



BRIEF



A vehicle on the Badrinath National Highway after it got blocked due to a rise in the water level of Khachdu drain, near Lambagad, in Chamoli district, Sunday.

Fire

Betul: A fire broke out at a bakery in a town in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district on Sunday and no casualty was reported in the incident, police said. Goods worth Rs 10 lakh were destroyed in the blaze that erupted at a bakery in Shahpur town of the district around 5.30 am, Shahpur sub-divisional officer of police (SDOP) HL Sharma said. The blaze was put out in an hour at the establishment located near the old bus stand of the town about 35 km from the district headquarters, he said.

Injured

Nagpur: Five persons were seriously injured after their car fell off a bridge and landed on the railway tracks in Maharashtra's Nagpur district in the early hours of Sunday, an official said. The incident took place in Bamani village on the Nagpur-Chandrapur route, he said. "Car driver Yusuf Minaj (30), a resident of Hyderabad in Telangana, may have dozed off. He lost control of the car, which hit the safety barrier, keeled over and landed on the railway tracks below," he said.

Arrested

Garhwa: Two members of the banned outfit People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) were arrested in Jharkhand's Garhwa district, a police officer said on Sunday. The two were arrested from Bhavraha forest, around 205 km from the state capital Ranchi, on Saturday night, he said. "Two rifles, one country-made katta and naxal literature were recovered from them," said Ranka sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Santosh Kumar.

Mishap

Muzaffarnagar: Two workers of a steel factory were crushed to death by a speeding truck while two others were injured on the Delhi-Dehradun National Highway here on Sunday, police said. The incident happened in an area under the Mansoorpur police station. Those killed have been identified as Deepak (27) and Shekhar (28), Mansoorpur SHO Rojant Tyagi said.

Overturn

Hazaribag: One person was killed and 12 others were injured after a bus overturned and fell in a roadside ditch in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district on Sunday, police said. The bus was on the way to the Chhinmasta temple in Rajrapa in Ramgarh district from Jehanabad in Bihar with devotees when the accident happened on National Highway 2 near Pipra village in Chouparan police station area, they said.

Weather
High 33 Low 27

VERTICAL SPLIT IN NCP

Ajit Pawar sworn in as Maha deputy CM

Third time in 4 years

Mumbai, Jul 02 (PTD):

In a day of dramatic developments in Maharashtra politics, NCP leader Ajit Pawar on Sunday led a vertical split in the party to become the deputy chief minister, shocking his uncle Sharad Pawar, who founded the outfit 24 years ago.

Eight NCP leaders were also sworn in as ministers at the ceremony held at Raj Bhavan in south Mumbai.

The NCP patriarch tried to put up a brave front after his 63-year-old nephew's stunning rebellion, as sources claimed that 36 of the 53 MLAs of the party were solidly backing the new deputy CM. The rapidly unfolding developments came as a shocker for Sharad Pawar, even as sources said Ajit's rebellion was prompted by the NCP chief and his daughter Supriya Sule's presence at the recent conclave of opposition leaders in Patna. Addressing reporters after taking oath, Ajit Pawar said NCP decided to become part of the Shiv Sena-BJP government for the development of the country and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Maintaining that there was no split in NCP, Ajit Pawar said they would contest all future elections on the NCP's name and symbol.



Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais congratulates the newly sworn-in Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, during a ceremony at Raj Bhavan, in Mumbai, Sunday.

What Shinde said...

Reacting to the development, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said Maharashtra will now sprint forward with one chief minister and two deputy chief ministers. "Politics of development is being backed by a man of development. When a deserving party worker gets a secondary role, such things happen," Shinde said. "Now the double engine government has a triple engine. The state will sprint (on the path of development). Now we have one CM and two deputy chief ministers. This will help faster development of the state," he told reporters.

No official support from party: NCP

Senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar was sworn in as deputy chief minister while eight MLAs of the party took oath as ministers in the government led by the Shiv Sena and the Bharatiya Janata Party. In a video message, Tapase said NCP's party workers, district president, taluka president, youth and women are with party's national leader Sharad Pawar. "The oath-taking ceremony in Maharashtra was part of Operation Lotus and it has no official support of NCP. Those who took oath, it is their personal decision and not that of the NCP," he said.

Shinde said the party leadership will take action against those who joined the state Cabinet.

Sharad Pawar hints at seeking action against nephew Ajit Pawar

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday said a decision has to be taken on those who violated the party line and joined the Eknath Shinde government, indicating that action would be taken against Ajit Pawar and other leaders who became part of the ruling dispensation. Addressing a press conference here, Sharad Pawar said his endeavour after this development would be to travel as much as possible within state and the country, and build relations with people. Pawar said he would not fight over anyone saying anything by taking the NCP's name, but would go to people instead. "Those who violated the party line and took oath, a decision has to be taken on them," he said. He said some party leaders



were nervous about probes by the Enforcement Directorate and named Ajit Pawar, Chhagan Bhujbal, Dilip Walse-Patil, Hasan Mushrif. "Today's episode (on his party MLAs joining the Shinde government) may be new for others, but not for me," he said. Pawar said he was not bothered that people have left, but he was worried about their future.

More than 40 NCP MLAs support Ajit Pawar

NCP leader Ajit Pawar, who took oath as Deputy Chief Minister in the Shiv Sena-BJP government on Sunday, has the support of more than 40 MLAs and over six MLCs of his party, sources claimed citing a letter submitted to Raj Bhavan. NCP has 53 MLAs and nine MLCs. "Ajit Pawar has the support of more than 40 MLAs and more than six MLCs. A letter of support of these legislators was given to Raj Bhavan," the source told PTI.

"All the elected representatives (of the party) have supported the decision to join the government," he claimed.

Sharad Pawar said it was not the party's deci-

'Monsoon covers entire country six days early'

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTD):

The southwest monsoon on Sunday covered the entire country six days before the normal date, as it advanced in the remaining parts of Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

On Friday, the IMD had said the monsoon is expected to be normal in July across the country, barring parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and south Bihar.

The weather office said the monsoon covered the entire country on Sunday, against the normal date of July 8.

As many as 16 states and Union territories received deficient rainfall in June, with Bihar and Kerala reporting large deficits at 69 per cent and 60 per cent below normal, respectively.



Dark clouds hover over the city on a rainy day, in Solapur, Sunday.

Some other states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana also received less rainfall than what is normal for June, the first month of the southwest monsoon season.

"The monthly rainfall averaged over the country as a whole during July

2023 is most likely to be normal (94 to 106 per cent of LPA) and most probably within the positive side of the normal," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra had said on Friday.

The long period average (LPA) of rainfall over the country during July based on the data of 1971-2020 is about 280.4 mm.

'KCR's remote control with Modi'

Khammam, Jul 02 (PTD):

Launching a scathing attack on Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said his remote control was with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and described the state's ruling party as "BJP's B-Team" and its new nomenclature, BRS, as 'BJP Rishtedar Samiti'.

Gandhi alleged that the corruption charges against Rao and his party's leaders have made them subservient to the BJP, and asserted that he told all other opposition leaders that the Congress would not join any bloc where the BRS was involved. Addressing a public meeting here, Gandhi said, "BRS is like BJP Rishtedar Samiti. KCR thinks he is a king and Telangana is his kingdom."

'Modi govt looted India more in 9 years than Britishers'

Bilaspur, Jul 02 (PTD):

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday alleged the amount of "loot" by the Narendra Modi government in the last nine years surpassed the loot of India committed by Britishers in 250 years during their rule.

Addressing a public rally at Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh, where Assembly elections are due by this year-end, Kejriwal also targeted the Congress for "looting" the country over 75 years.

He appealed to people to vote Aam Aadmi Party to power to rid Chhattisgarh of corruption.

"Modi ji became angry at me saying I am distributing 'revdis' (welfare sops) in Delhi. Yes, Modi ji I am distributing. But your people are looting revdis and taking it to



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal speaks during a public meeting in Bilaspur, Sunday.

their homes Why are you worried when I am putting revdi in the hands of poor?" Kejriwal asked.

He alleged the prices of essential commodities are touching the sky.

"Vegetables, milk, flour everything became costly. Have you (people) ever thought about why prices are rising? Modi ji has slapped so much tax which was unprecedented after independence. Modi ji has not even spared tea,

coffee, milk, oil etc.," Kejriwal claimed. He said even the British didn't impose taxes on milk and other essentials (during their rule in India). We have never seen tax on food items in 75 years after independence, the AAP leader claimed.

"Whom he (PM Modi) is giving after collecting so much tax? He has 'friends'. Modi ji waived off Rs 11 lakh crore worth of debt of his friends. Modi ji, you are collecting tax on milk and buttermilk and openly giving the entire money to your friends.

"The Modi government has looted so much in nine years that even Britishers did not loot in 250 years. Even the Congress did not loot this much in 75 years," he added. Kejriwal wondered whether the prime minister would have waived "Rs 11 lakh crore debt" for free.

Kuki groups lift 2-month blockade

On NH-2 in Manipur

Guwahati, Jul 02 (PTD):

Two militant outfits of Manipur, under Suspensions of Operation, on Sunday said they have lifted the two-month long blockade in Kangpokpi district along the crucial National Highway-2.

Issuing a joint statement, the United Peoples' Front (UPF) and Kuki National Organisation (KNO) said the blockade has been lifted with immediate effect following "deep concern to restore peace and harmony" by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

However, Kuki civil society group Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU), which had announced a roadblock on NH-2 two months ago, has not officially withdrawn the agi-

Three killed, five injured in violence

Imphal: At least three "village volunteers" were killed and five others injured in an exchange of fire with unidentified gunmen in Manipur's Bishnupur district, police said on Sunday. The incident took place in Khoijumantabi village late on Saturday night when the "village volunteers" were guarding the area in a makeshift bunker, a police officer said. While two bodies were found initially, the third one was recovered later. Five people were injured in the shootout that lasted for several hours. A couple of them, the condition of whom was stated to be serious, were brought to a hospital in Imphal, police said.

tation yet. Manipur has two national highways -- NH-2 (Imphal-Dimapur) and NH-37 (Imphal-Jiribam).

IN HOPE OF BIG CATCH



A fisherman casts net on the River Hooghly during sunset, in Nadia, Sunday.

Five killed in accidents involving heavy vehicles

Korba, Jul 02:

Five persons were killed in two road accidents involving heavy vehicles in Chhattisgarh's Korba district, police said on Sunday.

The first accident took place on a newly-constructed bridge under Darri police station area around 1.30 am on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, a senior official said. Three men were killed when their speeding car overturned after hitting a cow and colliding with a heavy vehicle on the bridge. In another accident, two men were killed when the heavy vehicles they were driving collided with each other on Pali-Bilaspur Road in the early hours of Sunday.

adding that the cow also died in the accident due to the severe impact of the crash. In another accident, two men were killed when the heavy vehicles they were driving collided with each other on Pali-Bilaspur Road in the early hours of Sunday, another official said.

About the mishaps

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Baghel emphasises on increasing milk production in Chhattisgarh

Safety Warriors accord grand farewell to CGM GP Singh

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: Chief General Manager (Safety and Fire Services) of SAIL Bhilai Steel Plant, GP Singh was accorded a grand farewell by BSP's Safety Warriors and Safety Engineering Department on his retirement on 30 June 2023. Safety warriors showered flowers on GP Singh, who came out from the Main gate in an open jeep. People walked in front of his jeep singing and dancing amidst the drum beats. Escorting his jeep were safety warriors on 18 motorcycles. Popularity of GP Singh can be gauged from the fact that there was a long queue of people to wish him. Very few people get such a grand farewell. The Safety Warriors were dancing with full enthusiasm. People had gathered in large numbers to bid farewell to GP Singh. This procession started from the main gate of BSP



and moved to his Talpuri residence. DK Srivastava, Executive Director, QCFI, Hyderabad Head Quarter witnessed his grand farewell ceremony. He also honoured Singh with a bouquet. On this occasion, Singh's wife Babita Singh and her daughter Richa Nikhil were also present. It needs to be mentioned here that GP Singh has played an important role in giving a new dimension to the safety culture of Bhilai Steel Plant. Singh has made outstanding contributions in giving shape to innovative concepts like Safety Warriors and Safety Circle. He has 6 patents and 2 copyrights registered in his name. Singh has been awarded the Vishwakarma National Award several times at the national level for his innovative works. Presently, Singh is the Secretary of Bhilai Chapter of Quality Circle Forum of India and Director on the National Board of QCFI.

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: On Sunday, a day-long convention of Chhattisgarh Jheria Yadav Samaj was organized at Patan. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel attended the programme organized at Dewangan Samaj Bhavan as the chief guest. Chandrapur MLA Ramkumar Yadav was present as the special guest.

While addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel greeted the office bearers of the Yadav Samaj who had arrived from all the districts of the state. He said that the Yadav Samaj has been serving the cattle generation after generation.

The identity of the Samaj has been made as Gau Sevak. Today, due to the decrease in the num-



ber of farmers who own cattle, the system of Gauthans in the villages is also getting extinct. Keeping the situation in mind, the government has re-developed Gauthan in the villages for serving the Gau Mata.

He said that giving importance to cow dung, the government is buying cow dung in Gauthans. Today, people are making

their dreams come true by selling cow dung. The Chief Minister said that like the Green Revolution, milk production has to be promoted in the state through white revolution.

The government is making Krishna Kunj for greenery in villages and cities. He said that land and funds have been made available to all so-



cial organizations during the Bhet Mulaqat programmes. Referring to the demands of the society, the Chief Minister assured to provide funds after getting the estimate for the construction of a community building in Patan.

Special Guest Chandrapur MLA Ramkumar Yadav threw light on the objectives of

the state government's ambitious Narva, Garuva, Ghurwa, Bari scheme. Samaj President Jagnik Yadav, in his welcome speech, drew the attention of the Chief Minister towards various demands. On this occasion, all the office bearers of the Samaj, local public representatives and a large number of people were present.

Seminar organised at Rawatpura Pharmacy Kumhari

To create awareness about cheap generic medicines available for treatment under PMJAY

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: A seminar was organised at Shri Rawatpura Government Institute of Pharmacy Kumhari to make students aware about Jan Aushadhi and generic medicines on the occasion of Doctor's Day. The program was attended by Chief Guest Dr JK Upadhyay, Retired IFS, Special Guest Dr Omesh Bhagat MBBS Chief Medical Officer VY Hospital and Program Coordinator Anish Voditelwar Manager Sales & Marketing PMBJP. The program started with the worship of Maa Saraswati. Manager Anish Voditelwar gave presentation to the students on the Pradhanmantri Bharatiya



Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) theme of the year 2023 was 'Jan Aushadhi - Cheap Bhi Achhi Bhi'. Through it he stressed on the need to encourage people to avail affordable and quality generic medicines under PMJAY. Anish Voditelwar also distributed first aid kit to the staff and informed them to use the first aid kit as per their requirement to help themselves and the needy.

Dr JK Upadhyay retired IFS said, the achievements of PMBJP are quite satisfactory. This has not only removed the worries of crores of people of

the country regarding the cost of treatment, but has also made their lives easier. Dr JK Upadhyay encouraged the Director and Principal to organize more and more informative seminars. The program was successfully organized by Training and Placement Coordinator Aastha Verma and Pharmacy staff. The program was attended by Director Dr Preeti Gurnani, Nursing Principal D Chennamma Bhaskar, Pharmacy Principal Dr Alankar Srivastava, all the staff of Pharmacy and Nursing along with students.

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: The executive committee meeting of Steel Employees Union (INTUC) was held at the office located in Sector 3. It was decided to stage a demonstration at Boria Gate from 8:00 am to 9:00 am on July 5. The union is going to press various demands of the workers and organise a NJCS meeting. The office bearers expressed their displeasure over the poor arrangements of the hospital and township.

Union General Secretary Vansh Bahadur Singh said that the SAIL management is adopting a very discriminatory attitude between the officers and employees. Even after 20 months of the MoU, the wage revision has not been finalized yet. The employees are waiting for the arrears of 39 months. The employees are suffering



loss of House Rent Allowance and Night Shift Allowance. Young employees are waiting for the CTC committee meeting to transfer from one unit to another. It seems that SAIL management is not bothered about the problems of personnel. He said that the incentive scheme in Bhilai has not been revised for a long time. In the meeting, the executive members decided that they will stage a protest at Boria Gate on July 5 and send the charter of de-

mands to the SAIL Chairman. If the management does not call the NJCS meeting soon, the union will take further strict steps.

Union Secretary Govind Rathore said that there is no proper system to inform the family members of the patients admitted in the ICU of Sector 9 Hospital. He said that there is a need to install an announcement system so that the family of the patient can be contacted. He also complained about

falling roof plaster of houses in the township and said that despite continuous incidents, the township management is not paying attention.

Deputy General Secretary Ramashankar Singh said that the demand for allotting quarters up to 650 sq under licence scheme is pending yet. He said that the licence scheme for quarters up to 650 square feet should be introduced as soon as possible so that the company quarters

could be saved from illegal possession in the township.

Working President SK Baghel, Senior Vice President Santosh Kumar Kitchlu, Chandrashekhar Singh, S Ravi, Vice President Sachchidanand Pandey, Ajay Kumar Martin, Madanlal Sinha, Deputy General Secretary Dhanesh Prasad, Ramashankar Singh, Vipin Bihari Mishra, CP Verma, Shiv Shankar Singh, Senior Secretary Resham Rathor, K Raman Murthy, GK Agrawal, Deputy Treasurer GR Suman, Secretary D Shankar, Arif Manjar, SP Singh, Prakash Mahle, Rakesh Kumar Tiwari, M Sundar Murthy, Ramakant Nishad, Tamradhwaj Sinha, Madan Mohan Soni, office incharge Jitendra Agarwal and other members of the working committee were present.

Health & Hygiene awareness programme organised on National Doctor's Day

Bhilai Steel Plant's several departments register back-to-back records in June-end



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: On National Doctor's Day, Bhilai Education Charitable Trust (BECT) in collaboration with Inner Wheel Bhilai Steel City organised a Health and Hygiene awareness program at Government Middle School Risali. The program aimed to educate primary and middle school students on various aspects of health, hygiene, and well-being. The event featured sessions conducted by expert doctors specializing in different areas of healthcare.

The Health and Hygiene awareness program commenced on National Doctor's Day, providing an excellent opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of medical professionals.

The program focused on imparting essential knowledge to students, ensuring they understand the significance of maintaining good health and hygiene practices.

In the first session, Dr Abiya Khan (HOD physiotherapy, Hitek hospital) led a session on correct sitting posture and instructed various exercises. Students were educated on the importance of maintaining a proper posture while studying or engaging in other activities. Dr Abiya demonstrated exercises to improve flexibility, strengthen muscles, and prevent musculoskeletal issues related to incorrect posture.

In the second session Dr Niharika Baghel (Ayush Medical Officer, National Health Mission, Durg) conducted an interactive session to address

nutrition-related concerns and promote healthy eating habits. She guided students on the importance of balanced meals, explained the role of nutrients in growth and development, and discussed strategies for maintaining a healthy diet. Dr Niharika emphasized the use of food and nutrition to promote overall health and manage potential diseases.

The third session was related to menstruation hygiene. Dr Aarti Choudhary (Homeo Doctor) delivered an informative session specifically aimed at girls, focusing on menstruation hygiene. She sensitized the students about the menstrual cycle, discussed proper hygiene practices, and provided guidance on managing menstrual health. Dr Aarti aimed to

promote awareness and ensure that girls felt comfortable discussing this important aspect of their well-being.

The Health and Hygiene Camp organized by BECT in collaboration with Inner Wheel Bhilai Steel City on National Doctor's Day was a resounding success. Through the expertise of Dr Aarti, Dr Abiya Khan, and Dr Niharika Baghel, the students gained valuable knowledge about correct sitting posture, nutrition, and menstruation hygiene. This initiative not only educated the students but also empowered them to make informed decisions regarding their health and well-being.

BECT took the opportunity to felicitate these doctors on the occasion of National Doctor's Day. Sanitary pads were distributed to the girl students. The Program was graced by the presence of Devendra Tiwari (HM, Govt MS Risali), Inner Wheel Bhilai Steel City President - Reema Rajeev, Club Secretary- Pranoti Gajbhiye, Inner wheel team members and the school staffs. The Complete program was coordinated and handled by EP Ritesh (Chief program officer, BECT). By organizing such health and hygiene awareness programs, BECT strives to create a healthier and more informed generation, equipping them with the necessary tools to lead healthier lives.



