to announce 'V Mega Pictures', a production house established with the intention of encouraging new and young talent. The production house will cater to Pan-Indian audiences while giving emerging talent a platform to shine.

The production company said that it is ready to captivate audiences with exceptional storytelling and groundbreaking entertainment.

Led by a visionary team with passion for the art of filmmaking, V Mega Pictures is committed to providing a platform for under-represented voices in the industry, it said.

"We at V Mega Pictures are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment that embraces diversity and welcomes fresh perspectives. By championing creativity and pushing boundaries, we aim to create a lasting impact on the entertainment industry and pave the way for new and emerging talent," a statement from the production house quoted Ram Charan as saying.

"We are delighted to embark on this exciting journey. By collaborating with talented artists, writers, directors, and technicians, V Mega Pictures aims to push the boundaries of storytelling and bring fresh perspectives to the screen," said Vikram Reddy.



Jubin Nautiyal's 'Bewafa Se Pyaar Kiya' presents a tale of betrayal



Media, takes viewers through a modern-day and relevant story that touches upon infidelity and betrayal.

Talking about the song, Jubin Nautiyal said: "This is a heart touching song and something many people will connect with. I'm sure 'Bewafa Se Pyaar Kiya' is going to be loved by all the broken hearts."

Riva Kishan shared:

"This is my first ever music video. Gautam has been a fantastic co-star to work with who made me very comfortable on set. This is an amazing song that will hit right at your heart-strings and I think a lot of people who have faced unfaithfulness in love will relate to this song." Gautam Singh Vig, who stars opposite Riva in the song, said: "Bewafa Se Pyaar Kiya is a heart wrenching song that combines elements of relatable lyrics, melodic singing and impactful visuals."

Playback singer Jubin Nautiyal released a new track titled 'Bewafa Se Pyaar Kiya', featuring Riva Kishan and Gautam Singh Vig on Thursday. The track has been composed by Payal Dev while lyrics was written by Manoj Muntashir.

The music video of the song, directed by Donati

TV actors unlock their tiffin box!



Rice because it is an excellent source of carbs. To add nutritious value to my diet, I consume boiled dal with lots of veggies, one seasonal sabzi without potatoes, and two fruits. My lunch box is both nutritious and delicious."

Tune in to Doosri Maa at 8:00 pm, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan at 10:00 pm, and Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai at 10:30 pm, airing every Monday to Friday only on &TV!

Eating healthy and nutritious food can provide a valuable boost to your wellbeing and success. Here's a look inside the dabba of your favourite &TV artists including Aayudh Bhanshali (Krishna, Doosri Maa), Himani Shivpuri (Katori Amma, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan), and Aasif Sheikh (Vibhuti Narayan Mishra, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai).

Himani Shivpuri, aka Katori Amma from Happu Ki Ultan Paltan, shares, "Lunchtime on our sets is special because we sit together and converse while eating. I am a 'Dabba' person who never forgets to bring a lunch box whenever shooting. I carry a juice bottle and some dry fruits packed. I like to munch on as and when I feel hungry between the scenes. For lunch, I carry homemade food consisting of a small portion of

World TV Premieres of 'Mission Majnu' and 'Phone Bhoot' only on Zee Cinema!

This weekend, get ready for a double dose of entertainment as Zee Cinema presents dhamakedar World Television Premieres of Mission Majnu on 27th May at 8pm and Phone Bhoot on 28th May at 12pm. Witness Bollywood ka Shershaah aka Sidharth Malhotra as a jaanbanz agent bringing one of the most dangerous national missions to screens with one of his most-awaited films of the year - Mission Majnu. It's then time to face some bhoots jo hasayenge bhi aur darayenge bhi with a mazedar horror comedy -



SAT, 27TH MAY, 8 PM



SUN, 28TH MAY, 12 PM

Phone Bhoot where we see Katrina Kaif in an all new avatar, along with Siddhant Chaturvedi and Ishaan Khatter. So, what

are you waiting for? The ultimate family weekend is finally here, just tune into Zee Cinema!