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: As the month of June 2023 came to an end, several new records of production were set by SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant in several areas of production as well as productivity parameters on June 30, 2023. The Plant's finishing mills including Universal Rail Mill, Merchant Mill, and Wire Rod Mill, along with Coke Oven & Coal Chemical Department have set several new day and shift records.

Plant's Merchant Mill has created history by setting new records in production of Angle 75 on three consecutive days. On June 28, 2023, Merchant Mill achieved record day production of 2225 tonnes and record shift production of 838 tonnes in Angle 75x8 profile. On June 29, 2023, the Mill set another record with a day production of 2202 tonnes and a shift production of 862 tonnes in Angle 75x10 profile. On June 30, 2023, the Mill surpassed this record as well by achieving a day

production of 2342 tonnes in Angle 75x10 profile.

The Plant's Wire Rod Mill too has set new production and dispatch records. Rolling plain wire rod coils in combination of 6,6.5 mm, the Mill surpassed the previous best production record of 1598T in the same combination on March 26, 2023. On June 30, 2023, the Mill scaled new heights by producing 1603 Tonnes, thereby serving a new day record. The month of June 2023 has also witnessed a new dispatch record of wire rod coils produced through SMS 3 route. Surpassing the previous dispatch record of 39064 T created in March 2019, Wire Rod Mill set a new monthly record by dispatching 40693 T in June 2023. Direct dispatch of 25179 T by WRM in June 2023 is also the best ever monthly record, surpassing the previous best of 19550 T in Sept 2019.

Another record was set by Universal Rail Mill, the Modex unit of SAIL Bhilai Steel Plant, that rolls out the world's longest 130-



metre rail as a single piece. The Mill has also recorded an ever best day rolling record on June 2023 by rolling 416 blooms, with support from all the associated Departments.

On the other hand, Plant's Coke Oven & Coal Chemical Department (CO&CCD) has also recorded a best ever pushing of 794 eq ovens (23831) on June 30, 2023, surpassing previous best of pushing 763 ovens in June 2010. Another best ever coke pushing record was also made on the same day by CO&CCD by pushing 801 eq ovens (72850), against the previous best of pushing 771 eq ovens (70197) in 2010-11.

These remarkable achievements were made with collective efforts and coordination of employees of the respective departments. Plant personnel worked together with utmost dedication and completed given tasks on time, under the leadership of the concerned Departmental Heads, resulting in improved productivity and breaking of

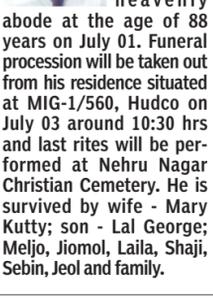
previous records.

The Bhilai Steel Plant Management has congratulated the URM, WRM, MM and CO&CCD collective for these achievements, along the Research & control Lab team of the Plant and other central and supporting agencies and departments for the superlative performances recorded on the day.

OBITUARY

George Varghese

Bhilai: Retired BSP employee George Varghese left for heavenly abode at the age of 88 years on July 01. Funeral procession will be taken out from his residence situated at MIG-1/560, Hudco on July 03 around 10:30 hrs and last rites will be performed at Nehru Nagar Christian Cemetery. He is survived by wife - Mary Kutty; son - Lal George; Meijo, Jiomol, Laila, Shaji, Sebin, Jeol and family.



Education is the only medium that enables the development of a person: CM

CM pays obeisance to Swami Dayanand Saraswati on his death anniversary and Tularam Arya Parganihaji on his Appearance Day

Chief Minister attended the provincial Arya convention and Gyan Jyoti Parv



Arya Convention and Gyan Jyoti Parv organized at the Shahid Smarak Bhawan in Raipur. He said that the revolutionary movement started by Swami Dayanand Saraswati is now reaping results. The Chief Minister also stated that Swami Dayanand Saraswati had raised his

voice in favour of educating women, as a result of which the number of female students in Chhattisgarh's colleges exceeds the number of male students.

Arya Convention and Gyan Jyoti Parv

Paying obeisance to Swami Dayanand Saraswati on the occasion of his 200th Anniversary and the 150th Foundation Day of Arya Samaj, Chief Minister Mr. Baghel congratulated everyone on the celebration of Gyan Jyoti Parv. Remembering the Founder of Arya Samaj in Chhattisgarh, Tularam Arya Parganihaji, on his Appearance Day, he said that the revered Tularam Arya Ji had made commendable endeavours towards social reform at the local level in the state. We are thankful to him for his

generosity and charity.

In his address, the Chief Minister said that the development of society is a complex process and that it takes centuries to create an advanced society. A society can progress only through the emergence of new ideas and the modification of old concepts, resulting in the development of its scientific outlook. He highlighted the fact that Indian society has always welcomed new ideas. The Sanatan tradition has survived since time immemorial and will continue till eternity.

Swami Aryavesh from Delhi, who attended the Provincial Arya Convention and Gyan Jyoti Festival, praised the schemes of the Chhattisgarh Government in his address and said that the Gauthan scheme

has helped in the conservation of cattle and also secured employment for villagers. While praising the Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel, Swami Aryavesh said that the Ram Van Gaman Tourism Circuit is a commendable project launched by the state government.

The Minister of Food and Culture Amarjeet Bhagat, Chairman of Chhattisgarh Mineral Development Corporation Girish Dewangan, Member of Chhattisgarh State Backward Classes Commission R.N. Verma, Swami Aryavesh from Arya Samaj, Chairman of Chhattisgarh Provincial Arya Samaj Acharaya Anshudev, Minister Bhuvnesh Sahu, and other officials and members were present on the occasion.

BAGS ON DEMAND



With reopening of Schools few days back, the demand for water-proof schools bags has increased with arrival of monsoon.

Raipur, Jul 02: 'We are progressing forward while preserving our culture and respecting our traditions. Education is the only medium through which the development of an individual is possible'. The Chief Minister Mr. Bhupesh Baghel said this during the Provincial

Baghel ridicules Maha govt with 'autorickshaw' comment

● **After Ajit Pawar is inducted**

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday said the split in the Nationalist Congress Party and Ajit Pawar joining the Eknath Shinde-Devendra Fadnavis government had made it a "three-wheel" autorickshaw from a "double engine" dispensation.

Pawar was sworn in as deputy chief minister in the neighbouring state during the day while eight of his NCP colleagues were made ministers in the Shinde government.

Asserting there would be further upheavals in the Maharashtra govern-

What CM said....

Asserting there would be further upheavals in the Maharashtra government, Baghel said, "I saw Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar sitting side by side and smiling, while CM Shinde, sitting on the other side of governor, seemed disappointed." "Last time, a split was engineered of the Shiv Sena and this time it is of the NCP. Earlier, there was a double engine government and now it is a three wheel autorickshaw," he said sarcastically.

ment, Baghel said, "I saw Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar sitting side by side and smiling, while CM Shinde, sitting on the other side of governor, seemed disappointed."

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three wheel autorickshaw," he said sarcastically.

Baghel also said NCP chief Sharad Pawar had not "opened his cards".

"More upheavals will take place. People do not like such developments and its impact will be seen in the future," the Chhattisgarh CM claimed.

Potaka tweets and praises the works of Chhattisgarh Millet Mission

Vice-Chancellor of Agricultural University, gives information about the Millet Mission and Paddy Research Program in international workshop organized in Ghana

Raipur, Jul 02: Eminent agriculture and nutrition expert and Deputy Director General (Crops) of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) Manila, Ms Joanna Kane-Potaka has appreciated the work being done under

Chhattisgarh Millet Mission to promote the production of small grain crops (Kodo-Kutki, Ragi) in Chhattisgarh.

Ms Potaka has praised the seed production program of small cereal crops under the Chhattisgarh Millet Mission and seed distribution system to farmers, establishment of millet processing centers with community participation through Krishi Vigyan Kendras. She also admired procurement of small grain crops like Kodo, Kutki, Ragi etc. from the farmers by the state government at the support price, inclusion of small grain crops in view of nutritional value in the mid-day meal program and establishment and operation of millet cafes in various districts through women self-help groups.



Ms Potaka has tweeted about this while sharing a photo of her meeting with Dr. Girish Chandel, Vice Chancellor of Indira Gandhi Agricultural University, during the "International High Impact Rice Breeding Workshop" organized in the South African country Ghana. Significantly, Ms. Potaka is also the Executive Director of the Smart Food Program.

Dr. Girish Chandel, Vice-Chancellor of Indira

Gandhi Agricultural University, participated as a subject-expert in a four-day workshop on "Modernization of Paddy Breeding Programme" organized in Kumasi city of Ghana. Dr. Chandel had given information about the work and activities being done to promote the production of small grain crops under the Chhattisgarh Millet Mission, run under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel

in Chhattisgarh. Dr. Chandel also informed about the research work being done on small grain crops at Indira Gandhi Agricultural University under the Millet Mission and the Millet Processing Center and Millet Cafe established through Krishi Vigyan Kendras. He also informed the agricultural scientists from different countries about the research work being done in the direction of modernizing the paddy breeding program at Indira Gandhi Agricultural University in the international workshop. While taking part in the workshop, a research scholar doing research in the field of paddy breeding contacted Dr Chandel and expressed interest in doing research in paddy breeding at Indira Gandhi Agricultural University.

NSCAEN to speed up activities of sickle cell investigation, prevention: Singhdeo

Raipur, Jul 02: Health and Family Welfare Minister TS Singhdeo has said that the National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission will speed up the activities of sickle cell investigation and its prevention in the state. The state government is already working seriously for its elimination, he said during inauguration of National Sickle Cell Elimination Mission (NSCAEN) by the Government of India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the mission on the national level from Shahdol. Singhdeo



joined the inauguration programme through video conferencing from Hamar Hospital Raja Talab Raipur. Singhdeo said that the foundation stone of the Center of Excellence of Sickle Cell Institute was laid in Raipur recently. Member of Parliament

Sunil Soni, former MLA Nande Sahu, Secretary of Health Department Siddharth Komal Pardeshi, Director of National Health Mission Bhoskar Vilas Sandipan and Corporator Akash Tiwari were also present with Singhdeo during the

programme.

On the occasion of the launch of the National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission, Singhdeo said that sickle cell screening must be done before marriage and before the birth of a child. One in ten people in Chhattisgarh is a sickle cell carrier, he said, adding that everyone should get it checked. POC kits are also being procured by the Health Department for the examination of sickle cell, he said and added that awareness among people about this disease was increasing now.

CM extends his best wishes for Guru Purnima

Raipur, Jul 02: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has congratulated and extended his best wishes for Guru Purnima to the people of the state. In his message issued on the eve of Guru Purnima, the Chief Minister said that Guru has been given the highest place in Indian culture. In India, Guru Purnima is celebrated on the day of Ashad Purnima. On this day, people express their gratitude and respect for the invaluable knowledge and wisdom of Gurus. A Guru ushers in the light of knowledge in our lives. The Chief Minister said that we should strive forward by imbibing the teachings of our Gurus.

Nirankari Mahila Sant Samagam organized

Raipur, Jul 02: Nirankari Mahila Sant Samagam was organized at Sindhi Dharmashala, Telibandha here on Sunday. Presiding over the programme Ravinder Kaur ji from Bilaspur gave the holy message of Nirankari Satguru Mata Sudiiksha Ji Maharaj in her discourses and said that "there is no need to take out separate time for devotion just like we do not need any extra time for breathing.

Nirankari Mission has always been Bestowed with the shadow of "mother power" and today under the guidance of Satguru Mata Ji, the mission is teaching the way of devotion to this world. The strength of a building depends on its foundation. Similarly, the education and culture that one gets



in childhood from mother creates a beautiful personality. A person learns dignity from home. The joy of devotion is also obtained from dignity.

Just as a river gives happiness when it is between two banks, in the same way, if life is kept within limits, then it becomes the cause of good for the world, otherwise it becomes the cause of loss. Similarly a person with limitations using wisdom can be a boon to society."

Many forms of women power were mentioned in this Nirankari Mahila Sant Samagam. Contribution of women is being seen in every field. The world is seeing the role of women in every field from home to business, corporate, bank, army, farm-barn to aeroplane. Zonal Incharge Gurbaksh Singh Kalra shared Tulsu Das ji's couplet and said that 'Sut Dara aur Lakshmi paapi ke bhi hoe Sant Samagam Hari Katha Tulsu durlabh Doe'.

Woman crushed to death by truck

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: A woman was crushed to death by a truck after she fell from Activa scooter in Pachpedi Naka Chowk of Raipur on Sunday morning. Eyewitnesses told that the accident was very frightening as it took place in a few seconds, claiming life of the woman. A crowd of people gathered on the road, the police were informed.

A woman died after she came under wheels of a truck on the service road leading towards Santoshi Nagar. In the presence of the police, the body of the woman was sent for post-mortem. According to the information received from Rajkumar Yadav, nephew of the woman, he and his aunt used to live in Oriya

Basti in Mandir Hasaud area. The family of his aunt Ramabai Yadav lived in another area. Ramabai, who belongs to family of daily wage earners, had to come to Pachpedi Naka for some work. She asked her nephew to accompany her to Pachpedi Naka. The Rajkumar brought Ramabai to Pachpedi Naka on his scooter.

Rajkumar told that at around 9:00 am he reached Pachpedi Naka with his aunt. He said that he and his aunt had to go to Laxmi Nagar. Meanwhile an auto came in front of the bypass road. He applied the brakes of his Activa. Due to the shock, his aunt fell down and then came under wheels of a truck coming from behind.

Sports Minister inaugurates training program for Kabaddi players

Meets players in Khelo India State Center of Excellence and Girls Residential Kabaddi Academy, reviews facilities

Awards outstanding sports persons at the national level

Raipur/Bilaspur, Jul 02: Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Umesh Patel met the players of Khelo India State Center of Excellence and Girls Residential Kabaddi Academy located in Bilaspur district and took stock of the facilities being provided to them besides giving necessary directions to the officials. He inaugurated the training session of the players in the Kabaddi Academy and honored the national level



outstanding players of the Kabaddi Academy by giving mementos.

Patel planted fruit and shady trees at State Sports Training Centre Bahtarai on late BR Yadav Memorial Day and appealed to the common people to plant trees as well.

Patel said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, the state government was making continuous efforts to promote sports. Apart from training in various disciplines, necessary facilities are also being provided to the sports persons of the state, he

said. He told that 27 Khelo India Centers had been started by the government to promote sports. Through this, the natural talent present in the talented players is being nurtured, he added.

MLA Bilaspur city Shailesh Pandey, Chairman of Chhattisgarh Tourism Board Atal Srivastava, Vice Chancellor of Atal Bihari Vajpayee University Prof. ADN Vajpayee along with senior social workers Vijay Kesharwani, Krishna Kumar Yadav (Raju Yadav) and Vivek Vajpayee were present.

National level selection of 9 players of the state in Taekwondo

Raipur, Jul 02: The players of Chhattisgarh are bringing laurels to Chhattisgarh by showcasing their talent in the Taekwondo game. The 19th State Level Taekwondo Competition was organized from June 26 to June 29, 2023 at Jashpur's Taekwondo Stadium. As many as 12 players taking training in Taekwondo game of Jashpur district participated in the competition.

They made the district proud by getting 9 gold, 4 silver, 2 bronze medals while showing their talent. Similarly, the district has also got success in getting runner up in whole of Chhattisgarh in Taekwondo Poomsae. Among them, three belonging to Eklavya Sports Academy Jashpur Taekwondo have received gold medals. The winning players will leave for Bangalore on July 4 for the junior level competition and the selected players for the



cadet category will leave for Lucknow on July 25, 2023. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has congratulated the players and coaches who won medals by performing excellently in Taekwondo.

The Collector of Jashpur district informed that in the state level competition, 5 players of Swami Atmanand English Medium School have won medals. Among them Rudra Pratap Singh won silver medal along with gold medal while Yuvraj Kumar won gold medal and Ms. Srishti Ekka

won silver medal. Ayush Yadav and Ashwin Kumar have got bronze medals, he informed. Pratik Bada of Jashpuranchal English Medium School bagged gold medal. Three players from Swami Atmanand Hindi Medium School and Eklavya Sports Academy Jashpur have also bagged medals. The three players are Ajay Chouhan who bagged two gold medals, Arjun Ram who bagged 1 gold medal and 1 silver medal and Karan Ram who bagged 1 gold medal.

Sahu community has a significant contribution in devp: CM

● **CM attends the inauguration ceremony of Arjun Sadan organized by Ch'garh Pradesh Sahu Sangh**

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, July 02: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel graced the inauguration of Arjun Sadan, a newly constructed building for the community, organised by Chhattisgarh Pradesh Sahu Sangh on Sunday. In his address, he lauded the hard-working and enterprising nature of the Sahu community, noting their participation in charitable endeavours. The Chief Minister acknowledged the community's significant contributions to the development

and progress of Chhattisgarh. He said, "The dreams of our forefathers are coming true, which is evident through the self-respect and pride on people's faces. The current state of our society reflects the efforts of our ancestors, for which we should remember and honour them".

Chief Minister Baghel announced that the government would allocate land to communities at a subsidized rate of 10 per cent for the construction of community halls. Recognizing the financial burden of renting hotels or marriage halls, the government aims to support communities by providing them with their own spaces. The decision was made after receiving requests for land and financial support for building construction



during the 'Bhent Mulakat Abhiyan'. Currently, land allocation is underway for some communities, while construction has already begun for others. The completion of these community halls will facilitate marriages and other community events for all communities, ensuring collective co-operation and support. CM Baghel announced that the present Chhattisgarh

Government has initiated the process of reserving land for Gauthans and allocating land to communities for community halls. Unlike other states, Chhattisgarh boasts a proportionally good availability of land relative to its population. This significant step makes Chhattisgarh the first state to provide substantial assistance in terms of land and building for all communi-

ties. The Chief Minister highlighted the government's commitment to fostering economic prosperity among farmers and artisans in rural areas, as well as preserving and strengthening traditional businesses. Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu and Urban Administration Minister Shiv Kumar Dahariya also addressed the program. MP Chunnilal Sahu, Chairman of Chhattisgarh State Mineral Development Corporation Girish Dewangan, Chairman of Chhattisgarh Telghani Board Sandeep Sahu, Chairman of Municipal Corporation Raipur Mr. Pramod Dubey and office bearers of Sahu Samaj were present.

CM Baghel invites Dalai Lama for upcoming World Buddhist meeting

● **To be held in Sirpur's Gurugram**

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel extends an invitation to Dalai Lama for a visit to the state. The Chairman of Sirpur Special Area Development Authority, Satish Jaggi, met Dalai Lama in Dharamshala and extended the invitation on behalf of the Chief Minister. Jaggi presented the Dalai Lama with a state 'gamchha' and a memento representing Chhattisgarh.

Chairman of Sirpur Special Area Development



Authority, Jaggi, discussed Chief Minister Baghel's plan to develop and establish Sirpur as a World Heritage Site for Buddhist Heritage with Dalai Lama. Mr. Jaggi conveyed the

Chief Minister's invitation to the Dalai Lama for the upcoming World Buddhist Meeting in Sirpur's Gurugram, scheduled from September 6th to September 9th, 2023.

Shala Pravesh Utsav held in SAEHMS CM inaugurates the newly constructed Khokhsa Railway Overbridge

● **Students welcomed with 'tilak' and sweets**

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, Jul 02: Shala Pravesh Utsav was observed at Swamy Atmanand Excellent Hindi Medium (Model Girls) School (SAEHMS) in Kawardha and the chief guest was member Chhattisgarh Raj Yoga Commission Ganeshnath Yogi, VVIP guest was Gangotri Yogi, district Mahila Congress President and President Shala Prabandhan and special guest was Tarani Thakur-District Mahila Congress. All the guests welcomed the children by applying 'tilak' and offering sweets and welcomed all the newly admitted stu-



dents in the School. Speaking as the Chief Guest- Ganeshnath Yogi said that both the School and its teachers are the supreme and the children who will come to school on time and follow the rules and discipline as given by teachers would get full success, said President Shala Prabandhan Samiti and special guest of the programme and extended greeting to all the stu-

dents. All the children have been blessed with knowledge and passion to excel and the need is to take right decision at the right time and do the right work. All children should study with due sincerity and they can become what they want in their life. One should not lag behind in doing hard work and it is the God who help the one who do not

hesitate to take an extra step. Special guest Tarani Thakur also extended greetings to all the children present.