Tune-in to Zee Cinema

for the World Television Premiere of Mission Majnu on 27th May at 8pm and Phone Bhoot on 28th May at 12pm.

Shahid Kapoor to lead action thriller helmed by Malayalam director Rosshan Andrrews

Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor, who received a lot of positive response for his streaming series 'Farzi', is set to headline an action thriller film directed by Malayalam director Rosshan Andrrews, who is known for blockbusters like 'Salute' and 'Kayamkulam Kochunni'. The plot follows a brilliant yet rebellious police officer investigating a high-profile case. As he delves deeper into the case, he uncovers a web of deceit and betrayal, leading him down a thrilling and dangerous path. Talking about the film, Shahid said: "It's rare to find a subject that has action, thrill, drama and suspense all packed into one script and I am really looking forward to this. Rosshan Andrrews is a veteran filmmaker whose Malayalam filmography is spectacular. We have spent many months together now and it will be a pleasure to work with such a fantastic cinematic mind. I can't wait to bring this exhilarating, entertaining and thrilling story to the masses."



Raja Kumari exudes elegance, oomph at Cannes in caped outfit by Manish Malhotra



Hip-hop artiste Raja Kumari, who is known for her chartbuster song 'City Slums', recently attended the ongoing edition of the Cannes Film Festival. She donned a stunning red custom ensemble designed by celebrity designer Manish Malhotra. The red ensemble came with a cape and long trail at the back. Raja Kumari attended the film festival for Inde Wild, a beauty ecosystem founded by Diipa Khosla. Speaking of her debut, Raja Kumari said: "I am so honoured to have been asked to attend the Cannes Film Festival and support my friend Diipa Khosla and Ind Wild." She further mentioned: "I always choose Indian Couture for my most important moments and I felt like a goddess wearing Manish Malhotra's sari with an elongated cape. I truly am humbled and grateful for this opportunity to be a part of the first South Asian brand representing at one of the most prestigious events in the world."

&TV artists seek blessings of Ganga

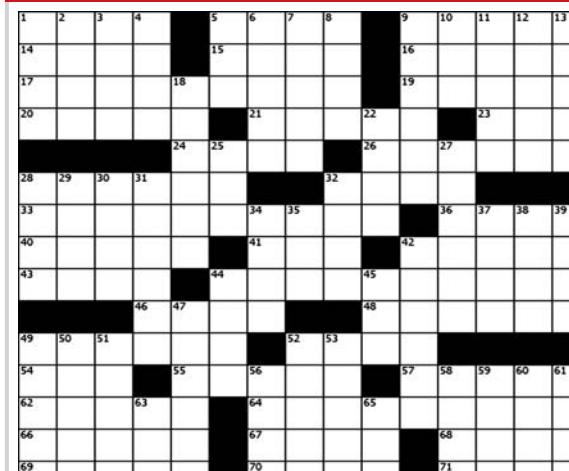


The Ganges holds more than mere sanctity; it pulsates as the very essence of India. Devotees beseech this sacred river for blessings of prosperity. During Ganga Dussehra, multitudes of radiant lamps adorn the coursing waters, invoking serenity and benevolence. With unwavering enthusiasm and zeal, this festival is joyously celebrated across various states where the Ganges flows. On this occasion, &TV artists Neha Joshi (Yashoda, Doosri Maa), Yogesh Tripathi (Daroga Happu Singh, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan), and Vidisha Srivastava (Anita Bhabhi, Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai) talk about the significance and rituals associated with the festival.

Vidisha Srivastava, aka Anita Bhabhi from Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai, shares, "Devotees seek blessings from the sacred Ganga River for good fortune. During my childhood, I joyfully played near the serene ghats of the Ganges and witnessed the enchanting sight of countless lamps adorning its flowing waters during the festival. This beautiful ritual symbolizes the pursuit of peace and goodness. During this time of the year, people from across the world gather in Varanasi to participate in the purifying act of bathing in the holy river. Additionally, my mother faithfully adhered to the tradition of offering tenfold. Whether it

Tune in to Doosri Maa at 8:00 pm, Happu Ki Ultan Paltan at 10:00 pm, and Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai at 10:30 pm, airing every Monday to Friday only on &TV!