Presiding over the programme, the Principal RP Singh presented the School's annual report and apprised the chief guests and others about the activities as well and wished all the best for the future of students. He also made an appeal to all the teachers to work with commitment for development of the school and its students.

On this occasion Sankul Co-ordinator Durgesh Pandey was specially present. In the Shaha Pravesh Utsav, the teachers, and other teaching staff of Middle and Higher Secondary department were present in large number.

● **At Jangir-Champa**

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel virtually inaugurated the newly constructed Khokhsa Railway Overbridge at Jangir-Champa at his residential office on Saturday.

It is worth noting that the construction of a railway over-bridge on the Howrah-Mumbai rail route in the Jangir-Champa district will provide a smooth traffic flow for the residents of the area throughout the year.

With its construction, over 10,000 people will be able to travel to district and tehsil headquarters



every day. The length of the bridge is 1168 meters and is build at a cost of over 29 crore rupees.

Two reps from Tadmethla Panchayat killed by Naxalites

● **Including Dy. Sarpanch Madvi Ganga, Shikshadoot Kawasi Sukka**

Central Chronicle News

Konta, Jul 02: Deputy Sarpanch of Tadmethla Panchayat under Chintagufa police station of Sukma district, Madvi Ganga and Shikshadoot Kawasi Sukka were killed by the Naxalites in village Duled area under Jagargunda sub-division about 8 days back. Madvi Ganga and Kawasi Sukka were murdered by the Naxalites by setting up a public court on June 28.

For their release, the villagers of Tadmethla and surrounding areas went to the

Naxalites, who have returned and all are safe. Madvi Ganga was also called by Naxalites 2 years ago and was released after a few days. This time too, knowing the situation as normal, the family members did not inform the police, thinking that Madvi Ganga would be released again this time too. Deputy Sarpanch Madvi was making aware the villagers of the area about the benefits of public welfare schemes like Aadhar Card, Ration Card, Food Scheme, Ayushman Card etc. of the Central Government and by teaching rural children of sensitive areas like Shikshadoot Kawasi Sukka Tadmethla was working to educate, so that the children get

educated and become partners in the development of the society and the region. But the Naxalites did not want that the children should be educated, people should be made aware of the schemes of the government, so to save their crumbling mass base, the Naxalites brutally murdered both the persons by holding a public court.

As soon as the police got information about the incident, the police tried to rescue everyone. At present, advance legal action is being taken by the police party after going to Tadmethla village and conducting the panchnama of the dead bodies of both of them. All the Naxalites involved in this incident are being ascertained.

Addition of names in voter list in progress

Final voter list to be published on October 4, 2023

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: For the General Assembly Election 2023, the second special brief revision of electoral rolls is in progress in the state. Meanwhile, door-to-door surveys are being conducted to identify and add the new unregistered citizens, to omit the names of the dead and permanently transferred voters and to create an accurate error-free voter list.

Names of the new unregistered citizens of age 18 years will be added to the voter list through form 6. Form 7 will be filled for deletion of the names of dead or perma-

nently transferred voters and form 8 will be made available for any amendment or transfer in voter's details. This time, for the revision, October 1, 2023 has been decided to be the qualifying date, i.e. the names of all the citizens who have completed 18 years of age on or before this date can be added to the voter list.

Voter Helpline App and Voter Service Portal are available for the general public to fill online form for addition, alteration and deletion. BLO App will be used to fill the form by BLO. Interested citizens can also fill the form offline on paper and submit it to

the BLO.

According to the program issued by the Election Commission of India, the voter list will be published at first on August 2, 2023, and the final publication will be done on October 4, 2023, in all the polling stations of the state as well as on the website of the Chief Electoral Officer's office.

In the 30-day review period from August 2 to August 31, extensive publicity and other awareness programs will be conducted under an intensive campaign to collect the forms in all the booths of the state. Special camps will also be organized on 12 and 13

August and 19 and 20 August 2023.

The forms received for the revision will be resolved by the concerned Electoral Registration Officers by 22 September 2023, after which the final voter list will be published on 4 October 2023.

Chief Electoral Officer, Chhattisgarh Reena Babasaheb Kangale said that to ensure transparency, the recognized political parties can appoint their booth level agents to provide necessary support in identifying new unregistered voters, deceased and transferred voters.

For this, a meeting of

all the recognized political parties at the state and district level were held and they were informed in the context. She further informed that after the electoral roll was published on January 5, a total of 1,96,671 new names have been added so far and as of today, a total of 1,95,87,994 voters are registered in the state.

Post revision, the number of voters is expected to increase. Chief Electoral Officer has appealed to people to come forward and participate in the process of creating an accurate and error-free electoral roll.

Repair, renovation of School buildings being done under MSJY

● **Govt has sanctioned Rs 25.44 cr for additional rooms**
● **387 works of repair completed; 284 by July 10**

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, Jul 02: Under the state government's Mukhyamantri School Jatan Yojana (MSJY), the Schools in the state are getting transformed. Under this Scheme, there is repair, renovation and re-construction work being carried out in the Schools and for which sanction from the state government has been received.

In the above repair, renovation and re-construction work, a total of Rs 25.44 cr has been sanctioned for 663



construction work of additional rooms. Out of these 86 works have been completed and other 301 are in progress and out of which 120 would be completed by June 30. For the remaining 284 repair works, they are also nearing completion and are expected to be completed by July 10.

The remaining 46 works will also be completed soon. In this way, the construction of 120 additional rooms is also going on in full swing and would be completed by the department by 15 Sept and there

are just 7 such works which have been cancelled.

Collector Janmajay Mohobe is regular conducting review of works sanctioned under MSJY. Collector had recently conducted combined meeting with field staff of Kawardha, Bodala, Pandaria, Sahaspur, Lohara block-level and directed to complete the same soon. For this he directed to hold regular meetings in order to conduct regular monitoring. He directed the officers

right from district level to District Education officer, to District Mission Co-ordinator and all Block-level officers to ensure quality in the construction work and conduct constant monitoring of the same and the work agency was asked to complete the work on time ensuring quality in the construction work.

It is notable here that under MSJY, both the School Education Department and Samagra Shiksha head, the repair and renovation works in the Schools is being carried out, so that the students get good teaching and studying atmosphere.

It is notable that the above work is being done by the Rural Engineering Services department and out of which many works have been completed and schools have been started.

CAIT urged for a fresh review of GST tax system: Amar Parwani

● **Central GST and Excise Commissioner felicitated CAIT CG Chapter on the completion of 6 years of GST**

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: National Senior Vice President of Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Amar Parwani, Chairman Mangal Malu, Amar Gidwani, State President Jitendra Doshi, Working President Vikram Singhdeo, Parmanand Jain, Vashu Makhija, General Secretary Surinder Singh, Working General Secretary Bharat Jain and Treasurer Ajay Agarwal informed that on completion of 6 years of GST, the Central GST and Excise Commissioner Mr. Mohammad Abu Shama felicitated CAIT CG Chapter.

A delegation of CAIT under the leadership of Mr. Amar Parwani, National Senior Vice President of CAIT participated in the program. National Senior Vice President of CAIT, Amar Parwani and State President, Mr. Jitendra Doshi said that Confederation of All India



Traders (CAIT), describing the completion of 6 years of implementation of GST in the country, said that one country - one concept of tax has got wide success across the country, which is proved by the fact that the revenue of GST has now become more Rs. one lakh sixty thousand crore per month which is a record. There has been a tremendous increase in revenue collection of both Central and State

Government. The contribution of the business class across the country is very important in this growth.

Mr. Parwani and Mr. Doshi congratulated on the success of GST and said that a special task force should be formed to make the GST tax system permanent and remove the existing anomalies to create a more simplified tax system, in which senior government officials would be involved. Apart

from this, representatives of traders and industry should also participate. While this task force will give suggestions to rationalize the GST tax system and reduce the multiplicity of laws and regulations on traders, on the other hand, how to develop the more tax revenue, suggestions will also be given to prevent fake billing and taking wrong inputs. Mr. Parwani and Mr. Doshi said that the central and state governments and traders have had many experiences regarding the GST tax system implemented in the country for the last 6 years and on the basis of those experiences, this tax system should be reviewed afresh and Based on the vision of Ease of Doing Business, GST should be developed as such a simple and convenient tax system that even a common businessman can easily follow.

He also suggested that a GST coordination committee should be formed at each district level in the country under the chairmanship of the collector, in which local tax and other officials and people from local business organizations should be included.

Successful is the one who learned more from life than from books: Collector

Central Chronicle News

Balod, Jul 02: 'Garbo future program' was organized by the district administration here in the community building of Gurur Nagar in Balod district, where hundreds of children participated in the program showing interest for placement.

District Collector Kuldeep Sharma also gave guidelines to all the beneficiaries regarding employment and said that apart from books, we should also learn from life.

The Collector told that for self-employment and placement related programs, registration is being done in the administration portal according to development blocks,



Gurur block where the event is being organized, so far more than 1000 registrations have been done through online medium, which is increasing continuously.

Work has also started on

906 registrations, he said. He also said that apart from setting up camps in development blocks in the entire district, camps will also be organized at the district level so that youths can be given jobs in

good companies with better guidance.

The Collector in his address gave inspiration to all the unemployed youths here at Gurur Community Hall to move forward in life. The collector said that

this is not my first job, before that I did many jobs after which I got this post.

He said that the skill never goes away; it is connected with our life. The collector said that understanding life is also very important, a successful person is one who learns not from books, but from the things around us.

Through the 'Garhbo Bhavishya' placement camp, the eligible beneficiaries of the district are getting the best opportunity to get self-employment under the unemployment allowance scheme and more than 1000 educated unemployed youths of Gurur development block participated in the first 'Garhbo Bhavishya' placement camp of the district.



Simga: State Working President Bharatiya Rashtriya Mazdoor Congress Federation (BRMCF) Pappu Ali extended greetings to people of the state on occasion of 'Eid-ul-Adha' here on Thursday.

Ways of alliance with like-minded parties are open: JCC(J)

Central Chronicle News

Dongargarh, Jul 02: District President of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC(J)) Jogi, Vishnu Lodhi has opined that through a press release and said that the important meeting of the core committee of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh J, the only regional political party of Chhattisgarh state, will be held on June 28 at Anugrah Teak Bungalow. It was held under the chairmanship of Tilak Ram Dewangan, who holds ministerial status, and in the presence of party president Amit Jogi.

In the meeting, the core committee unanimously decided not to consider



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the proposal of merging the Congress with any other party, if necessary it would go ahead with the like-minded parties. Consensus was made to contest the assembly elections 2023-24 and during this, it was decided to gherao the assembly on July 18, 2023, before the upcoming Monsoon session,

regarding the problems of the people of the state.

Addressing the meeting, senior party leader Tilakram Dewangan said that the founder of the party, the first Chief Minister of the state Late. Ajit Jogi's Chhattisgarhiism, party's policy-principle and party's election symbol plow farmer is paramount for us, the way of alliance with like-minded parties is always open in front of us, but the merger of our party is not possible at any cost. Party President Amit Jogi said that the sentiments of 3 crore people of Chhattisgarh are attached to Janata Congress Chhattisgarh, Jogi Congress.

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jul 02: Nagarnar police station of the district received information from the informer that two smugglers from Orissa state were coming towards Jagdalpur with Ganja. Both the ganja smugglers are passengers in the passenger bus of Payal Travels and they are keeping Ganja in their bags.

Based on this information, the passenger bus of Payal Travels was stopped and checked near Village Dhanpunji Forest Naka NH 63 main road. In the investigation, two suspects of the character told

by the informer Suraj Santosh More S/o Satosh More R/o Maharashtra and Praful Vaman Mohite S/o Vaman Mohite R/o Maharashtra were present.

The bag recovered from the joint possession of the suspects contained a total of 20.574 kg of the drug Ganja. The accused were arrested after recovering the narcotics.

The NDPS Act was registered against the said accused in police station Nagarnar and after proceeding, they were produced before the court. As per the order of the court, the accused were sent to jail.



In the memorandum statement of arrested Ganja smuggling the accused Suraj Santosh More and Praful Vaman Mohite, it was informed that the seized Ganja was purchased from Koraput district Koraput resident Arshad Ali alias Ayub, Odisha.

On the statement of the accused, the accused Arshad Ali alias Ayub was interrogated. On accepting the crime, accused Arshad Ali alias Ayub's S/o Abdul Rehman, R/o of Koraput Orissa has also been arrested and produced before the court after the proceedings.

Three drug smugglers arrested with 20.574 kg Ganja

DCC (Arang) distributes fruits to CHC patients

• Greets Mohan Markam on completion of 4 yrs as PCC Chief

Central Chronicle News

Mandir-Hasoud, Jul 02: On completion of successful four years as President of PCC by Mohan Markam on June 29, 2023, DCC (urban) Arang distributed fruits among the patients of CHC in Arang and planted saplings here on Thursday and extended greetings to PCC Chief Mohan Markam for the same.

On this occasion Bharti Dewangan- President DCC (Arang) (urban),



Chandrashekhara Chandrakar President Nagar Panchayat Arang; Dineshwar Tamboli - V-P DCC (Arang); Laxaminarayan Lodhi, Zone President; Sadiq Balim, member Urdu

Academy, Sharad Gupta, corporator; Deepak Chandrakar corporator; Rammohan Lodhi corporator; Ganesh Bandhe Alderman; Rajeshwari Sahu Alderman; Upendra Sahu

Alderman; Bharat Lodhi Alderman; Tulsi Bhai Patel, Rakesh Mishra, Poshan Sahu Sarpanch Khamtarai; Tikeswar Gilhare, Gopi Gupta and other DCC office bearers were present.

School lock opened in Devkot Primary School

Central Chronicle News

Balod, Jul 02: In village Devkot under Gurur development block of Balod district, due to the resentment in running of Devkot Primary School, after the intervention of the Collector and administrative officers, the entrance festival is being celebrated enthusiastically.

As per information, on discussion with the Balod DEO and Block Education Officer in this context, they told that the indiscipline of the teacher Mohan Sinha has also come to the fore in the whole matter, even after the teacher was attached, instead of going to the original school; he stayed in Devkot against the order of the government. The teacher has also been accused of inciting the villagers; the whole matter



will be clear after the investigation.

Taking cognizance of the matter, Collector Kuldeep Sharma had sent Tehsildar Development Block Medical Officer and other officials to the spot, after which the matter was pacified after a long discussion with the vil-

lagers. The administration has talked about taking it to the government because this order has come from the government and it is a matter of government level.

In the whole matter, DEO Mukul Saw told that there are enough teachers in Devkot

Primary School, here the registered number of student is 43 and behind this registered number, 2 teachers are posted, which is adequate.

BJP Nagar Mandal honours officials of SBI

• On occasion of SBI's foundation day

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jul 02: On the foundation day of the State Bank of India (SBI), the Branch manager Shailesh Patil was felicitated by giving a bouquet of flowers by members of BJP Nagar Mandal going to the collectorate branch located in Jagdalpur. Workers of BJP Nagar Mandal and Mahila Morcha wished all the staff on Bank Day.

It is noteworthy that the State Bank of India was formed on 1 July 1955. It is the largest and oldest bank in India. On 14 September 2022, State Bank of India has become the third lender and seventh Indian company to cross 5 trillion

market capitalization on Indian stock exchanges for the first time. Since the renaming of Imperial Bank as State Bank of India on 1st July, 1955, the foundation day of the bank is celebrated every year on 1st July in SBI branches in India and abroad.

During this city President Suresh Gupta, city General Secretary Sangram Singh Rana, Mahila Morcha District President Sudha Mishra, State Working Committee Members Mahila Morcha Mamta Singh Rana, Laxmi Kashyap, Maheshwari Thakur, Ila Sheikh, Poonam, Gopi Manikpuri, Suresh Kashyap, Kusum Parihar, Aika BJP workers and bank staff including Sengar, Gayatri Kashyap, Basanti Nayak, Kiran Dewan, Bharti Rao, Chameli Jiram, Kamal Kumari, Laxmi Sahu, Anita Thakur, Dhakeshwari Pandey were present.

Health workers to go on indefinite strike from July 4

65 DMFT employees were terminated from service by the management

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jul 02: On July 4, 2023, on the provincial call of the Chhattisgarh Health Employees' Association (CHEA), an indefinite strike will be held in Bastar district on 24-point demands. Ajay Pratap Singh Parihar, District President and Deputy Provincial President of Chhattisgarh State Health Employees Union district branch, informed that, repeated requests and applications have been made to the government to solve the problem of regular and contractual employees of the health department.

Even after making a request, no meaningful initiative was taken by the government in the interest of the employees. Due to which the path of indefinite agitation has to



be adopted. He told that the regular, irregular, sub-contracted, NHM DMFT and daily wage workers of the health department will participate in the strike starting from July 04. Due to which the work in the Medical College and District Hospital, Community, Primary and Sub Health Center will be stopped completely.

It is noteworthy that in Bastar district, many posts are vacant against the sanctioned posts of doctors to paramedical staff. Despite this, the health workers are working with full dedication. Due to the work of the doctors and paramedical staff of the district, the health department's work has been appreciated at the state level as well.

Due to the good work done towards eradication of malaria, the spread of malaria disease has reduced nowadays. Even during the Covid period, the doctors and paramedical staff worked with all their heart. Due to which the lives of many people could be saved. Despite doing so much, the government is not serious about the legitimate de-

mand of the health workers. The problems of DMFT employees working in Medical College Dimrapal is not coming to an end. Late on Friday, a list came regarding extension of tenure of DMFT contract employees.

In which only 30 people had their names. That is, the tenure of these 30 people has been extended till March. On the other hand, the services of the remaining 65 income employees were terminated without any notice on Saturday.

In which Ward Boy, Ward Aaya and others are included. After this, there is great deal of resentment among the terminated employees. President of DMFT Union Rikeshwar told that after paying the salary of 2 months, an order came out, in which the services of 65 employees has been terminated.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Notice inviting Open Tender through 'E' Process
Notice No.: COM-G-R-PARCEL
Name of Work: Open Tender for Leasing of SLR Spaces capacity of 04/3.9 Tonnes for a period of 02 Years through "e"-Auction over Raipur Division are invited for execution of below mentioned work from. (Freight differs from train to train).
Opening of Quotation: At 17:20 Hrs. on 13.07.2023.
Name of Website: www.ireps.gov.in
 1. Bidder before participating in the "e"-Auction must carefully go through all the provisions/terms and conditions of "e"-Auction available on our website www.ireps.gov.in
 2. The subject "e"-Auction is governed as per Railway Board's circulars : I - Freight Marketing Circular No. 11 of 2022 (No. 2022/TC(FM)/10/04, Dated 13.06.2022) and its amendments from time to time. II - Freight Marketing Circular No. 12 of 2022 (No. 2022/TC(FM)/10/04, Dated 14.06.2022) and its amendments from time to time.
 3. The standard condition of contract and special condition of contract shall be applicable on contracts awarded through "e"-Auction.
 4. For any further information, you can contact at the office address of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, DRM Office Complex, RVH Colony, Near Waitair Level Crossing, Raipur (CG).
DECISION MADE BY RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION ON THE SUBJECT OF E-AUCTION WILL BE FINAL.
 Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial)
 South East Central Railway, Raipur
 PR/R/Comm/PC/81
 South East Central Railway @secrail

BRIEF



BSP supremo Mayawati addresses a press conference in Lucknow, Sunday.

Session

■ Agartala: The four-day monsoon session of Tripura Assembly will commence on July 7, Speaker Biswabandhu Sen said on Sunday. Finance Minister Pranajit Singha Roy would table the budget for the current financial year on the opening day of the monsoon session, he said. Although the budget session took place in March, Finance Minister Pranajit Singha Roy could not table the budget for the 2023-24 financial year because of the Assembly elections in February and March, Sen said.

Mishap

■ Mumbai: Two persons were killed when two buses of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) collided and then one of them hit an auto-rickshaw in Mumbai on Sunday, police said. The accident took place at 1.45 am on a slippery road near Aarey flyover on the Western Express Highway, they said. Mumbai has been receiving rains since the past one week, making roads slippery.

Search

■ Jammu: Security forces on Sunday launched a search operation in a forward village near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The joint search and cordon operation by army and police was launched in Dabi Dharti area of Balakote sector at around 9 am following inputs about suspicious movement, the officials said.

Arrested

■ Chandigarh: An assistant sub-inspector of the Punjab Police was held in Ferozpur for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000, officials said. According to a statement issued by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau here, ASI Gurdeep Singh was posted at a police station in Zira. Sanjeev Kumar, a resident of Zira, accused the ASI of demanding Rs 10,000 for helping him and his family members in a case registered against them in August 2021, it said.

Seize

■ Guwahati: Drugs worth nearly Rs 12 crore were seized on Sunday and three traffickers nabbed by police in Kamrup district, an officer said. Assam Police's Special Task Force (STF) Deputy Inspector General Partha Sarathi Mahanta said acting on a tip-off, the Kamrup district police led by Additional SP Kalyan Pathak launched an operation against trafficking of the consignment.

TMC worker killed, several others injured

● In rural poll violence

Kolkata, Jul 02 (PTI)

A Trinamool Congress (TMC) worker was killed and several other members of the ruling party and opposition outfits were injured in clashes in panchayat poll-bound West Bengal, police said. A TMC worker, identified as 52-year-old Jiyarul Molla, was shot dead in Phulmalancha area in Basanti in South 24 Parganas district late on Saturday night while he was returning home, a police officer said. The man was taken to a local hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead. A local Indian Secular Front (ISF) leader claimed that Molla, who

was a close associate of TMC leader Amarul Laskar, was a victim of infighting within the ruling party. Molla's daughter Manwara, who is a TMC candidate in Kathalberia gram panchayat, also alleged that her father had complained to the police about frequent threats from a rival faction which asked him to quit politics but the law enforcers did not take any action. "I am a first-time candidate. My candidature is not liked by another local faction in the party. I demand a high-level probe into the incident," she told reporters. Local TMC MLA Saokat Molla said the police should probe the matter and take prompt action against whoever is responsible. With the fresh

death, 10 people have been killed so far in West Bengal in poll-related violence since the filing of nominations for the rural elections began on June 9, according to police reports. Meanwhile, at least 10 people were injured in clashes between CPI(M) and ISF supporters on one side and those of the TMC on the other in Paschim Medinipur district on Sunday, police said. The incident took place in Krishnapur area in Chandrakona in the morning after the TMC members tried to erect party flags, and faced resistance from opposition activists. The 10 injured people, who belong to both camps, have been admitted to hospitals, where they are undergoing treatment, another police officer said,

adding that their condition is stated to be stable. A large contingent of police team has been deployed on the spot, he added. The police did not mention the number of people detained or arrested after the clashes. In another incident, Ibrahim Mollah, TMC candidate in Chaltaberia gram panchayat, was seriously injured when he was thrashed and stabbed allegedly by ISF activists while he was returning home in Bhangar area in South 24 Parganas on Sunday night after campaigning, police said. TMC leader Saokat Molla alleged that ISF's Bhangar MLA Naushad Siddique was behind the attack as he wanted to unleash a "reign of terror" in the area.

WATER CRISIS



People collect drinking water from a Municipal Corporation tanker on the outskirts of Bhopal, Sunday.

Bengal Gov supervises situation in violence-hit Cooch Behar

● As fresh clashes reported

Cooch Behar (WB), Jul 02 (PTI) West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose supervised the situation in poll violence-hit Cooch Behar district, where fresh overnight clashes were reported, officials said. Five people were injured in the clashes that took place in Dinhatata area on Saturday night.

A TMC candidate's kin was among those injured, police said. Bose monitored the situation throughout the night from Cooch Behar circuit house, where he is staying, and issued instructions to State Election Commissioner Rajjiva Sinha, SP and District Magistrate, officials said. "The governor on Sunday morning visited the hospital where the five injured people are undergoing treatment and may also visit the spot where the clashes took place," a

senior official of the Raj Bhavan told PTI over the phone. Bose also spoke with the hospital authorities and asked them to ensure best treatment to the injured people. He dialed the DM and SP of Cooch Behar and asked them to maintain law and order and arrest the culprits. Bose, who is on a trip to the northern districts of the state, has visited families of deceased as well as those injured in incidents of violence in Dinhatata. The Raj Bhavan has opened a 'peace home' and a 24x7 phone number to address complaints of violence and intimidation. The matters are instantly taken up with the SEC or the chief secretary. Around 5.67 crore people are eligible to cast their votes in the three-tier panchayat elections in the state on July 8 for nearly 74,000 seats in zilla parishads, panchayat samiti and gram panchayats.

MAHA BUS FIRE Mass cremation of 24 bodies held

Buldhana, Jul 02 (PTI)

A mass cremation was held on Sunday of 24 out of the 25 victims charred to death after a private bus caught fire in Maharashtra's Buldhana district, a senior official said. The body of one of the victims will be handed over to the family for burial, an official said earlier in the day. As most of the victims were charred beyond recognition after the bus caught fire in the early hours of Saturday, efforts were made to convince their families for mass cremation of the bodies instead of their DNA analysis, the official said. The DNA testing is a lengthy procedure which may take days to ascertain the identity of the deceased, as per sources. The mass cremation of 24 bodies was held at Vaikunth Dham Hindu Smashan Bhoomi in Buldhana on Sunday. Relatives of the de-



People, who were killed in the bus fire tragedy, being cremated at Vaikunth Smashanbhumi, in Buldhana, Sunday.

ceased and Maharashtra minister Girish Mahajan were present during the cremation and paid homage to the deceased. The 25 passengers were charred to death as the private bus they were travelling in caught fire after hitting a divider on the Nagpur-Mumbai 'Samruddhi Expressway' in eastern Maharashtra's Buldhana district at around 1.30 am on Saturday, police earlier said. The deceased included 11 male and 14 female passengers. Ten of the victims were from

Wardha, seven from Pune, four from Nagpur and two each from Yavatmal and Washim. The family members of the 25 deceased have reached Buldhana, according to local administration. Eight persons, including the driver and 'cleaner' (driver's assistant), survived the horrific accident. A case for negligent driving was registered against the bus driver on Saturday with police believing that, prima facie, he dozed off and lost control of the vehicle.

Punjab delegation visits Kerala to learn about use of tech

● To plug excise revenue leakage

Chandigarh, Jul 02 (PTI)

A Punjab government delegation led by Finance and Excise Minister Harpal Singh Cheema visited Kerala to learn about technological interventions in plugging revenue leakage and raising excise revenue. The delegation also comprised Financial Commissioner, Taxation, Vikas Partap, and Excise Commissioner Varun Roojam. Their visit to Kerala also included learning about the supply chain management ERP software and point of sale system being used by the Kerala Excise department, said an official release. "The purpose of the visit was to learn about the technological interventions which are important from the point of view of plugging revenue leakages and enhancing the excise

revenue," Cheema said. He said the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software will provide the Punjab Excise Department an integrated and real-time view of its core processes. These would be easily accessible through one centralised system, the minister said. Cheema said this software will help in enhancing transparency in governance. During this visit, officials of the Kerala government also gave a detailed presentation regarding the technological solutions they have been using in their excise department. Cheema also held a meeting with the Kerala Excise Minister M B Rajesh. He apprised his Kerala counterpart that the Punjab Government is very keen to adopt the software-based technological solutions to streamline the process of excise revenue collection and plug leakages within the system to check revenue loss.

AWARENESS RALLY



Police personnel along with civilians take out a march to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs, in Mumbai, Sunday.

13 more bodies of Balasore train tragedy handed over to families

Bhubaneswar, Jul 02 (PTI)

At least 13 more bodies of the June 2 Balasore train accident kept at AIIMS Bhubaneswar were handed over to their family members, official sources said. Of the 29 bodies identified using DNA sampling, six were handed over to their families on Friday and 13 on Saturday, a railway official said. "On the basis of DNA test results and with coordination with AIIMS Bhubaneswar, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and GRP, 13 bodies of the Bahanaga train accident victims have been handed over to the kin of the deceased on Saturday," the railway official said. Of the 13 bodies, four have been sent to Bihar, eight to West Bengal and

one to Jharkhand, he said. An ex-gratia amount of Rs 10 lakh each have been paid to the kin of the family members as announced by the railways, the official said. Stating that the process of handing over of the bodies will continue till claimants come, the official said as many as 62 bodies still remain unidentified and preserved in the containers in AIIMS, Bhubaneswar. Of the 293 people killed in the accident involving Shalimar-Chennai Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express and a stationary goods train, 287 had died on the spot or brought dead to hospital while six succumbed to injuries in hospitals. The accident took place near Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district on June 2 evening.

174 Indian students win scholarship

● For higher studies in Europe

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI)

In the biggest ever annual selection of Indian students, as many as 174 candidates — over 50 per cent of them women — have been awarded the prestigious Erasmus Mundus scholarships for the degree programmes starting in the academic year 2023-24. The selected Indian students of the Erasmus Mundus 2023-2025 batch, under the fully-funded scholarship programme by the European Union, will have the opportunity to study and conduct research in at least two universities located in different European countries and obtain a joint, double or multiple degree. The delegation of the European Union to India on Friday organised an

ERASMUS MUNDUS

Gen Kalita flags off Army bike expedition

● From Kohima to Kargil

Kohima, Jul 02 (PTI)

Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen R P Kalita on Sunday flagged off 'Kargil Vijay Ride' of the 2nd Naga Regiment from Kohima to Kargil (K2) at the Assam Rifles garrison here. In his address, the GOC-in-C of Eastern Army Command said that it is one of the first ever motorcycle expedition from K2K being conducted to commemorate the commencement of 25 years of

Operation Vijay wherein the brave Naga warriors enriched the soil of our northern borders by their blood towards safeguarding the territorial integrity of our motherland. The 2nd Naga Regiment had valiantly fought and won the Kargil War, he said, adding that this is a great tribute to celebrate the supreme sacrifice and bravery of the valiant martyrs. Lt Gen Kalita said that the riders will reach Kargil on the eve of Kargil Vijay Diwas and wished the expedition a success. The expedition has 25 valiant Mashkoh (2 Naga

'BJP-JJP govt in Haryana sitting on pile of failures'

Rohtak (Hry), Jul 02 (PTI)

Senior Congress leader Bhopinder Singh Hooda alleged on Sunday that the BJP-JJP government in Haryana is sitting on "a pile of failures" and that it does not have a single achievement to show in the last nine years. The leader of opposition in the state Assembly said this after participating in various social and religious programmes in Rohtak. "The BJP-JJP government is completely cut off from people and the ground reality. It has finally remembered the people now as elections are near," Hooda said in a statement. The Congress, he said, has been with the public throughout thanks to programmes like "Vipaksh Aapke Samaksh", "Bharat Jodo Yatra", the "Haath se Haath Jodo" campaign and "Jan Milan". The opposition party has so far organ-



Bhopinder Singh Hooda

ised "Vipaksh Aapke Samaksh" programmes in seven Lok Sabha constituencies of the state. The eighth programme is scheduled to be held in Bhiwani on July 9 and preparations for the same are on, Hooda said. The former Haryana chief minister further said Congress leaders and workers have not been sitting at home since the 2019 (Lok Sabha and Assembly) elections and are constantly engaging with the people.

Four security personnel killed in attack in restive Balochistan

Karachi, Jul 02 (PTD):

At least four security personnel and a terrorist were killed in an exchange of fire between them in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province on Sunday.

The attack took place in Dhana Sar area in the province.

Sherani Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bilal Shabbir confirmed the fatalities, adding that the exchange of fire between the security forces and the terrorists continued for almost two hours.

Three police officials and security personnel were killed in the attack in

the Sherani sub-district, Shabbir said, adding that a terrorist was also killed.

DC Shabbir added: "The companions of the injured terrorists succeeded in taking them away. The body of the dead terrorist has been handed over to the CTD (Counter-Terrorism Department).

"The terrorists were well armed and they attacked the checkpoints after which the police and security responded and the firing lasted for some two hours," he said.

"One security personnel was also injured but is out of danger," Shabbir said.

He further said that the bodies of those killed have

been taken to Zhob District Headquarters Hospital. Stating that law enforcement agencies have cordoned off Dhana Sar and the surrounding areas, the DC added that the CTD has collected evidence from the incident's site and has initiated its probe.

Meanwhile, Sherani District Health Officer Dr Daulat Khan has said that a state of emergency has been put in place at the Zhob Civil Hospital and that all hospital staff had been called to duty despite the weekend.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo condemned the "rocket attack

and firing" on the checkpoints and expressed his grief on the killing of the four security personnel.

He also lauded the police's and the FC's efforts in killing one terrorist. "The terrorists cannot demoralise the security forces by their cowardly actions," he said in a statement.

"The sacrifices of the security forces are a beacon for the nation. The security forces are ensuring the security of the country and the nation with their firm determination and courage," Bizenjo added.

However, no one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

UK police have new expanded powers to crack down on protests

London, Jul 02 (AP):

New and expanded powers for British police took effect on Sunday, including measures targeting activists who stop traffic and major building works with protests.

Authorities have repeatedly condemned environmental protest groups, including Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion, which have sought to raise awareness about the urgency of climate change by staging multiple high-profile protests at the busiest highways and roads.

Their protests in recent years often caused serious disruption for motorists. From Sunday, police will have powers to move static protests. Critics have argued the toughened laws are a threat to the right to protest, but UK officials say the measures were to stop "disruption from a selfish minority." "The public have had enough of



Participants entertain the crowd during a Canada Day parade in Montreal.

their lives being disrupted by selfish protesters. The mayhem we've seen on our streets has been a scandal," Home Secretary Suella Braverman said.

Authorities say that under the new Public Order Act, protesters found guilty of "tunnelling" or digging underground tunnels to obstruct the building of new infrastructure works could face three years in prison.

Anyone found guilty of obstructing a major transportation project could be jailed for up to six months.

Hundreds of protesters were arrested last year in the UK for blocking major roads and bridges. Many activists protested by sitting in the middle of the roads or gluing themselves to the roadway to make them harder to move. Police have said it's costly to deal with the protests and that they diverted thousands of officers.

Hundreds more arrested in France amid violence

Paris, July 02:

Protests that erupted in France in response to the killing of a 17-year-old by a police officer continued for a fifth night, The New York Times reported.

Authorities arrested hundreds of people nationwide overnight and protesters clashed with police officers in riot gear.

Taking to his Twitter handle, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said that 427 people had been arrested overnight on Saturday.

On Friday, more than 1,300 people had been detained in France.

He further said that 45,000 police officers were deployed nationwide on Saturday evening, a number similar to the night before, according to The New York Times report.

A government minister said that the evening was calmer than the recent ones.

However, local media reported rioting, looting, and clashes in Marseille, the report said.



Police officers on motorcycles patrol on the Champs Elysees in Paris. President Emmanuel Macron scrapped an official trip to Germany after a fourth straight night of rioting and looting across France in defiance of a massive police deployment. Hundreds turned out for the burial of the 17-year-old whose killing by police triggered the unrest.

Gerald Darmanin noted that the number of officers deployed across the nation was not increased and added that more officers were sent to control protesters in Lyon, Grenoble, and Marseille, The New York Times reported. Tensions remained high in France after the funeral of the 17-year-old by a police officer on Tuesday in Nanterre.

The funeral of a French teen, whose shooting by police provoked violent protests across the nation, was held after more than

1,300 people were detained overnight on Saturday, CNN reported. The service was held at a mosque in Nanterre, a suburb of Paris, on Saturday afternoon local time. Mounia, the mother of the teenager who was shot dead, told France 5 on Friday that she alone held the cop who shot her son, Nahel Merzouk, accountable for his demise. However, the murder has led to widespread damaging unrest and inquiries into whether race played a role in his passing.

Rishi Sunak speaks of 'sting' of racism growing up in UK

London, Jul 02 (PTI):

Rishi Sunak, Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister, has spoken of the "sting" of racism that he experienced growing up in the UK during a special appearance at the England versus Australia Ashes Test match at Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

The 43-year-old cricket lover was interviewed on the BBC's iconic 'Test Match Special' (TMS) radio show on the fourth day of the second Ashes Test on Saturday when he was asked about a recent independent report which found "widespread and deep-rooted" racism, sexism, elitism and class-based bias at all levels of cricket and prompted an unreserved apology by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

"I haven't experienced that in cricket, but of course I've experienced



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak (front row R) watches on day four of the second Ashes cricket test match between England and Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London.

racism growing up," said Sunak, in response to a question by BBC cricket correspondent Jonathan Agnew.

"It stings you in a way that very few other things do. I'm in a job where I take criticism on a daily, hourly, minute-by-minute basis. But racism, it stings you, it does hurt," he said.

Sunak said the

Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) report had been "hard to read" and "really sad" for cricket lovers like him. "All of us who love this game want it to be inclusive, open, accessible to absolutely everybody, to welcome people from all backgrounds and for it to be a place where everyone can feel respected and supported," he said.

Baltimore mass shooting: 2 killed, 28 injured

Baltimore (US), Jul 02 (AP):

Two people were killed and 28 were wounded in a mass shooting in Baltimore Sunday morning, including three who are in critical condition, police said.

Baltimore Police Department Acting Commissioner Richard Worley confirmed there were a total of 30 victims during a press conference at the scene.

The shooting took place just after 12:30 am at a block party in the Brooklyn Homes area of South Baltimore in the 800 block of Gretna



Avenue, Worley said.

All of the victims were adults. Nine victims were transported by ambulance and 20 victims walked into area hospitals with injuries from the shooting, Worley said.

"I want those who are responsible to hear me, and hear me very clear-

ly," Mayor Brandon Scott said at the scene. "We will not stop until we find you, and we will find you. Until then, I hope that every single breath you take, that you think about the lives that you took, think about the lives that you impacted here tonight."

No arrests were made immediately after the shooting. Scott asked anyone with information to come forward to assist investigators locate the "cowards" who were responsible for the shooting.

"Treat this as if it were your family," Scott said. "How you would want people to treat it if you were mourning, if this was your neighbourhood, if this was an event in your community that this happened at. We want you to treat it that way because that's how we have to treat each other as Baltimoreans."

Haiti urgently needs international aid, security: UN Chief



Port-Au-Prince (Haiti), Jul 02 (AP):

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited Haiti and again called on foreign governments with strong security forces to help the struggling country fight a surge in gang violence. The appeal was made after Guterres met with Prime Minister Ariel Henry, civil society leaders, U.N. staff and the heads of various political parties during his one-day trip. "Now is not the time to forget Haiti or weaken our solidarity with its people," he said. Guterres met with re-

porters at Haiti's international airport in Port-au-Prince, who pressed him on whether an international security force would be deployed as requested by the prime minister last October.

Guterres said he spoke about the issue with Henry, as well as the need to hold credible elections.

"I am not here to tell Haitians what to do. I am here to listen to them and to encourage them to build consensus as broadly as possible to move the transition process forward," he said. Henry, who has been running the country since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Mo se, has been under pressure to hold elections. But experts have noted it is impossible to do so given the current level of violence in the country, with gangs controlling an estimated 80% of the capital.

Russia launches first drone strike on Kyiv in 12 days

Kyiv, Jul 02 (AP):

After a relative lull, Russia launched a drone attack early on Sunday on Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, officials said. It was the first such attack of the war in 12 days.

All of the Iranian-made Shahed exploding drones were detected and shot down, according to Serhii Popko, the head of the Kyiv city administration. In addition to the city itself, the surrounding Kyiv region was targeted. Kyiv regional Gov. Ruslan Kravchenko reported that one person was wounded by falling debris from a destroyed drone.

Officials in the Ukrainian capital didn't provide an exact number of drones that attacked the city. But Ukraine's air force said that across the country, eight Shaheds and three Kalibr cruise missiles were launched by the Russians. Further

south, a 13-year-old boy was wounded in overnight shelling of Ukraine's partially occupied southern Kherson province, said Oleksandr Tolokonnikov, spokesman for the Ukrainian administration of the province.