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Aroma
- Old wound
- Theater walkway
- The _____ Star State
- "_____ Enchanted" (movie)
- Drying cloth
- Play host
- Shaquille
- Pillifer
- Lucifer
- Adam's partner
- Recipe abbr.
- Unlock again
- Jar tops
- Intrigued
- Wedding dessert
- Make into law
- Ascot
- Steam bath
- Liability
- Low priority locale (2 wds.)
- Metallic deposits
- Foot arch

49. Biblical mountain

52. Golf stroke

54. Border

55. Tiny landmass

57. Fable collector

62. Graven images

64. Parking lot employee

66. Consent

67. Ship's bottom

68. Andes native

69. Plant beginnings

70. Makes mistakes

71. Casual tops

DOWN

1. Spanish cheers

2. Stop that!

3. Atop

4. Rod and

5. Immovable

6. Hold tightly

7. Pseudonym

8. Talk wildly

9. Repeated

10. Electrified atom

11. Use a broom

12. Take off

13. Comic _____ DeGeneres

18. Witty reply

22. Parched

25. NNW's opposite

27. Movie awards

28. Committed perjury

29. "The Diary of _____ Frank"

30. Wild attempt

31. Zone

32. Scallion's kin

657

34. Amtrak stops (abbr.)

35. Facial spasm

37. Parent's sister

38. Leg joint

39. Old West lawman

42. Beach acquisition

44. Bookie's concerns

45. Drill attachment

47. Elevates

48. Divert

49. Diva's offerings

50. Blue _____ Mountains

51. Love in Rome

52. Pan

53. Say

56. Tahoe, e.g.

58. Prepare copy

59. Sensible

60. _____ upon a time..."

61. Sch. groups

63. Was ahead

65. Overhead trains

SOLUTION 656

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Sindhu, Prannoy advance to semifinals, Srikanth out

Malaysia Masters

Kuala Lumpur, May 26 (PTI):

Star Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy advanced to the women's and men's singles semifinals of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 tournament with hard-fought wins over their respective opponents here on Friday.

While double Olympic medallist Sindhu, seeded sixth in the tournament, beat lower ranked Yi Man Zhang of China 21-16, 13-21, 22-20, Prannoy earned a 25-23, 18-21, 21-13 win over Kent Nishimoto of Japan in the quarterfinals.

Sindhu faces seventh seed and world number nine Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia in the semifinals on Saturday. Tunjung upset second seed Yi Zhi Wang of China in the quarterfinals 21-18, 22-20.

Tunjung has been in fine form recently and Sindhu had lost to her in the Madrid Spain Masters final in straight games in April. The Indian will, however, go into the semifinals with a 7-1 head-to-head advantage over Tunjung. World number nine Prannoy faces qualifier Christian Adinata, ranked 57, of Indonesia, who beat



Kidambi Srikanth 16-21, 21-

16, 21-11 in another quarter-

finals, in the semifinals of Saturday. Prannoy has never played against the 21-year-old Adinata, who began playing at the senior level just last year.

For world number 13 Sindhu, it was a revenge of sort for her round-of-32 loss to Zhang, ranked 18th, in the All England Open earlier this year. She had also beaten her Chinese opponent in the same tournament last year.

But from there, Sindhu zoomed to take a 20-17 lead but Zhang won the next three points to level the score 20-20. But ultimately, Sindhu held onto her nerve to grab the next two points to win the third game and the match.

In the second game, Zhang learnt her lessons and did not allow Sindhu to come back unlike in the first. From 2-all, it was Zhang who led all through till the end to make the tie 1-1. The decider was neck-and-neck all through and it could have gone either way. From 12-all onwards, the shuttlers didn't give each other more than a two-point lead, and it went like that till 17-all.

"We have started the tournament on a strong note and we will look to continue with the same mentality against Pakistan. Our first two wins have given us the confidence we needed to go through the tournament.

Pakistan have a strong team as well and it will be a close contest," said Uttam on Friday.

Uttam said India's defence was capable of facing the Pakistani attacks. "We have a good defen-

Salalah (Oman), May 26 (PTD):

India would look to continue their winning momentum after two commanding victories but they can ill-afford to drop their guard when they face arch-rivals Pakistan in a Pool A match of the Men's Junior Asia Cup here on Thursday.

India thrashed Chinese Taipei 18-0 in their opening match, before beating Japan 3-1. But they will have their first real test of the tournament in the form of a confident Pakistan who have also notched up resounding wins over Chinese Taipei (15-1) and Thailand (9-0).

India captain Uttam Singh said the two wins had instilled a lot of confidence in his team but admitted that the match against Pakistan will be a "close contest".

"We have started the tournament on a strong note and we will look to continue with the same mentality against Pakistan. Our first two wins have given us the confidence we needed to go through the tournament.

Pakistan have a strong team as well and it will be a close contest," said Uttam on Friday.

Uttam said India's defence was capable of facing the Pakistani attacks.

"We have a good defen-

Men's junior Asia Cup hockey

India seeks to continue winning momentum against Pakistan

India register a comfortable 3-1 win against Japan

New Delhi, May 26 (PTD):

The Indian men's hockey team came from behind to clinch a comfortable 3-1 win against Japan in their second Pool A game at the Junior Asia Cup in Salalah, Oman on Thursday.

Arajeet Singh Hundal (36th), Sharda Nand Tiwari (39th) and Uttam Singh (56th) scored a goal apiece for India while Kumpei Yasuda (19th) found the back of the net for Japan.

This was India's second win in as many games at the junior continental championship.

India mounted an attack from the get-go and were keen on landing the first blow against Japan.

Nonetheless, soon after the midway mark, the Indian colts started to create more chances with Sudeep Chirmako making the opposition goalie work. Japan almost



opened the scoring late in the quarter at the other end, but India stood firm, with the teams going into the break locked at 0-0.

It was Japan who broke the deadlock, against the run of play, as Kumpei Yasuda slotted it past the left of goalkeeper to lead 1-0 at the half-time break.

After the interval, it was Japan who started out the better team, keeping India in their own half

for quite a bit. However, India rallied back, scoring the equaliser soon after as Hundal rifled it home from the left.

With their tails up, India went on the offensive, and won a series of penalty corners, the last of which helped them storm into the lead as Sharda Nand powered it into the top corner.

With one quarter left, India were leading 2-1.

In the final quarter, India started out on the front foot, eager to add to their advantage. Eleven minutes in, India won a penalty corner, and captain Uttam Singh scored to give his side a two-goal cushion. Japan looked to counterpunch quickly but India's defenders literally put their bodies on the line, and eventually saw out the contest with a 3-1 scoreline.

BCCI could rest all seniors for Afghanistan series keeping Windies tour in mind

Mumbai, May 26 (PTD):

Contrary to reports in some quarters that BCCI is planning to cancel the proposed home series against Afghanistan due to cramped calendar, there is possibility that a second string team might play with all seniors including ODI and Test captain Rohit Sharma along with senior player Virat Kohli rested before West Indies tour.

All Indian players were involved in a gruelling IPL for nearly two months and will be in England for a one-off WTC final but after that, most seniors like Kohli and Rohit will need rest before they embark on West Indies tour where all three formats will be played. Kohli and Rohit are certain to play Tests and ODIs and would need adequate rest.

With only window for Afghanistan series between June 20-30, the

Australia include Peirson as cover for back-up keeper Inglis

Sydney, May 26 (PTD):

Australia have selected wicketkeeper Jimmy Peirson as cover for back-up gloveman Josh Inglis, who will return home after the opening Ashes Test for the birth of his first child.

Alex Carey is Australia's first-choice keeper for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against India and the five Ashes Tests and Inglis has been selected as his back-up.

But Inglis will return to Perth after the first Ashes Test starting on June 16 and his place will be taken up before the second Test at Lord's by 30-year-old Queensland gloveman Peirson, who has 65 first-class games to his credit, according to cricket.com.au on Friday.