The child was wounded when the Russian army shelled the village of Mylove on the banks of the Dnieper River in the Beryslav district, Tolokonnikov said.

"The child was hospitalized, there is no threat to his life," Tolokonnikov added," he said on state TV. Shelling of Kherson province continued Sunday morning, wounding four people in the regional capital, also called Kherson.

The regional prosecutor's office said that a residential area of the city was targeted by Russian troops operating in the Russia-occupied part of the Kherson province.

Trump returns to campaign rallies

● Draws thousands to small South Carolina city ahead of July 4

Pickens (US), Jul 02 (AP):

Former President Donald Trump on Saturday marked a return to the large-scale rallies of his previous presidential campaigns, speaking to thousands gathered in the streets of a small South Carolina city on a blazing day ahead of the July 4 holiday.

"There's nowhere else I'd rather be to kick off the Fourth of July weekend than right here on Main St., with thousands of hardworking South Carolina patriots who believe in God, family and country," Trump said to a roaring crowd standing on asphalt as temperatures climbed into the 90s.

It wasn't immediately clear how many people had gathered in the streets of downtown Pickens, a small city in South Carolina's conservative Upstate of around 3,400



residents. Law enforcement officials told some media outlets that around 15,000 people had gathered by 11 a.m., two hours before Trump's remarks.

The heavily Republican area is a popular one for GOP hopefuls as they aim to attract support for South Carolina's first-in-the-South presidential primary. In recent months, other candidates including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence and biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy have all held events in the Upstate, as well as the two South Carolinians in the race: former Gov. Nikki Haley and Sen. Tim Scott.

But none drew a crowd like Trump, whose appearance effectively shuttered Pickens' quintessential southern downtown.

Contrasted with his 2016 and 2020 campaigns, which drew thousands to rallies in states across the country, Trump's 2024 effort has been markedly different. Earlier this year, instead of addressing voters in a gymnasium or airplane hangar, Trump held his first South Carolina campaign event inside the Statehouse in Columbia, rolling out his state leadership team at an invitation-only gathering in an ornate lobby between the House and Senate chambers. In other states, the

former president has focused his efforts on smaller events, including a series of speeches before state party organizations, as he works to bolster his standing with delegates and local officials.

This was only Trump's second large rally of the 2024 campaign. In March, he rallied in Waco, Texas, disparaging the prosecutors then investigating him on hush-money charges on which he was later indicted and predicting his vindication. A planned outdoor rally in Iowa in May was canceled due to tornado warnings.

The rallies are also expensive to put on, although Trump has continued to bring in millions in fundraising, after both the New York indictment and also federal charges related to his retention of classified documents after leaving the White House. Last month, senior Trump aide Chris LaCivita told the conservative Ruthless podcast that the rallies "are half a million bucks a pop."

Elon Musk imposes daily limits on reading posts on Twitter

San Francisco, Jul 02 (AP):

Twitter owner Elon Musk has limited the amount of tweets that most users can view each day restrictions he described as an attempt to prevent unauthorized scraping of potentially valuable data from the social media platform.

The site is now requiring people to log on to view tweets and profiles a change in its longtime practice to allow everyone to peruse the chatter on what Musk has frequently touted as the

world's digital town square since buying it for USD 44 billion last year.

The restrictions could result in users being locked out of Twitter for the day after scrolling through several hundred tweets. Thousands of users complained Saturday of not being able to access the site.

In a Friday tweet, Musk described the new restrictions as a temporary measure that was taken because "we were getting data pillaged so much that it was degrading service for normal

users!"

Musk has pushed back on what he calls misuse of Twitter data to train popular artificial intelligence systems like ChatGPT. They scour reams of information online to generate human-like text, photos, video and other content.

Musk elaborated on the limits Saturday, saying unverified accounts will temporarily be restricted to reading 600 posts per day, while verified accounts will be able to scroll through up to 6,000.

After facing backlash, he tweeted that the thresholds would be raised to 800 posts for unverified accounts and 8,000 for verified accounts before later settling on 1,000 and 10,000 tweets, respectively.

The crackdown began to have ripple effects, causing more than 7,500 people at one point Saturday to report problems using the social media service, based on complaints registered on DownDetector, a website that tracks online outages.



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Financial Titans Unite

HDFC Bank and HDFC Merger Shakes Industry Foundations

The merger between HDFC Bank and HDFC marks a significant milestone in the financial landscape of India. As the largest merger between a private sector bank and a non-banking financial company (NBFC), this union will undoubtedly bring forth a multitude of changes for investors and stakeholders. Although the merger is an in-house affair, with HDFC Bank acquiring its parent company HDFC and subsequently delisting the latter from exchanges, the impact on portfolios will be tangible. The effective commencement of the HDFC twins merger on July 1, 2023, ushers in a new era of financial synergy. HDFC Bank recently announced the successful completion of the merger after securing the necessary shareholder and regulatory approvals. This strategic decision, conceived in April last year, comes to fruition within the estimated time frame of 15 to 18 months. Sashi Jagdishan, CEO & MD of HDFC Bank, expressed his confidence in this transformative event, stating that it would enable the creation of a holistic ecosystem of financial services. By welcoming the talented team of HDFC Ltd. into the HDFC Bank family, Jagdishan envisions a journey defined by agility, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to excellence. As challenges arise, they will be viewed as opportunities to learn and grow, striving to become the benchmark of success and integrity in the financial services industry. Deepak Parekh, who played a pivotal role in HDFC's journey, bids farewell as he exits following the merger. The mantle of leadership now falls on Sashi Jagdishan, as the merged entity embarks on an exciting future of growth and prosperity. Parekh's parting words assure shareholders that the execution capabilities of HDFC Bank will pave the way for new opportunities, further enhancing the combined entity's potential. The merger brings together the complementary strengths of both entities, poised to create meaningful value for stakeholders, including customers, employees, and shareholders. This amalgamation facilitates increased scale, comprehensive product offerings, balance sheet resilience, and the ability to drive synergies across revenue opportunities, operational efficiencies, and underwriting processes. As a result of the merger, HDFC shares will be delisted from both the BSE and NSE on July 13, 2023. However, shareholders need not fret, as their HDFC shares will continue to be traded under the HDFC Bank scrip codes on the exchanges. The share swap between eligible shareholders entails HDFC Bank issuing and allotting 42 new equity shares, each with a face value of Re 1/-, for every 25 equity shares held in HDFC as of the record date. This transaction signifies a pivotal moment for both individual and institutional investors. Experts predict that the merged entity will revitalize HDFC Bank's performance, as it has previously underperformed the Nifty over the past three years. With a proven track record and exceptional execution capabilities, the bank is expected to benefit from the synergy unleashed by the merger. Presently trading at a discount to its average price-to-earnings and price-to-book ratios, HDFC Bank offers an attractive investment opportunity. The merged entity, set to become the second-largest firm in India in terms of market share, showcases the tremendous potential of this merger. With a combined market capitalization higher than that of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), it underscores the significance of this financial convergence. Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries will retain its position as the largest firm, followed by the HDFC Bank-HDFC merged entity and TCS. In terms of index weightage, the merged entity is projected to account for approximately 15% of the Nifty index. This substantial presence demonstrates the merged entity's impact on the broader market and its influence on investors' portfolios. The merger enhances the diversified financial services offered by HDFC Bank, transforming it into a financial conglomerate that encompasses banking, insurance, mutual funds, and more. Previously acting as a distributor for these products, HDFC Bank now solidifies its position as a comprehensive provider of financial solutions. The merger also highlights the importance of HDFC Bank's subsidiaries, including HDFC Securities, HDB Financial Services Ltd., HDFC Asset Management Co. Ltd., HDFC ERGO General Insurance Co. Ltd., HDFC Capital Advisors Ltd., and HDFC Life Insurance. These subsidiaries contribute to the diversified portfolio of services offered by the merged entity, further expanding its reach and potential for growth. Overall, the HDFC Bank and HDFC merger marks a significant milestone in the financial sector, signaling a new era of possibilities and growth. The combined strength, resources, and expertise of these two giants have the potential to reshape the industry landscape. As shareholders and investors witness the unfolding of this union, they can expect enhanced value, increased opportunities, and a more robust financial ecosystem.

Turbulent Tolerance

India's recent summoning of a Pakistani diplomat has underscored its strong protest against the appalling attacks on members of the Sikh community in Pakistan. These incidents, occurring between April and June, have raised grave concerns in India, prompting a demand for a thorough investigation into the violent acts and a plea for Pakistan to guarantee the safety and security of its minority communities. It is distressing to note that these attacks are not isolated occurrences but part of a pattern of religious persecution faced by Sikhs in Pakistan. The Islamic State Group has claimed responsibility for the murder of a Sikh community member in Peshawar, Pakistan, making the situation even more alarming. The motive behind these attacks is rooted in religious intolerance, with the extremist organization targeting Sikhs due to their affiliation with a sect perceived as "polytheistic." This tragic incident follows another attack where a Sikh individual was injured, solidifying concerns about the safety and well-being of the Sikh community. After the partition in 1947, many Sikhs migrated to India, while a significant number chose to remain in Pakistan. Sadly, over time, the Sikh population in Pakistan has dwindled due to religious atrocities, targeted killings, and forced conversions. This continuous decline underscores the urgent need for Pakistan to protect its minority communities. Pakistan's leaders claim to use religion as a unifying force for the nation, positioning themselves as guardians of Islamic principles. However, this approach has left minority communities increasingly vulnerable. Discrimination, evident in law enforcement and the judicial system, further compounds the challenges faced by minorities. Additionally, political and religious organizations often provide support to criminals, making it incredibly difficult for victims to seek justice against their perpetrators. Despite Pakistan's claims of championing minority rights, the reality exposes a stark contradiction. Disturbing accounts frequently emerge, shedding light on the mistreatment of Sikhs and Hindus within Pakistan. Blasphemy cases are manipulated to settle personal scores, while the government exhibits favoritism towards the country's Muslim majority. Sikh shrines are indirectly controlled, and significant decisions regarding the Sikh community are made without their input. The safety of Sikhs in Pakistan remains a paramount concern, as they are targeted through killings, abductions, and forced conversions. Religious or sectarian motivations often drive these attacks, which have dire implications for the Sikh community and other minority groups. The presence and activities of extremist groups like ISIS further exacerbate the precarious situation, threatening not only Sikhs but also the stability of the entire region. It is evident that these acts of violence aim to instill fear and compel mass conversions. India's summoning of a Pakistani diplomat demonstrates the deep worry of Sikh individuals' safety in Pakistan, particularly concerning their relatives residing in India. Pakistan must take decisive action against radical ideologies to curb violence targeting Sikhs and other minority communities. Targeted killings have no place in a civilized society, and it is crucial for the Pakistani government to combat terrorism and extremism by dismantling these networks. Ensuring the safety and security of all citizens, especially religious minorities, requires serious efforts in investigating and bringing the perpetrators of these attacks to justice. Pakistan cannot shirk its responsibilities towards its minority populations.

Central Chronicle invites articles, write-ups, and comments on a wide range of issues for our editorial page. Submissions should be between 800-900 words in length. In addition, we welcome letters to the editor for this page. While letters may be edited for clarity, we aim to preserve the integrity of the original message, and ask that they be kept to around 50-60 words. Submissions can be sent via email.to.editor@centralchronicle@gmail.com.

VAN MAHOTSAV

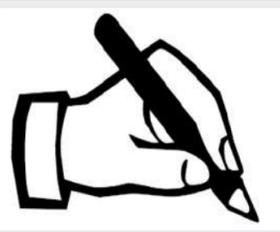


School students participate in a march during 'Van Mahotsav' week, in Moradabad, Sunday, July 1.

Gurus: Pillars of Society, Guides of Light



PRABHAT KISHORE



Guru Govind Dou Khade, Kake Lagoo Paay; Bahihari Guru Aap Ne, Govind Diyo Batay. Yah Tan Vish Ki Bel Ri, Guru Amrit Ki Khan; Shish Diyo Jo Guru Mile, To Bhri Sasta Jaan. Sab Dharati Kagaj Karu, Lekhani Sab Vanray; Saat Samudra Masi Karu, Guru Gun Likha Na Jaay.

This Doha (verse) of Sadguru Kabir describes the greatness of a Guru, who is necessary for the life of a human being and an important pillar of society. They are friends, philosophers and guides who teach, philosophise and enrich students. From academic knowledge to moral-ethical or social, the Gurus are a treasure trove. A Guru's contribution to the world is priceless and irreplaceable. Gurus are known to form the minds of the youth, they bestow good qualities on their students and make them responsible citizens. It is a profession and mission taught by the saint. The Vedic Mantra "Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu, Gurur Devo Maheshvarah; Guruah Sakshat Param Brahma, Tasmai Guruve Namah" explains that Guru himself is the Tridev i.e. Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh and is verily the supreme Power or Absolute truth. It signifies the unchallenged position of the Guru, who helps us in solving all troubles that we encounter in the path of learning & wisdom in our life.

Guru is composed of two Sanskrit words "Gu", meaning darkness and

"Ru", meaning light. Thus Guru means the one who brings from darkness to light. The word Guru itself resembles the message "Asto Maa Sadgamay, Tamo Maa Jyotirgamay, Mrityor Maa Amritgamay" (i.e. lead us from ignorance to truth, from darkness to light and from death to deathlessness). A guru is one, who has imminence knowledge, wisdom and command over a subject and makes use of it to guide his disciples. Guru is the building block of society, who helps to become a person better human being. The word "Guru" is untranslatable and "Teacher", "Master", "tutor" or other equivalents give only a partial meaning. Parents as well as all those persons, who are responsible for the career building of the disciples, are their "Guru".

In Indian culture and civilization, the concept of Guru is found in the earliest Vedic texts. The Guru and Gurukul were the established tradition in ancient Bharatvarsha. Guru had the highest position in King's Rajdarbar and society. Archeological and epigraphical evidence certify the existence of numerous Gurukuls, where

Shishyas were equipped not only with bookish knowledge but also had an all-round development. Philosophy, grammar, farming, animal husbandry, weapon training, music, painting and other essential life skills in human life were part of the study.

The Guru-Shishya Parampara were also part & parcel of other sects like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, which originated from Sanatan Dharma. Sikh is the transformed form of the Sanskrit word Shishya and Shikshism is completely based on Guru tradition. Thus Guru tradition-based learning was the backbone of enriched Indian society and India was the hub of knowledge and culture.

Nalanda Vishwavidyalaya, Vikramshila Vishwavidyalaya, Udantpuri Vishwavidyalaya, Takshshila Vishwavidyalaya, Kashi Vidyapeeth etc. are some such evidences, where learners from all over the world illuminated their mind and body.

Undoubtedly, Guru is the one who shapes the nation inside his/her classroom. After cessation of the Guru-Shishya Parampara (system) and the adoption of the Macaulay education system, the goal and meaning of education has completely transformed. The teacher/tutor's duty has narrowed down to just teach the students certain subjects in classroom and now they have nothing to do with their all-round development. Gradually the teachers lost their dignity in society.

After the governmentisation of schools, the teacher no longer remain a Guru, but became a salaried employee. The government used them in various jobs, other than teaching. They are the soft targets for engagement in various non-teaching works like elections, human census, animal census, pulse polio works, ration card verification & many more. The entry of politics and unionism among teachers has also badly hampered the education system. Several factions of teachers' organization have evolved

only to establish leadership, which time & again organise strikes for their demands. The ultimate sufferers are the learners, for whom the schools have been established and teachers have been appointed.

The two-fold system of education i.e. Government and Private, has bifurcated the education scenario in two distinct identities. Policy makers, themselves do not accept the government schools and send their wards to private schools. Even teachers, working in government school, have no faith in their school and they prefer to admit their wards to private schools. Generally, government schools are now meant for poor and downtrodden classes, who have no better option. Even after 75 years of independence, the education system has not been transformed as job-oriented and the graduates find themselves empty handed after passing out. The mind-set of teachers has totally been transformed. Due to downgrading from "Guru" to "teacher", the country's foundation is at stake.

It is heartbreaking that the major section of present-day teachers is apathetic towards the high-valued job of learner's career building through teaching. Education has become a profitable business, and teachers have become its marketing managers. Although the enriched growth of science and education has made us capable to reach on the moon and mars, but unfortunately the human values have been lost. The need of the hour is to relook the prevailing education system in India. We must shift our strategy from the present education system, which is producing graduates having only bookish knowledge, to Gurukul system, where the all-round development of the disciple was the main objective. By adopting the Guru Parampara, the country will once again become a Vishwa Guru.

(The Author is a technocrat and educationist)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Governor's Liability

The actions of the governor of Tamil Nadu have raised concerns about the role of governors and whether they are becoming liabilities for the states. The governor dismissed a state minister without consulting the chief minister, only to retract the order later. This dismissal was deemed illegal, as the governor himself acknowledged by putting the order on hold. The governor's power to dismiss a minister is limited and can only be exercised under specific circumstances, such as when the government loses a majority. However, in this case, the minister's dismissal was based on corruption charges, raising questions about due process and the governor's authority. These incidents highlight the need for governors to have a thorough understanding of the constitution and for a screening mechanism to be implemented to ensure their knowledge and commitment to upholding constitutional principles.

Yash Pal Raihan, Jalandhar

UCC Controversy

Prime Minister Modi has recently advocated for the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), deeming it an opportune time to discuss this controversial issue. However, as the situation in Manipur continues to deteriorate, serious questions arise for the BJP government regarding their handling of safety and integrity concerns in the region. The pressing problem of high unemployment, which stands at over seven percent, remains unsolved despite grand endeavors such as constructing new temples, erecting statues, or altering the status of Kashmir. The crucial question remains: How will the implementation of UCC effectively tackle the prominent issues of unemployment, poverty, and inflation? It seems that political parties are increasingly exploiting this matter for electoral gains rather than focusing on resolving fundamental challenges faced by the population. Unfortunately, the plight of the poor seems to be of little concern amidst this political trend.

Krishna Kumar KT, Kollam

Sacrifice and Compliance

Muslims around the world participate in the symbolic act of animal sacrifice, as permitted by their respective countries' laws, to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim's (Abraham's) willingness and obedience to God when he offered his son Ismael as a sacrifice. It is of utmost importance to ensure that these actions do not cause harm to anyone. Every Muslim is encouraged to adhere to government guidelines while performing the sacrifice during Eidul Adha and to refrain from sharing pictures of slaughtered animals on social media. Eidul Adha, also known as the festival of sacrifice, will be celebrated over the course of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Md Abdul Ali, Jalandhar

Why India's mobile phone story is a major manufacturing success!

Rajesh Kumar Singh and Kumar V Pratap

Several recent newspaper articles have tried to create a narrative that the role of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme in promoting mobile phones exports is questionable on account of low value addition in India. The key elements of such criticism include the following: only due to imposition of higher tariffs the net imports of mobiles have turned positive, that the incentive payment in PLI scheme may outweigh the value added in India, that India became import dependent since the PLI scheme was announced and that there is a need to reassess whether jobs have been created under the PLI schemes and the associated cost for such jobs. These points are largely incorrect as is detailed below:

Tariff policy changes are part of a deliberate strategy to increase domestic capabilities in manufacturing and exports. Compared to 2015, 99.2% of the mobile handsets now being used in India are Made in India. The PLI incentives are not even 6% (will come down in stages to less than 2%), and it is only on the incremental production. While the

beneficiaries of the PLI Scheme constituted only 20 percent by market share, they accounted for 82% of the mobile phone exports in FY 2022-23. Analysis shows that domestic value addition in mobiles is between 14-25 percent depending upon the model and complexity. Robust development in subassemblies and supply chains for Chargers, Battery Packs, Headsets, Mechanics, Camera Module, Display assembly is being seen. New markets have been added for exports including Western Europe, Americas and developed Asia, besides the shifting of global supply chains to India. Green shoots in the component ecosystem are also visible wherein large Indian companies like Tatas have entered and thus the externalities generated by such a policy intervention are significant.

We need to consider what would have happened to imports of mobiles and its components in the absence of the PLI Scheme and the time period for supply chains to be established as evident from the experience of other countries. China has built a USD 1.3 trillion electronics industry over 25 years but still lacks the capacity to manufacture key smartphone components such as semiconductors, memory and OLED displays, which are 45

percent of its value. China's import of electronics was ~USD 650 billion in 2022. Vietnam, after 15 years, has a USD 140 billion electronics industry with an 18 percent value addition. The experiences of both countries highlight the importance of scale, particularly in exports, for increasing domestic value addition. Many of the critical reports give a static picture of a policy intervention while the perspective should be dynamic.

For fostering a robust electronics manufacturing ecosystem, one must appreciate that various elements of the production process are at different stages of localization. While the initial focus has been on attracting large-scale mobile phone assembly to India, the next phase is geared towards deepening the manufacturing value chain with localization of components. A nuanced understanding of this progressive transition seems to be missing in most of the critical reports. Government of India has adopted an ecosystem approach to position India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM). In 2014-15, electronics production was USD 37 billion with minimal value addition and high import dependency. Over the last 9 years, India has made sig-

nificant progress in electronics production which has grown nearly three-fold to USD 101 billion in 2022-23 (industry estimates), exports have increased over four-fold to USD 23 billion, and value addition has increased to approximately 23%. India's share in global electronics manufacturing has risen from 1.3 percent in 2012 to 3.75 percent in FY 2021-22.

Consequent to the launch of the PLI scheme for electronics, India emerged as the second largest manufacturer of mobile phones in the world in volume terms from 60 million mobile phones in FY 2014-15 to about 320 million mobile phones in FY 2021-22, and from making 3% of the world's Mobile handsets in 2014, to a projected 19% this year. In value, the production of mobile phones has grown from Rs.190 billion in FY 2014-15 to Rs.3.5 trillion in FY 2022-23. Of the USD 101 billion total electronics production, smartphones constitute USD 44 billion, including USD 11.1 billion in exports. There is sufficient evidence to establish that mobile manufacturing in India is becoming deeper as well as broader, with added domestic value addition, employment and incomes.

The PLI Scheme for LSEM has attracted investment of Rs.65.62 billion

till end-FY 2022-23, which has led to total production of Rs.2.84 trillion, including exports of Rs.1.29 trillion and generated direct employment of over 100,000 and indirect employment of about 2,50,000. Women employment is 70 percent of all new jobs created, which would help address gender balance in formal sector employment in India. Since 2014, more than 1 million jobs have been added in the sector. India scored a coup with the decision by Apple to significantly expand iPhone production in India, including manufacturing of its most advanced models. Projections are that a quarter of all Apple iPhones will be made in India by 2025. To conclude, the success of PLI schemes can be seen through its contributions in terms of employment generation, increased FDI in manufacturing, increased exports and diversification of the exports basket as well as significant value addition and the creation of a growing local value chain in many of the PLI products, especially mobiles.

(The authors respectively are Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Government of India and Senior Economic Adviser in the same department.)

BRIEF

Vantage Circle

Guwahati: HR technology firm Vantage Circle on Sunday said it will almost double its manpower to over 400 people within the next 2-3 years as it looks to foray into Latin America with its various products. The Guwahati-based company, which began as a less than 10-member startup in 2010, has now established operations in over 70 countries catering to more than 700 global clients with approximately 18 lakh corporate employees.

NMDC

New Delhi: State-owned NMDC has posted 20 per cent growth in iron ore production to 10.70 million tonne (MT) in the first quarter of FY24. NMDC produced 8.92 MT of iron ore during April-June of FY23, the company said in a regulatory filing. Sales rose to 11.15 MT from 7.66 MT in the year-ago period, registering a 45 per cent rise. "NMDC's contribution to the country's economy continues to make massive headway in meeting the increase in the demand for iron ore."

UltraTech Cement

New Delhi: Leading cement maker UltraTech's consolidated sales increased 19.64 per cent to 29.96 million tonne (MT) in the first quarter ended June 2023. The company produced 25.04 MT of cement in the April-June quarter a year ago, Aditya Birla Group firm said in a regulatory filing on Saturday. Its total sales volume in the domestic market rose 19.87 per cent to 29.01 MT during the quarter under review.

Tata Motors

New Delhi: Tata Motors on Saturday reported a 1 per cent rise in total domestic sales at 80,383 units in June 2023 as against 79,606 units in the year-ago month. Domestic passenger vehicle sales, including electric vehicles, were at 47,235 units as compared to 45,197 units in the same month a year ago, a growth of 5 per cent, Tata Motors said in a statement. Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd Managing Director Shailesh Chandra said the passenger vehicle industry in Q1 FY24 witnessed a robust demand driven by new launches, especially in the SUV segment and EVs.

Diesel sales fall

New Delhi: Diesel sales dropped in June as the arrival of monsoon cut demand and reduced vehicular movement, preliminary industry data showed. Demand for diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country -- accounting for about two-fifths of the total demand, fell 3.7 per cent to 7.1 million tonnes in June compared to the year-ago period. Diesel had soared 6.7 per cent in April and May, respectively, as agriculture demand picked up and cars yanked up air-conditioning to beat summer heat. Month-on-month sales were almost flat compared to 7.09 million tonnes of diesel consumed in May.

PTC India likely to clock 20 pc growth in power trading in FY24: CMD Mishra

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI):

Power trading solutions provider PTC India Ltd has clocked 16 per cent growth in its power trading volumes during the first quarter of this fiscal and hopes for around 20 per cent rise in the entire 2023-24, driven by targeted segment wise trade and innovative products, according to CMD Rajib Kumar Mishra.

PTC India's trading activities include long-term trading of power generated from large power projects and short-term trading arising from supply and demand mismatches, which inevitably occur in various regions of the country. The company also has a mandate to trade electricity with Bhutan, Nepal, and Bangladesh.



In an interview with PTI, the company's chairman and managing director was extremely bullish about the growth prospects in the current fiscal, buoyed by the operational performance in the first quarter. "Our daily power trading volumes have increased by 16 per cent year-on-year in the April-June period of this fiscal. We crossed the 300 MU/day

traded volume on June 25, the highest in this fiscal. We expect the volumes to increase further and clock a growth of 20 per cent for the full year," Mishra said. At an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) held last week, shareholders of PTC India approved the appointment of Mishra as the company's chairman and managing director with requisite majority

votes. He expected the growth momentum to strengthen in the remaining period and hoped for around 20 per cent growth for the full fiscal.

PTC India's consolidated total income stood at Rs 16,002.51 crore last fiscal as against Rs 16,879.77 crore in the year-ago period, while net profit was Rs 507.15 crore during 2022-23 as compared with Rs 551.67 crore a year ago.

In the last fiscal on the operational front, the power trading volumes stood at 70,610 million units as against 87,515 million units in the year-ago period.

The trading volumes were down by 19 per cent in the last fiscal on account of a decline in low-margin power exchange-traded volumes, he said.

Bandhan Bank triples its branch

Mumbai, Jul 02:

Bandhan Bank, has achieved a milestone of tripling its branch presence in less than 8 years of its operations. The Bank now has a total of more than 1,500 bank branches. With a network of another 4,500 banking units that the Bank already has, the total number of banking outlets is now more than 6,000 across the country. The Bank started its journey with 501 branches on August 23, 2015. The Bank currently serves more than 3 crore customers through a strong network of over 6,000 banking outlets spread across 34 states and union territories in India. It is committed to fulfilling the diverse financial needs of every Indian irrespective of where they reside, what financial product they need or which banking channel they may prefer - physical or digital. Chandra Shekhar Ghosh, MD & CEO, said, "Today marks an exciting milestone for Bandhan Bank. The rapid growth of the Bank in the past eight years has been a result of the confidence and trust that customers from every corner of the country have reposed on us."

NSL commences trial production of HR Coils



Hyderabad, Jul 02:

NMDC Steel Limited (NSL) commenced trial production of Hot Rolled Coils from its Rolling Mill on 30 June, 2023. The occasion was graced by Amitava Mukherjee, CMD (Additional Charge) of NMDC and NSL and Functional Directors of NMDC and NSL Dilip Kumar Mohanty, Director (Production); Vishwanath Suresh, Director (Commercial); Vinay Kumar, Director (Technical) and K Praveen Kumar, Executive Director (NSL). The team of NSL, MECON & Danieli completed the integrated trial runs by charging 70mm semi-rolled plates sourced from Rourkela Steel Plant. This was followed by Ghost Rolling and other synchronisation activities on 29 June 2023 which culminated in taking slabs in the Tunnel Furnace on 30 June 2023, result-

ing in successful rolling of Hot Slabs. This state-of-the-art Hot Strip Mill is supplied by technology provider M/s Danieli, Italy. After stabilisation, it will produce around 2.89 Million Tonnes of Coils, Sheets and Plates of different grades. The HR plates manufactured in the plant will be widely used for LPG cylinders, bridges, automobile grades, pipes, storage tanks, boilers and railway wagons. Speaking on the occasion, Amitava Mukherjee said, "It is indeed a moment of pride for NMDC Steel Limited as they commence the trial of their Hot Strip Mill today. This achievement has paved the way for concluding the commissioning and integration of all the packages and roll-out steel in a month or so. This ambitious project commissioning of 3.0 MTPA Steel Plant will be a landmark in the history of NMDC and NSL."

BoB plans to divest up to 49 pc in credit card arm

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI):

State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) plans to sell up to 49 per cent stake in credit card business arm BOB Financial Solutions Ltd. Currently, it is 100 per cent owned by BoB.

The bank has floated a Request for Proposal for roping in a strategic investor, and the process is expected to complete in one year, a senior bank official said.

BoB intends to offload up to 49 per cent in a combination of primary and secondary capital from one or multiple investors to create more value in BOB Financial Solutions and take it to the next level of growth, the official

said. BOB Financial doubled the acquisition of new credit cards in FY23 by issuing close to 1.2 million credit cards compared to 0.5 million a year ago.

"Retail spends too more than doubled compared to FY 2022, clocking approximately Rs 17,300 crore (compared to Rs 7,000 crore in FY 2022)," BoB said in its annual report.

At the same time, the net profit of the NBFC also more than doubled to Rs 24.62 crore against Rs 10.07 crore in the year-ago period. BOB Financial Solutions Ltd, formerly known as BOB Cards Ltd, was established in 1994 as a non-banking financial company, a wholly-owned arm of BoB.

Leading Taiwanese firms looking at relocating production bases to India

Taipei, Jul 02 (PTI):

Leading Taiwanese technology firms are looking at relocating their manufacturing bases to India to bring down their exposure to the Chinese market, top policymakers in the Taiwan government have said, amid the self-governed island's increasingly tense relations with China.

Deputy Minister for Taiwan's National Development Kao Shien-Quey said there is huge scope for collaboration between New Delhi and Taipei in areas of emerging and critical technologies including manufacturing of semiconductors and electronics equipment. In an interaction with a group of international journalists, she said major Taiwanese technology giants are looking at India as a key destination to strengthen their global supply chains.

Kristy Tsun-tzu Hsu, the director at premier policy think-tank Taiwan ASEAN Studies Center at Chung-Hua Institution of Economic Research, described India as an important country for Taiwan and said Taiwanese companies operating in China are looking at "decoupling" the global supply chain from that country while maintaining it for the domestic consumers. Leading Taiwanese companies are increasingly looking at relocating their

production bases from China to countries in Europe, North America, the US and India in view of Washington's trade dispute with Beijing and the Chinese military's increasing muscle-flexing around Taiwan. The relationship between China and Taiwan has become increasingly strained after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island in August last year. India is keen on having production facilities of leading Taiwanese chip producers including Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (TSMC), the world's largest chipmaker whose clients included Apple.

Indian Bank rolls out digital services under 'Project WAVE' initiative

Chennai, Jul 02 (PTI):

Public sector lender Indian Bank has unveiled new services under its digital transformation initiative -- Project WAVE -- the bank said on Sunday.

Accordingly, the city-headquartered bank in collaboration with National E-Governance Services Ltd, has introduced an electronic bank guarantee (e-BG) service to ease traditional paper-based processes.

This move will also reduce the turn-around time of the bank guarantee issuance and delivery to the beneficiary from an industry average of 3-4 working days to a few minutes, a bank state-

ment said. Besides, the facility would replace the need for physical stamp paper and physical signatures of customers by replacing them with digital stamping and e-signing making the entire process digital. Indian Bank has launched a facility to avail pre-approved business loans, an end-to-end digital journey, for eligible individuals and proprietor firms to cater to their respective businesses. "The newly launched digital vehicle loan product enables individual customers of the bank to get their dream vehicle with hassle-free loan processes. This facility would be available for loan value up to Rs 25 lakh" the bank said.

Merger raises HDFC Bank's total business to over Rs 41 lakh cr

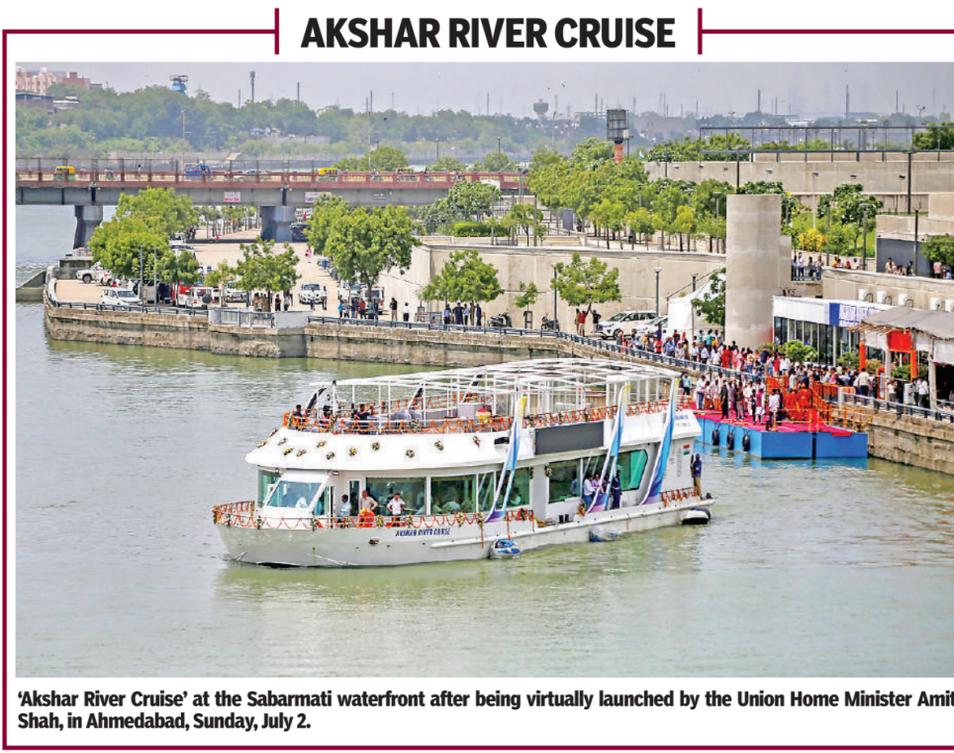
New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI):

The reverse merger of HDFC with its subsidiary HDFC Bank effective Saturday has increased the total business of the merged entity to over Rs 41 lakh crore, closer to the country's biggest lender SBI.

The total business (deposit and advances) of State Bank of India (SBI) stood at Rs 70.30 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2023. However, the combined profit is higher at Rs 60,000 crore as compared to Rs 50,232 crore recorded by SBI in FY23. Post-merger, HDFC Bank became the fourth most valued lender in the world, and narrowed the gap by asset size with state-owned SBI to be the second largest Indian bank. The total business of the merged entity stood at Rs 41 lakh



crore at the end of March 2023. With the merger, the networth of the entity would be over Rs 4.14 lakh crore. Following the merger, the capital of HDFC Bank increased to Rs 1,190.61 crore with the power to increase or reduce the share capital. HDFC Investments and HDFC Holdings have been amalgamated with and into HDFC Limited, and have stood dissolved without being wound up, without any further act or deed, on July 1, 2023, HDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing.



'Akshar River Cruise' at the Sabarmati waterfront after being virtually launched by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, in Ahmedabad, Sunday, July 2.

Oil companies scout for retail outlets

Mumbai, Jul 02:

BPCL, HPCL, and IOCL, the leading PSU Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have started the process for establishment of new retail outlets across the country. The aim is to meet the growing demand for petrol and diesel in line with the country's fast-growing economy. The demand for Retail Sales of Petrol and Diesel is increasing over the years. With the country's economy experiencing significant development, the need for energy has increased manifold. As a result, OMCs are undertaking the expansion of their retail outlet network to cater to this rising demand. The expansion will cater to emerging markets such as urban areas, upcoming highways, agricultural pockets, rural, remote, and far-flung areas.

Share of housing loans in total advances rises to 14.2 pc in 11 years: RBI report

Mumbai, Jul 02 (PTI):

The share of residential housing loans in total advances has increased over the last eleven years to 14.2 per cent in March 2023 from 8.6 per cent in March 2012, as per the Reserve Bank's latest Financial Stability Report (FSR).

It also said the housing sector is witnessing a healthy growth with sales growing by 21.6 per cent in the fourth quarter (January-March) of 2023. In addition to rising sales, new launches also maintained healthy growth, reflecting strength in demand by end-users. The share of residential

housing loans in total loans has increased over the last eleven years to 14.2 per cent in March 2023 from 8.6 per cent in March 2012, the report said.

During this period, the share of commercial real estate (CRE) in total loans has hovered between 2.0-2.9 per cent.

"Total exposure of the banking system to real estate stood at 16.5 per cent of total loans in March 2023. Given the secured nature of these loans and loan to value (LTV) ratio regulations, loan defaults remain less than 2 per cent," it said.

Pradeep Aggarwal, Founder and Chairman,

Signature Global (India), said historically, Indians have shown a preference for avoiding loans, and if they do take one, their inclination is to repay it as quickly as possible.

"This approach is particularly evident when it comes to home loans, as buyers seek to clear their debts promptly. Home ownership is viewed as a source of pride and accomplishment, and individuals are motivated to avoid loan defaults and the potential loss of their homes. As a result, the non-performing asset (NPA) rate in the home loan segment remains low," he said.

Axis Mutual Fund launches 'Axis Nifty IT Index Fund'

Mumbai, Jul 02:

Axis Mutual Fund, announced the launch of their New Fund Offer -- Axis Nifty IT Index Fund, an open-ended index fund tracking the NIFTY IT TRI. Mr. Hitesh Das (Fund Manager) would be managing the fund. Axis Nifty IT Index Fund will track the NIFTY IT TRI and aim to provide returns before expenses that correspond to the total returns of the NIFTY IT TRI, subject to tracking errors. The minimum investment amount is Rs. 5,000 and in multiples of Re.1/- thereof.

The main objective of an Index Fund is to replicate a stock market index in terms of the portfolio. All the stocks in these indices will find some representation in their investment portfolio. Essentially, this ensures a performance fairly identical to that of the index being tracked.

Half CA: A Tale of Aspiration and Determination

The upcoming web series, 'Half CA,' is set to make this year's CA Day even more special as it delves into the lives of a group of students aspiring to become Chartered Accountants. Ahsaas Channa, one of the lead actors in the show, describes it as a story of aspiration, highlighting the challenges and triumphs of her character as she navigates the highly competitive world of accounting. Excited about the series, Ahsaas shares, "I am really excited for 'Half CA' as it explores various aspects of the educational world that have remained untouched. My character reveals the different layers of a teenager striving to climb the ladder in this fiercely competitive world." The show promises to be a riveting coming-of-age narrative that resonates with anyone preparing for the CA exam or any other competitive test. It captures the essence of student life, transporting viewers back to their own academic journeys. Ahsaas adds, "Each of us has been a student at some point in our lives, and this series is full of moments that will evoke nostalgia." 'Half CA' offers a glimpse into the daily lives of a group of students on their path to becoming CAs. Narrated through the perspective of Archi and her friends, the series explores the multifaceted dynamics they encounter, from the initial preparations to the final exams. It sheds light on why pursuing a career in CA is considered one of the most challenging professions in the world. The show features a talented ensemble cast including Ahsaas Channa, Prit Kamani, Gyanendra Tripathi, Anmol Kajani, and Rohan Joshi in leading roles.

Sherlyn Chopra's majestic transformation for 'Paurashpur 2'

Actress Sherlyn Chopra is set to captivate audiences with her mesmerizing portrayal of Maharani Snehlata in the historical fiction drama series 'Paurashpur' for its highly anticipated second season. In her new look, Chopra effortlessly combines elements of seduction, strength, and regality, creating a character that exudes power and allure.