The Australian team management has said Inglis will rejoin the squad later in the series.

Peirson, who has been impressive at the domestic and Australia 'A' level with



both the bat and gloves, trained with the Test squad in Brisbane last week and would be fancying his chances of wearing the iconic Baggy Green during the Ashes.

The right-handed lower-order batter has improved his batting drastically over the years, going from an average of less than 30 in his first 35 first-class games to 42.56, including six tons in 30 games since the 2020-21 season.

He also struck an un-

beaten 128 for Australia 'A' during their tour of Sri Lanka last year.

Peirson's appearance in the Australian Test squad has partly been delayed because Tim Paine was the first-choice keeper for a long time and then Carey replaced the former captain, who stepped down due to a controversy ahead of the 2021 Ashes series at home.

Peirson said he was driven by the desire to set higher standards for himself.

BAI to conduct trials for Badminton Asia Junior Championship

New Delhi, May 26 (PTD):

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) will conduct a selection trial at the Karnaik Singh Stadium here from June 4 to 7 to pick the team for the Asian Junior Championships.

The Asian Junior championships is scheduled to be held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from July 7 to 16.

The players will be selected on the basis of their performances in the selection trials.

The trials will include top-8 boys and girls singles shuttlers as well as top-4 pairs from doubles events from the All India Junior Ranking Badminton Tournament held in Guwahati earlier this month, along with top-4 singles players and top-2 doubles pairs in the BAI rankings.

Dhoni takes someone else's trash and makes it treasure: Matthew Hayden

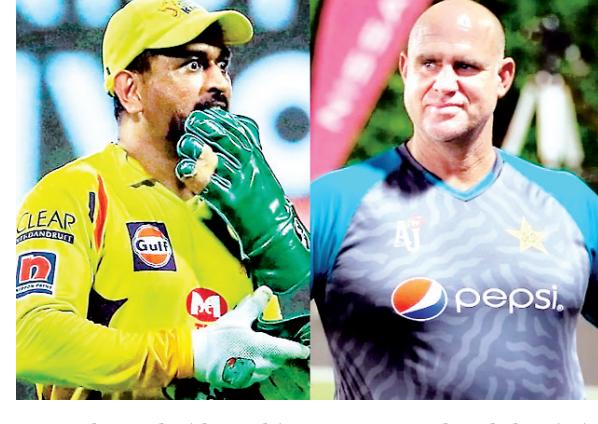
New Delhi, May 26 (PTD):

Mahendra Singh Dhoni is a "magician" who can turn someone else's "trash into treasure" says the great Matthew Hayden, who also reckons that the former India captain's unmatched contribution to the CSK success story makes his playing future with the franchise "almost irrelevant".

Dhoni's tactical genius has played a big part in CSK reaching their 10th IPL final. He did not have the best of bowling attacks at his disposal at the start of the tournament but he has been able to bring the best out of it.

How he has used Ajinkya Rahane and Shivam Dube in the batting department has also been praised widely.

Dhoni, who has played with a knee injury throughout the tournament, has given himself 8-



months to decide on his playing future. Hayden, however, feels the World Cup winning captain will not be around for the next IPL. "MS is a magician. He takes someone else's trash and makes it treasure. He is a very skilful and positive captain. He said something really interesting which I thought summed up not only his humility and his truth around cricket where he is represented and that is in Tamil Nadu Cricket Association," Hayden told PTI. "The alignment between that association and the franchise, how strong that is in terms of building that process. To me that is MS. There is a systematic way of going through things and working through them. He did that for India and he is doing it for Chennai Super kings."