Chopra's first glimpse as Maharani Snehlata in 'Paurashpur 2' showcases her boldness and elegance. Adorned in opulent royal attire, she radiates grandeur and embodies the essence of royalty. The aesthetic transformation is a testament to Chopra's versatility as an actress, as she embraces the complexities of the character with utmost grace.

Expressing her enthusiasm for the challenging role, Chopra shared her experience, stating, "Playing Maharani Snehlata has been a transformative journey for me. The depth and complexity of the character have pushed me to explore new dimensions of my acting abilities. It's an honor to be part of a series that celebrates strong, empowered women, and I eagerly await the audience's response."

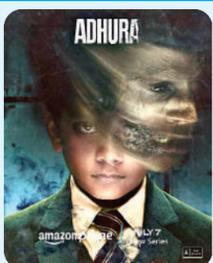


immense strength and intelligence, defying the restrictive norms of her patriarchal society. As the story unfolds, she navigates the intricate power dynamics while grappling with her own desires and vulnerabilities. This multifaceted portrayal adds depth to the character and positions Snehlata as one of the most intriguing figures in the show.

'Paurashpur 2' promises to deliver an enthralling narrative that showcases the resilience and determination of its female characters. With Sherlyn Chopra's captivating performance, the series aims to captivate viewers with its exploration of societal norms and the indomitable spirit of its women.

Streaming on ALTBalaji, 'Paurashpur 2' invites audiences to immerse themselves in a world where strength, power, and regality converge, as Maharani Snehlata's journey unfolds. Prepare to be enthralled by this remarkable series that challenges conventions and celebrates the triumph of the human spirit.

Sahil Salathia reunites with Nikkhil Advani



Sahil Salathia made an impressive and grand Bollywood debut with Ashutosh Gowariker's historical drama Panipat. The actor received rave reviews for his portrayal of Shamsheer Bahadur in the film. Before that, he had already collaborated with Nikkhil Advani for his acclaimed series POW-bandhi Uddh ke and 7 years after that series, the actor-filmmaker are reuniting on a series. Sahil will be seen in Nikkhil Advani's new series Adhura on Amazon Prime Video, produced by Emmay Entertainment. The show is a Hindi horror series and will tell the story of a nostalgic reunion which turns sinister. The first look poster features a spine-chilling image of a school boy as the animation gives an impression of him being possessed. The actor is quite ecstatic about this reunion with Nikkhil and Emmay and is looking forward to his new show. Sahil says, "I am very excited to be a part of Adhura. I think it's a very interesting series. I have worked with Nikkhil Advani and Emmay Entertainment before on the series P.O.W. I got to play the antagonist in that series and this time, I am again doing something that I haven't done before."

Subhash Ghai's directorial clocks 43 glorious years



Renowned for his remarkable directorial skills, Subhash Ghai has an illustrious filmography that boasts some of Indian cinema's biggest hits. Among his many triumphs, 'Karz' stands tall as one of his most iconic creations, and today it marks its 43rd year in existence. Widely regarded as one of the all-time blockbusters, the music of 'Karz' captivated audiences along with Subhash Ghai's masterful direction, making it an undeniable epic. Reflecting on this

momentous milestone, Subhash Ghai delves into nostalgia, expressing, "The music from 'Karz' holds a special place in my heart and will always remain dear to me. The film also, is undeniably Chintuji's (referring to the late Rishi Kapoor) finest performance. It's heartening to know that even the younger generation today resonates with the music of 'Karz.' To remain relevant after more than three decades is truly an achievement for any filmmaker."

'I haven't seen my shots, I trust Sandeep completely'

The makers of the show have released the show a day prior to its original release date and the show is now available to binge-watch, sending a wave of cheer for fans! After leaving the audiences on tenterhooks with the first part of 'The Night Manager,' Sandeep Modi is set to fascinate the audiences with the second part of one of the most watched series of 2023. The series stars Anil Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapur and Shobhita Dhulipala in pivotal roles. Ahead of the second part's release, Anil Kapoor was quoted saying at a show's recent press con, "When Sandeep (creator of the show) okayed a shot, I never felt the need to go and check it. I trust his creative instinct. I haven't seen 99% of the shots." Sandeep is accredited with giving massive successes like the Sushmita Sen-starrer 'Aarya' and 'The Night Manager - part 1.



Divyanka Tripathi set to stream new web series on Jio Studios



Television actress Divyanka Tripathi has announced that her highly anticipated web series will premiere in mid-July, with the teaser set to be unveiled soon. Tripathi shared the exciting news during an award ceremony held in Mumbai, where she provided a glimpse into her upcoming show. "I'm thrilled to announce that my new web series will be released in mid-July. It will be streamed exclusively on Jio Studios," Tripathi revealed. Expressing her enthusiasm for the project, she added, "I am confident that everyone will love it,

and it can be enjoyed with family members. Stay tuned for the teaser, which will be launched very soon." Recently, the actress ventured to South Africa to participate in the forthcoming season of the popular reality show 'Khatron Ke Khiladi'. Reflecting on her experience, Tripathi shared, "It was an incredibly exciting adventure. As a challenger on the show, I felt a greater sense of responsibility. I had the opportunity to perform two daring stunts, and I thoroughly enjoyed being there, especially as Rohit Sir [Shetty] is always warm and welcoming."

'I'm a lot like Aradhna in real life'

The first glimpse of Sony Entertainment Television's upcoming romance drama 'Barsatein - Mausam Pyaar Ka' has created a wave of excitement amongst viewers. Set against the backdrop of a newsroom, this love story will explore the clash of two headstrong individuals - Reyansh and Aradhna, who find themselves entwined in a complex web of emotions. Bringing to life a stormy monsoon romance, the show, produced by Balaji Telefilms, will witness Shivangi Joshi play the righteous and independent Aradhna Sahni. Having made an impression with her endearing roles on television, audience favorite Shivangi Joshi is all set to step into the shoes of Aradhna Sahni, an aspiring journalist. Brimming with ideas and dreams, Aradhna possesses a constant sparkle in her eyes and wants to make a mark in the field of journalism. Curious by nature, Aradhna is sharp and intelligent; yet despite knowing better, she is attracted to the suave and irresistibly charming Reyansh Lamba. Elated to be a part of Barsatein - Mausam Pyaar Ka, Shivangi Joshi shares, "One thing that stood out for me when I heard the story of Barsatein - Mausam Pyaar Ka was its refreshing and relatable take on love stories. Despite all the warnings, many people have fallen for elusive men and eventually have their hearts broken."



Konkona Sen Sharma opens up about early career struggles

Acclaimed actress and director Konkona Sen Sharma recently reflected on the challenges she faced in the early stages of her acting career. She revealed that she struggled to conform to societal expectations and "fit in" a certain mold.

Sen Sharma's short film in the streaming anthology 'Lust Stories 2' has garnered significant praise, delving into the themes of the female gaze and voyeurism. Starring Tillotama Shome and Amruta Subhash in lead roles, the film explores the complexities of women's desires.

Speaking about the prevalent stereotypes surrounding women and their sexual and romantic pleasures, Sen Sharma emphasized the limited representation and expectations imposed on certain body types. She stated, "Often, only a specific set of bodies, those that are thin, fair, rich, and young, are allowed to experience sexual and romantic pleasure. There have been

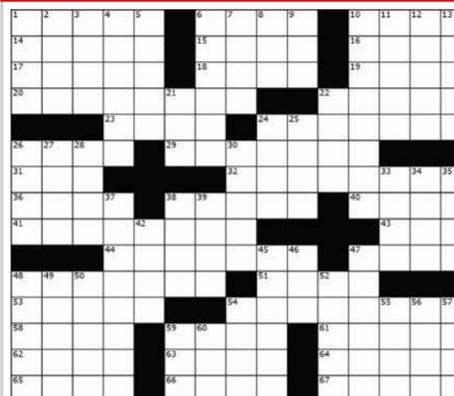


limitations in portraying individuals from diverse economic backgrounds." Sen Sharma's candid remarks shed light on the persistent challenges faced by actors and actresses who do not conform to society's narrow beauty standards. Her insight highlights the need for greater inclusivity and representation in the entertainment industry, allowing for a more authentic and diverse portrayal of human experiences.

As Sen Sharma continues to push boundaries with her thought-provoking work, her willingness to confront the industry's limitations serves as an inspiration for aspiring artists and a reminder of the importance of embracing individuality and breaking stereotypes.

While Sen Sharma's journey may have been marked by struggles, her dedication to authenticity and her determination to challenge norms have undoubtedly contributed to her success and positioned her as a respected figure in the film industry. Her honest reflection encourages a broader dialogue about representation, paving the way for a more inclusive and accepting creative landscape.

CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Heidi's cousin
 - Outer covering
 - Blemish
 - Exterior
 - Actress _____ Bancroft
 - Gold fabric
 - Home
 - Fender nick
 - Eve's garden
 - Citrus drink
 - Author Jules _____
 - Title
 - Least shallow
 - Apple part
 - Moderately slow, in music
 - Picnic drink
 - Approved
 - Leonardo's "_____ Lisa"
 - Festive occasions
 - Skyrocket
 - Search for gold
 - UN member
 - Under
 - Erupt

- DOWN**
- West Virginia product
 - Grease
 - Energy source
 - Redecorated
 - Sports building
 - Make unhappy
 - Leg part
 - Lodge
 - Butterfly snare
 - Dozing ones
 - San Diego athlete
 - Prophetic signs
 - Belief
 - Physicians' gp.
 - Presidential "no"
 - Comic _____ Carvey
 - Concludes
 - Child's resort
 - Stench
 - Divorce city
 - River mouth
 - Minestrone, e.g.
 - Soften
 - Attract
 - Fireproof material
 - Chap
 - Top pilots
 - Corrals
 - Menace
 - Swine
 - Madrid matron
 - Endures
 - Love, Italian-style
 - Newsman _____ Shriver
 - Sail supports
 - Bread topping
 - Adored one
 - Alike
 - Chef's measures (abbr.)
 - Chatter
 - Coffeepot



Yuki Bhambri wins maiden ATP doubles title in Spain

Indian tennis player Yuki Bhambri with South African Lloyd Harris poses after winning the men's doubles trophy at the Mallorca Open 2023, Spain, Sunday, July 2.



Mallorca (Spain), Jul 02 (PTD): Yuki Bhambri clinched his maiden title on the ATP World Tour, winning the doubles trophy at the Mallorca

Championships with South African partner Lloyd Harris. The Indo-South African pair defeated the Dutch-Austrian duo of Robine Haase and Philipp Oswald 6-3 6-4

in the final of the grass court event, the last in the build up to the Wimbledon Championships. The 30-year-old Indian finished the match with a forehand winner between the two

opposition players across the court and raised his arms in celebration. "It's incredible to win the tournament on grass. Winning without dropping even one set on grass is un-

heard of in doubles. It obviously helps playing with a partner who was performing exceptionally well in singles," Bhambri told PTI.

"We played to our potential and came through. We took it one match at a time and got the result. Hopefully many more (titles) to come," he added.

Bhambri, who is ranked 75, will move up to career-best 58 after this win as he presented himself an early birthday present. He will turn 31 on Tuesday. His singles career marred by injuries, Bhambri had decided to switch to doubles on the Tour to prolong his tennis career. He mostly played with compatriot Saketh Myneni. They won two Challenger titles this season -- in Nonthaburi and Girona.

They did not play this tournament together because Myneni wanted to take a break, according to Bhambri, who added that he will play the Wimbledon Championships with his Indian partner.

China ends Japan's long reign to win women's basketball Asia Cup title



Sydney, Jul 02 (AP):

China rallied to claim its first women's basketball Asia Cup title since 2012 as they beat five-time defending champion Japan 73-71 in an epic final on Sunday.

Trailblazing at halftime it appeared China may fall for a third consecutive time in a title game as reigning champions Japan scored the last 14 points of the first half to lead by nine points.

Led by player of the tournament center Xu Han, China seized the mo-

mentum early in the third quarter and took what proved a match-winning lead late in the game to end their 12-year wait for a gold medal in front of a large crowd in Sydney.

Xu finished with a match-defining 26 points and 10 rebounds to complete the feat of recording a double-double in every game of the tournament. Siyu Wang scored 17 points.

Maki Takada led Japan with 17 points and four rebounds, with Saki Hayashi scoring 12 points for Japan.

China's title follows its silver medal at the women's basketball World Cup, also held in Sydney, late last year.

Japan and China met in the 2019 and 2021 title games with the Japanese prevailing in both to claim their fourth and fifth titles.

Earlier Saturday, host nation Australia claimed its third consecutive bronze medal as they cruised past New Zealand 81-59 to repeat its result from Bengaluru, India in 2019 and Amman, Jordan in 2021.

Territorial mindset needs to change in West Indies cricket: Jason Holder

Harare, Jul 02 (PTD):

West Indies all-rounder Jason Holder appealed fellow cricketers to shun "territorial" mindset and come together "as a region" for the good of the sport after the team failed to qualify for the ODI World Cup in India. The two-time former title winners will not feature in the 50-over World Cup for the first time since the competition's inception in 1975. The team from the Caribbean was on Saturday eliminated after its seven-wicket loss to Scotland in a Super Six match of the World Cup Qualifier here. West Indies scored 181 and Scotland



chased down the target with more than six overs to spare. "It's (cricket) not an individual thing or a territorial thing. We've got to come together as a region... and really, really think about how we want to go forward as a group and make it happen," one of the world's top all-rounders said during the post-match press conference here on Saturday. Holder scored 45 and took a wicket on Saturday. Cricket West Indies (CWI), the governing body of the team, consists of six associations, namely Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Trinidad & Tobago and Windward Islands.

Theekshana, Nissanka hand Sri Lanka ODI World Cup ticket

Bulawayo, Jul 02 (PTD):

Opener Pathum Nissanka anchored the chase with a stylish century after spinner Maheesh Theekshana grabbed four wickets as Sri Lanka thrashed hosts Zimbabwe by nine wickets to ensure qualification in the upcoming ICC ODI World Cup in India, starting October 5.

After Chennai Super Kings spinner Theekshana took 4 for 25 to effect a middle-order collapse to bowl out Zimbabwe for 165 in 32.2 overs, right-handed Nissanka scored unbeaten 101 off 102 balls with the help of 14 boundaries as Sri Lanka knocked off the pal-

try target in 33.1 overs.

Sri Lanka's victory took them to eight points and even if they lose their final Super Six encounter, the champions of the 1996 edition are assured of a top-two finish.

"See coming for the qualifiers. It's always tough but still, if you go through the process...and we know with the team we got, we are going to qualify for the World Cup. Credit to the other teams; they played really well in the tournament. Some other teams gave us some good fights but still, we are the better side," Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka said after the match.

Aus survive Stokes blast to take 2-0 series lead

London, Jul 02 (AP):

Australia survived Ben Stokes' explosive century to secure a 2-0 series lead against England after an intense match in London. The game had echoes of the Headingley Test in 2019, as Stokes threatened to stage another remarkable comeback with his brilliant innings of 155. However, once he was dismissed by Josh Hazlewood, Australia quickly regained control. England were eventually bowled out for 327, handing Australia a 43-run victory. There were several notable moments during the match.

Overnight batsmen Ben Duckett and Jonny Bairstow were both dismissed by the Australian bowlers, with Bairstow falling victim to a controversial run-out decision. Bairstow's confusion and immediate departure from the crease led to accusations of cheating from the crowd, resulting in heated exchanges between players and spectators. Stokes, visibly frustrated by the run-out incident, unleashed his anger on the field by punishing the Australian bowlers. He smashed boundaries all around the ground, particularly targeting Cameron Green, who bore the brunt

of Stokes' assault. In a sensational display of power hitting, Stokes scored 24 runs off Green's next over, including three consecutive sixes, propelling him from 62 to 100 in just 16 balls. Despite Stokes' heroics, Australia managed to maintain their composure and clinch the victory.

The win puts them in a commanding position with a 2-0 series lead, leaving England with an uphill battle to stage a comeback. Three more games remain in the series, ensuring there will be plenty more excitement and drama in the coming matches.

SAFF Championship

India beat Lebanon 4-2 in penalty shootout to enter final

Bengaluru, Jul 1 (PTD)

Defending champions India held their nerves to beat Lebanon 4-2 in a tense penalty shootout after a goalless 120 minutes of play to enter the final of the SAFF Championship football here.

The home side face Kuwait, a 1-0 winner over Bangladesh in the other semifinal of the day, in the summit clash on July 4.

India will be playing in the final of the regional tournament for the 13th time and ninth on the trot. They have won eight times in the earlier 13 editions. The only time India did not make it to the top two was in 2003. In the



Indian players celebrate after they won in penalty shoot out during the 2nd semifinal of SAFF Championship 2023 between India vs Lebanon at Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru.

penalty shootout, skipper Sunil Chhetri, Anwar Ali, Mahesh Singh and Udanta Singh found the back of the net for India.

Lebanon could only score twice through Walid Shour and Mohammad Sadek. India goalkeeper Gurpreet Sandhu saved

the kick from Hassan Maatouk while Khalil Bader's sailed above the crossbar. It was also India's second successive win over Lebanon after defeating them 2-0 in the recent Intercontinental Cup in Odisha. Before the late drama unfolded, the first half began with Lebanon dominating the proceedings. India were not even in the picture for the first 10 minutes. Lebanon had a brilliant chance to go ahead in the second minute. But Nader Matar was a bit too eager to execute a volley, failing to impart direction as it sailed over the bar. India found their bearings soon and got their first crack at the opposition goal in the 16th minute.

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTD):

Shimron Hetmyer's Rs 8.50 crore annual IPL fees earned from Rajasthan Royals or Andre Russell's Rs 16 crore retention fee from Kolkata Knight Riders is an indication how cricket's financial landscape has changed and playing for the West Indies isn't a motivation anymore.

It is the money that matters and has created the biggest hindrance for Cricket West Indies (CWI) from at least keeping the top players interested throughout the year.

During the ongoing World Cup qualifiers, West Indies didn't have the services of Hetmyer, Andre Russell or Sunil Narine, all of whom are not in

2 months of IPL: Pooran earns nearly 8 times, Hetmyer 4 times of what they would for representing WI

the 18 member central contract list released last year by CWI. All of them had voluntarily opted out as they do freelance in T20 leagues throughout the year. Nicholas Pooran, who got a Rs 16 crore deal from Lucknow Super Giants this year, played in the qualifiers, scored a hundred, but how long can Caribbean cricket establishment force him to wear the maroon in the wake of multi-year deal that his IPL franchise might offer to play in IPL, as well as SA T20? Add with it, a CPL, BBL and possibly a contract in Major League Cricket (MLC) in hand, the

dashing left-hander could well be on his way out.

The last documented match fees for West Indies players, which was published by ESPN Cricinfo in 2017 -- was USD 5750 for Tests (Rs 4.72 lakh per game), USD 2300 for ODIs (1.88 lakh per game) and USD 1735 (Rs 1.42 lakh).

Now there is no official document available on the internet to ascertain whether CWI had revised these figures but if these are the numbers, they earn at least three-and-half to four times less than their Indian counterparts who get Rs 15 lakh (nearly USD 18,000) for Tests, Rs 8 lakh for ODIs (USD 9800 approx) and Rs 4 lakh (USD 4800) for T20Is.

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'PM only diverts and distracts'

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI)

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi making a strong pitch for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) ahead of next year's general elections, the Congress on Sunday said the ruling BJP is raising "divisive and polarising" issues to divert the attention from the failures of its government. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh accused Modi of working overtime to raise such issues and not addressing the day-to-day concerns of the common man.



Jairam Ramesh

burning, China is sitting on Indian territory, people are struggling with rising prices and unemployment, the prime minister is on a different note," the former Union minister said.

He further alleged that the prime minister is trying to raise such divisive and polarising issues only to divert the attention of people from the failures of his government. The Congress has been adopting a cautious approach on the UCC issue.

The top leadership of the party discussed the issue at length at its strategy group meeting on Saturday. Insiders say the opposition party is hoping that the debate on the issue will settle soon.

The Congress has said there is no change in its stand on the issue, as enumerated in its June 15 statement where it questioned the law commission for changing its stand on a UCC by inviting fresh public opinion. Ramesh said since there has been no significant development in the matter in the last 15 days, the party has nothing to add to it as of now.