Man United secures Champions League return with 4-1 rout of Chelsea

Manchester, May 26 (AP):

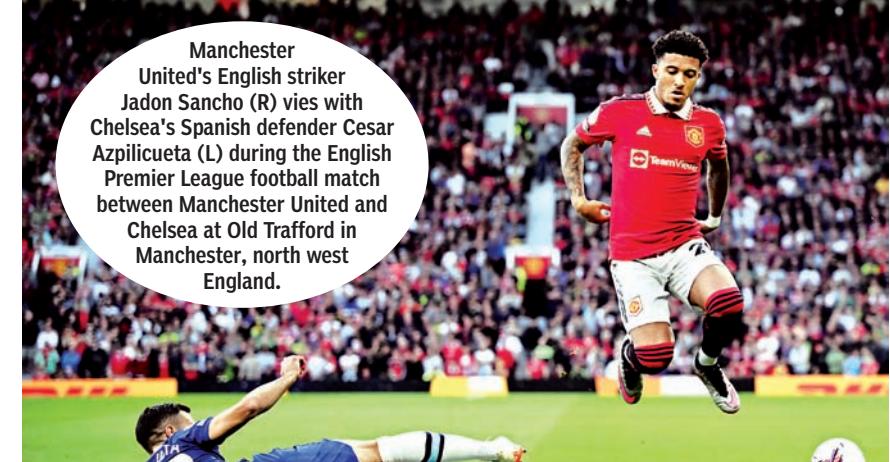
It has not always gone smoothly for Erik ten Hag in his first year in charge at Manchester United.

There is still much work to be done if the 20-time league champion is to be restored to its former glories.

But on Thursday night, in front of a packed Old Trafford, Ten Hag achieved what he called his "main objective" of securing a return to the Champions League with a 4-1 win against Chelsea.

"It is a successful season but the season is not finished," he said.

"This club belongs in the Champions League so you have to qualify in the first four. We played a good season in the Premier League. I think a very good season."



Goals from Casemiro, Anthony Martial, Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford fired United to a victory that means a top-four finish is now certain.

United moved up to third and two points above Newcastle going into the season finale.

It could get better still for Ten Hag, who has al-

ready lifted his first trophy the League Cup in February. United faces Manchester City in the FA Cup final on June 3 at Wembley.

Goals from Casemiro, Anthony Martial, Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford fired United to a victory that means a top-four finish is now certain.

Nine years of misery, says Cong on BJP anniv

New Delhi, May 26:

The Congress party on Friday said that nine years of the PM Narendra Modi-led Central government was filled with failure and misery for the country. It has alleged that the government did not fulfil its promises and people had to bear the brunt of unemployment and demonetisation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) among others.

In a series of tweets in Hindi, Congress claimed that people had to bear the brunt of inflation, unemployment and "dictatorial" decisions in these nine years. "Today Modi government completes 9 years. These are '9 years of failure'. There are 9 years of misery in the country. In these 9 years, people had to

bear the brunt of inflation, unemployment and dictatorial decisions. The Modi government, which came to power on the basis of jumbas, did not fulfil even a single promise. Just kept on giving date after date," tweeted Congress roughly translated into Hindi.

"Promise to double farmers' income by 2022. Promise to give house to all by 2022. Promised to give 15 lakhs by bringing black money. Promise of 2 crore jobs every year," tweeted Congress.

Attacking the PM, Congress said that PM Modi did not fulfil his promises, to the contrary and that he had put the country in trouble due to his ignorance. "Demonetisation destroyed the economy, peo-

ple died in bank lines. Who can forget that horrifying scene?", tweeted Congress. Attacking the PM further wrote that traders are devastated by the Gabbar Singh Tax (GST). It also claimed that the Centre's Agniveer scheme crushed the dreams of the youth of this country.

In another tweet, Congress accused the Modi-led BJP government of unleashing federal agencies on Opposition leaders. "Suppress someone who raises a voice, crush him, put him in jail, bulldoze him. Show fear of ED, CBI. If there is no government, buy power on the basis of money and kill democracy". "These are '9 years of failure'. Now people are tired of them. The

Karnataka election is proof of this, where the public directly rejected PM Modi and his corrupt government. This wave of discontent has started from the South which will engulf the whole country. The public is waiting and will give a befitting reply," tweeted Congress.

The Congress also attacked PM Modi on China. "Must remember... There was talk of showing red eye to China.

Eventually, the matter reached the red shirt. Today China is stopping us from patrolling on our land. Our brave soldiers also gave martyrdom for this and in the end the 'great man' started wooing China by wearing red shirt. This is their cowardice," tweeted Congress.

Sengol not symbol of transfer of power: Cong

New Delhi, May 12 (PTI):

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Friday claimed there is no documented evidence of Lord Mountbatten, C Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru describing the 'Sengol' as a symbol of transfer of power by the British to India. He also alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his drum-beaters are using the ceremonial sceptre for their political ends in Tamil Nadu.

On Twitter, Ramesh said, "The sceptre is now being used by the PM (prime minister) and his drum-beaters for their political ends in Tamil Nadu. This is typical of this brigade that embroilers facts to suit its twisted objectives. The real question is why is President Droupadi Murmu not being allowed to inaugurate the new Parliament."

He claimed that a majestic sceptre conceived of by a religious establishment in the Madras province and crafted in Madras city (now Chennai) was indeed presented to Nehru in August 1947. "There is no documented evidence whatsoever of Mountbatten, Rajaji and Nehru describing this sceptre as a symbol of transfer of British power to India. All claims to this ef-

fect are plain and simple — bogus," he said. "Wholly and completely manufactured in the minds of a few and dispersed into WhatsApp, and now to the drum-beaters in the media. Two of the finest Rajaji scholars with impeccable credentials have expressed surprise," the Congress general secretary communications said.

While announcing the boycott, the Opposition parties had said the prime minister's decision to inaugurate it by himself, "completely sidelining President Droupadi Murmu, is not only a grave insult but a direct assault on our democracy which demands a commensurate response".

"Is it any surprise that the new Parliament is being consecrated with typically false narratives from WhatsApp University? The BJP-RSS distorians stand exposed yet again with maximum claims, minimum evidence," Congress general secretary communications Ramesh said in his tweet.

No food, water for flight stranded in Mumbai for 10hrs

Mumbai, May 26:

As many as 300 passengers of a VietJet flight to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam were stranded at the city airport for around 10 hours due to a glitch in the aircraft, according to a passenger.

The passenger, on the condition of anonymity, alleged that the airline did not provide hotel accommodation or food for passengers despite the long delay.

Under DGCA rules, passengers are to be provided accommodation as well as food by the airline concerned if a flight is delayed beyond a stipulated time. Response was awaited to queries sent to VietJet.

"The flight VJ-884 (operating on Mumbai-Ho Chi Minh City

route) was to depart at 11.30 pm on Thursday. We boarded the flight at 11 pm. "However, when it did not take off for an hour, we asked for the reason. We were told there is some glitch in the aircraft and it will take some time for departure," said the passenger who was to travel to Bali via Vietnam on the flight.

"Between 11.30 pm and 5 am, till the time they brought us back to the immigration area, no food or water was provided to the stranded passengers," he said, adding that there is still no clarity about an alternative flight to Ho Chi Minh City.

The passengers were deplaned and brought back to the immigration area at around 7 am, he said.

DRUG DISPOSAL



Officials during incineration of seized drugs worth over Rs 1,500 crore, at Mumbai Waste Management plant in Taloja, in Navi Mumbai, Friday, May 26.

Will force govt to change POCSO Act: Brij Bhushan



New Delhi, May 26 (PTI):

Wrestling Federation of India president and Bharatiya Janata Party MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who faces a case under the POCSO Act, on Thursday said the law is being "misused" and under the leadership of seers, "we will force the government to change" it.

Singh was speaking to reporters at a meeting in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich regard-

ing preparations for a rally of seers called by him in Ayodhya on June 5. He has claimed 11 lakh seers will take part in the rally.

Top wrestlers of the country, including Vinesh Phogat and Olympic medallists Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik, have been staging a sit-in at Jantar Mantar in Delhi since April 23, demanding Singh's arrest for allegedly sexually harassing seven women grapplers, including a minor.

The Delhi Police has filed two FIRs against the WFI president. While the first FIR relates to allegations by the minor wrestler and has been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the second is related to outraging modesty. Singh alleged the POCSO Act is being "misused on a large scale".

"This law is being mis-

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