"We issued a statement on June 15. There has been no change in our stand on a UCC," he added.

"When there is a draft and a discussion, we will participate and examine what is proposed. As of

now, all we have is a law commission public notice for responses. The Congress reiterates the statement as nothing new has happened," he said.

The Congress had alleged that the law commission's latest attempt to seek fresh public opinion on a UCC represents the Modi government's desperation for continuing with its agenda of polarisation and diversion from its failures. Ramesh had earlier said the law commission's attempt to seek fresh public opinion on the issue shows the government's desperation for continuing with its polarisation agenda. He had also said it is strange that the law commission is seeking a fresh reference when it acknowledges that its predecessor, the 21st Law Commission, had published a consultation paper on the subject in August 2018.

COMMUNAL HARMONY



Muslims take part in the funeral of well-known Kashmiri Pandit and veteran trade union leader Sampat Prakash who died due to heart attack, in Srinagar, Sunday

Heavy rains cause flood-like situation in many areas of Gujarat

Ahmedabad, Jul 02 (PTI)

Heavy rains in several parts of Gujarat created a flood-like situation and led to many villages getting cut off, officials said on Sunday.

Some parts of Valsad and Navsari districts received extremely heavy rainfall in a 24-hour period till Sunday morning, data from the State Emergency Operation Centre revealed.

Several villages were cut off as roads were flooded or had been washed away, with the National and State Disaster Response Forces (NDRF and SDRF) engaged in operations to rescue stranded people, officials said.

Jamnagar is one of the worst-affected districts with

police saying 11 people have died in rain-related incidents since Friday.

A three-year-old girl died after falling into a well while scooping water out of her flooded house there on Friday, while bodies of two men who had gone missing after heavy rainfall were found on Saturday by a rescue team, police added.

Villages in Limbdi taluka of Surendranagar district were cut off due to the flooding of approach roads, with seven people being rescued by local residents from one of the villages, state government officials said.

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Gujarat government was taking all efforts to provide relief

to people amid heavy rains. "The government is working hard to provide all possible help to the people affected by the flood-like situation in many places due to heavy rains in Gujarat. Talked to Chief Minister @BhupendraBj and got information about the situation.

"Teams of NDRF and SDRF as well as local administration are busy helping people in these areas. The central and state governments stand with the people in these difficult times," Shah tweeted.

In the last 24 hours, the state has received 32 millimetres average rainfall, with Dharampur taluka in Valsad district leading with 234 mm, the SEOC said.

Surge in solo travel; J&K, Manali preferred travel destinations

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI)

Jammu and Kashmir, Manali and Shimla are the most preferred destinations for solo travellers as more people are inclined to explore places at their own pace and preference, said a recent travel trend report.

The research, conducted by leading travel fintech SanKash, found that almost "35 per cent" of solo travellers prefer Jammu and Kashmir for vacationing, followed by Manali (25 per cent) and Shimla (14 per cent). Mussoorie, Sikkim, and Goa are among the other top preferred destinations, with bookings clocking in at nine per cent, seven per cent, and five per cent, respectively.

"Destinations renowned for their natural beauty, cultural richness have witnessed a surge in popularity, captivating the hearts of

travellers. As of March 2023, domestic travel is becoming more popular, and domestic capacity has already surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Bookings are back to 100 per cent of pre-pandemic levels for domestic travel," said Akash Dahiya, co-founder and CEO of SanKash.

The insights indicate a notable shift in travel patterns, with travellers displaying a strong inclination towards "self-exploration, adventure, and reconnecting with nature". According to the report, the most interesting trend has been a shift towards solo travel, as there has been a whopping surge of "250 per cent" in Q1-FY23.

"Solo travel has topped the chart as the most preferred trend, as travellers are inclined to explore not only themselves but the world at their own pace and preference," it added.

Friends pool resources to rebuild Alwar school

● Lying in ruins due to neglect

Jaipur, Jul 02 (PTI)

A group of friends, some of them civil servants and some Non-Resident Indians, pooled Rs 18 lakh to revitalise a long-neglected government school that languished in a dilapidated state for over 15 years in Rajasthan's Alwar district.

Motivated by their shared belief in the power of education and desire to improve the lives of future generations in their district, they contributed voluntarily for the renovation and construction efforts which took two years to complete. The rebuilt Government Primary School, located in Dalapura village of Alwar, was inaugurated on Sunday by local public



A dilapidated primary school being renovated in Dalapur village

representatives at an event attended by several dignitaries. For the school that suffered years of neglect and disrepair, with its ceiling leaking, walls crumbling and facilities non-existent, the transformation has been breathtaking.

The leaking roofs have been replaced, the crumbling walls rebuilt, and modern basic facilities made available. The school exudes an air of vibrancy with classrooms equipped

with state-of-the-art technical facilities and comfortable furniture. It also now boasts of abundance of educational material.

Resplendent in colourful paints, the school building now has six rooms, including four classrooms, one office, one aaganwadi room and one kitchen.

Toilets have been reconstructed, water tank and water filter are in place and swings have been installed.

UP village carving out a niche in making artificial braids

Shahjahanpur (UP), Jul 02 (PTI)

The artificial braids woven here give the perfect hair look and style, say artisans in Feel Nagar who are earning a place for themselves in Uttar Pradesh and in several parts of the country with their work.

However, artificial braids are not about style alone. Villagers say many hang it outside houses and shops, on vehicles and also tie it around the neck of their livestock to ward off the evil eye.

Ajay Kashyap, a resident of Feel Nagar who lost his job during the COVID-19 pandemic, says he returned home to join the business.

The village, located 35 kilometers from the district headquarters, comes

under the Tilhar block. Almost every household in the village is involved in the work of braid making.

"The business has helped me make ends meet in the tough times of the pandemic. I am planning to expand the business," Kashyap said.

The villagers bring raw cotton thread from Bhillwara, Rajasthan, and some parts of Gujarat. The raw threads are cleaned and cut to the required sizes of braids before being distributed to different households for braiding. People at home, especially women, braid the threads and secure them by tying knots at the end.

Kashyap explains that other artisans decorate the braid by making flowers on braids. In this way,



Workers prepare artificial braids at a workshop in Feel Nagar village of Shahjahanpur.

after the efforts of many people, a braid is prepared.

Every artisan works on contract and is paid for his work. Every artisan earns Rs 300-500 daily, Kashyap said. The braids are collected by contractors and distributed across the country. Afroz Ali, a con-

tractor of braid-making work, said the braids are made throughout the year in the village, but there is more demand from August to October. Ali says a good braid sells for Rs 300 and gives a profit margin sufficient to sustain the business. According to locals, the braids are used as

totems and tied outside homes and businesses. People also tie it to their cattle or holy trees or private vehicles. Braids are particularly popular among truck drivers who decorate their vehicles with more than 40 braids.

Talib Khan, a truck driver, said he utilizes braids to "protect his vehicle from the evil eye and bad omens". "The braids also make the truck look beautiful."

"Once these braids were also popular among women who used them in makeup as hair extension. But it has now been replaced by other braids that use natural hair," said Kashyap.

District Magistrate Umesh Pratap Singh said artificial braids making has generated self-employ-

ment on a large scale in Feel Nagar. "The villagers are engaged in this work due to which they are not forced to migrate in search of jobs."

The officer said the villagers have been engaged in braiding work for many decades. "It used to be done by people of specific castes, but now people of all castes have adopted it. Women use their free time to make braids and get a good income," the DM said.

Shahjahanpur Superintendent of Police Ashok Kumar Meena said there is no history-sheeter, rapist, or even a single person with a criminal history in Feel Nagar village.

"A murder took place in the village in 2011, but since then there has been no such incident," the SP said.

IRANI TO CWCs

Review cases of older children who could be made free for adoption

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI)

Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani asked the child welfare committees on Sunday to visit child-care homes and review the cases of older children who could be made free for adoption as soon as possible. Many children living in child-care homes are not legally free for adoption. According to official figures, there are around 66,000 children residing in child-care homes across the country and less than 3,000 of them are legally free for adoption.

Speaking at a regional symposium on "Child Protection, Safety and Child Welfare" that was attended by child welfare committee members and officials from

child-care institutions among others, Irani asked the CWCs to visit the child-care homes and review the cases of older children who could be made free for adoption at the earliest.

Irani said the women and child development ministry has already reviewed two states, looked into 9,000 cases of older children and identified 164 such children who could be made legally free for adoption. She also asked the child-care homes to look into the infrastructure gaps in their areas and requested the apex child rights body — National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) — to review these gaps and present them to the ministry so that they can be brought up in the upcoming budget.

ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE



Bulldozers being used to demolish illegal structures during an anti-encroachment drive by PWD, at Bhajanpura area in New Delhi, Sunday.

Congress MP's proposal to shift Kerala capital to Kochi rejected by everyone

Thiruvananthapuram/Kochi, Jul 02 (PTI) Congress MP Hibi Eden's move to propose shifting of Kerala's state capital to Kochi from Thiruvananthapuram has been widely criticised across political lines, including his own party which rejected it and termed it as "illogical" and "impractical".

The ruling CPI(M) in Kerala also made it clear that Thiruvananthapuram would remain as the state capital and termed Ernakulam MP Eden's move as "immature" and aimed at improving his chances in the general election next year.

The Left party said that

no one in his right mind would make such a suggestion in view of all the government departments and facilities available in Thiruvananthapuram.

Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram, Shashi Tharoor, said he completely rejects the proposal by Eden as it is "illogical".

He also said there was some "mischief" on the part of the Centre in seeking views on the Bill by Eden to shift the state capital even before he was given permission to table it in the House.

"Hibi Eden has the right to move such a Bill, but it is an illogical decision. I completely reject it," he

said. He also tweeted — "Some light relief for the weekend!"

Kerala: Congress MP @HibiEden wants the state capital shifted to Kochi, @CMOKerala notes its impracticality, @ShashiTharoor says "wholly without merit".

K Muraleedharan, Congress MP and son of late party leader and former Chief Minister K Karunakaran, too shared similar views when he said Eden's move would consulting the grand old party was "unacceptable".

He said that Thiruvananthapuram was the state capital ever

since Kerala came into existence. There were a lot of facilities, like an international airport and places of worship of all faiths, within the city and therefore, there was no question of moving the capital to Kochi.

"I do not know what prompted Eden to make such a proposal, but the state capital cannot be shifted on someone's wish. He should have consulted the party before such a move," he said.

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the state assembly V D Satheshan said that while Eden was like a younger brother to him, the moment he

came to know about the proposal, he immediately conveyed his "strong dissatisfaction" to the Ernakulam MP.

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BRIEF



A vehicle on the Badrinath National Highway after it got blocked due to a rise in the water level of Khachdu drain, near Lambagad, in Chamoli district, Sunday.

Fire

Betul: A fire broke out at a bakery in a town in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district on Sunday and no casualty was reported in the incident, police said. Goods worth Rs 10 lakh were destroyed in the blaze that erupted at a bakery in Shahpur town of the district around 5.30 am, Shahpur sub-divisional officer of police (SDOP) HL Sharma said. The blaze was put out in an hour at the establishment located near the old bus stand of the town about 35 km from the district headquarters, he said.

Injured

Nagpur: Five persons were seriously injured after their car fell off a bridge and landed on the railway tracks in Maharashtra's Nagpur district in the early hours of Sunday, an official said. The incident took place in Bamani village on the Nagpur-Chandrapur route, he said. "Car driver Yusuf Minaj (30), a resident of Hyderabad in Telangana, may have dozed off. He lost control of the car, which hit the safety barrier, keeled over and landed on the railway tracks below," he said.

Arrested

Garhwa: Two members of the banned outfit People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) were arrested in Jharkhand's Garhwa district, a police officer said on Sunday. The two were arrested from Bhavraha forest, around 205 km from the state capital Ranchi, on Saturday night, he said. "Two rifles, one country-made katta and naxal literature were recovered from them," said Ranka sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Santosh Kumar.

Mishap

Muzaffarnagar: Two workers of a steel factory were crushed to death by a speeding truck while two others were injured on the Delhi-Dehradun National Highway here on Sunday, police said. The incident happened in an area under the Mansoorpur police station. Those killed have been identified as Deepak (27) and Shekhar (28), Mansoorpur SHO Rojant Tyagi said.

Overturn

Hazaribag: One person was killed and 12 others were injured after a bus overturned and fell in a roadside ditch in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district on Sunday, police said. The bus was on the way to the Chhinmasta temple in Rajrapa in Ramgarh district from Jehanabad in Bihar with devotees when the accident happened on National Highway 2 near Pipra village in Chouparan police station area, they said.

Weather
High 33 Low 27

VERTICAL SPLIT IN NCP

Ajit Pawar sworn in as Maha deputy CM

Third time in 4 years

Mumbai, Jul 02 (PTD):

In a day of dramatic developments in Maharashtra politics, NCP leader Ajit Pawar on Sunday led a vertical split in the party to become the deputy chief minister, shocking his uncle Sharad Pawar, who founded the outfit 24 years ago.

Eight NCP leaders were also sworn in as ministers at the ceremony held at Raj Bhavan in south Mumbai.

The NCP patriarch tried to put up a brave front after his 63-year-old nephew's stunning rebellion, as sources claimed that 36 of the 53 MLAs of the party were solidly backing the new deputy CM. The rapidly unfolding developments came as a shocker for Sharad Pawar, even as sources said Ajit's rebellion was prompted by the NCP chief and his daughter Supriya Sule's presence at the recent conclave of opposition leaders in Patna. Addressing reporters after taking oath, Ajit Pawar said NCP decided to become part of the Shiv Sena-BJP government of the country and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Maintaining that there was no split in NCP, Ajit Pawar said they would contest all future elections on the NCP's name and symbol.



Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais congratulates the newly sworn-in Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, during a ceremony at Raj Bhavan, in Mumbai, Sunday.

Sharad Pawar hints at seeking action against nephew Ajit Pawar

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday said a decision has to be taken on those who violated the party line and joined the Eknath Shinde government, indicating that action would be taken against Ajit Pawar and other leaders who became part of the ruling dispensation. Addressing a press conference here, Sharad Pawar said his endeavour after this development would be to travel as much as possible within state and the country, and build relations with people. Pawar said he would not fight over anyone saying anything by taking the NCP's name, but would go to people instead. "Those who violated the party line and took oath, a decision has to be taken on them," he said. He said some party leaders



were nervous about probes by the Enforcement Directorate and named Ajit Pawar, Chhagan Bhujbal, Dilip Walse-Patil, Hasan Mushrif. "Today's episode (on his party MLAs joining the Shinde government) may be new for others, but not for me," he said. Pawar said he was not bothered that people have left, but he was worried about their future.

More than 40 NCP MLAs support Ajit Pawar

NCP leader Ajit Pawar, who took oath as Deputy Chief Minister in the Shiv Sena-BJP government on Sunday, has the support of more than 40 MLAs and over six MLCs of his party, sources claimed citing a letter submitted to Raj Bhavan. NCP has 53 MLAs and nine MLCs. "Ajit Pawar has the support of more than 40 MLAs and more than six MLCs. A letter of support of these legislators was given to Raj Bhavan," the source told PTI.

"All the elected representatives (of the party) have supported the decision to join the government," he claimed.

Sharad Pawar said it was not the party's deci-

What Shinde said...

Reacting to the development, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said Maharashtra will now sprint forward with one chief minister and two deputy chief ministers. "Politics of development is being backed by a man of development. When a deserving party worker gets a secondary role, such things happen," Shinde said. "Now the double engine government has a triple engine. The state will sprint (on the path of development). Now we have one CM and two deputy chief ministers. This will help faster development of the state," he told reporters.

No official support from party: NCP

Senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar was sworn in as deputy chief minister while eight MLAs of the party took oath as ministers in the government led by the Shiv Sena and the Bharatiya Janata Party. In a video message, Tapase said NCP's party workers, district president, taluka president, youth and women are with party's national leader Sharad Pawar. "The oath-taking ceremony in Maharashtra was part of Operation Lotus and it has no official support of NCP. Those who took oath, it is their personal decision and not that of the NCP," he said.

sion to go with BJP-Shiv Sena. He said the party leadership will take action against those who joined the state Cabinet.

'Monsoon covers entire country six days early'

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTD):

The southwest monsoon on Sunday covered the entire country six days before the normal date, as it advanced in the remaining parts of Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

On Friday, the IMD had said the monsoon is expected to be normal in July across the country, barring parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and south Bihar.

The weather office said the monsoon covered the entire country on Sunday, against the normal date of July 8.

As many as 16 states and Union territories received deficient rainfall in June, with Bihar and Kerala reporting large deficits at 69 per cent and 60 per cent below normal, respectively.



Dark clouds hover over the city on a rainy day, in Solapur, Sunday.

ly. Some other states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana also received less rainfall than what is normal for June, the first month of the southwest monsoon season.

"The monthly rainfall averaged over the country as a whole during July

2023 is most likely to be normal (94 to 106 per cent of LPA) and most probably within the positive side of the normal," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra had said on Friday.

The long period average (LPA) of rainfall over the country during July based on the data of 1971-2020 is about 280.4 mm.

'KCR's remote control with Modi'

Khammam, Jul 02 (PTD):

Launching a scathing attack on Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said his remote control was with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and described the state's ruling party as "BJP's B-Team" and its new nomenclature, BRS, as 'BJP Rishtedar Samiti'.

Gandhi alleged that the corruption charges against Rao and his party's leaders have made them subservient to the BJP, and asserted that he told all other opposition leaders that the Congress would not join any bloc where the BRS was involved. Addressing a public meeting here, Gandhi said, "BRS is like BJP Rishtedar Samiti. KCR thinks he is a king and Telangana is his kingdom."

'Modi govt looted India more in 9 years than Britishers'

Bilaspur, Jul 02 (PTD):

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday alleged the amount of "loot" by the Narendra Modi government in the last nine years surpassed the loot of India committed by Britishers in 250 years during their rule.

Addressing a public rally at Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh, where Assembly elections are due by this year-end, Kejriwal also targeted the Congress for "looting" the country over 75 years.

He appealed to people to vote Aam Aadmi Party to power to rid Chhattisgarh of corruption.

"Modi ji became angry at me saying I am distributing 'revdis' (welfare sops) in Delhi. Yes, Modi ji I am distributing. But your people are looting revdis and taking it to

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PM to chair meeting of cabinet today amid reshuffle buzz

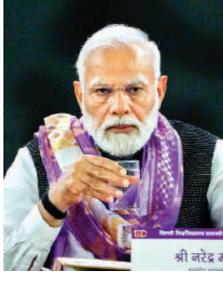
New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTD):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a meeting of the Union Council of Ministers on Monday amid a heightened buzz about the likelihood of a Cabinet reshuffle following a series of meetings of the ruling BJP's top brass.

The Monday meeting is expected to be held at the newly built convention centre at Pragati Maidan here, which will host the G20 summit in September.

The political upheaval in Maharashtra on Sunday as NCP leader Ajit Pawar joined the BJP-Shiv Sena government along with several of his party legislators and a number of closed-door meetings involving the BJP's brain trust, including Home Minister Amit Shah and party president J P Nadda, have strengthened the view that a Cabinet reshuffle is on the cards.

Senior NCP MP and former Union minister Praful Patel, who ditched his longtime mentor Sharad



Pawar to join hands with his nephew, is being seen as a probable contender among the likely new ministers in the central government.

With Ajit Pawar taking oath as deputy chief minister in Maharashtra, there is also speculation about Devendra Fadnis, also a deputy chief minister and the key BJP leader in the state, being brought into the central government.

BJP sources have been indicating that allies will be given representation in the Cabinet whenever Modi decides to go in for a rejig in his Council of Ministers.

Kuki groups lift 2-month blockade

On NH-2 in Manipur

Guwahati, Jul 02 (PTD):

Two militant outfits of Manipur, under Suspensions of Operation, on Sunday said they have lifted the two-month long blockade in Kangpokpi district along the crucial National Highway-2.

Issuing a joint statement, the United Peoples' Front (UPF) and Kuki National Organisation (KNO) said the blockade has been lifted with immediate effect following "deep concern to restore peace and harmony" by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

However, Kuki civil society group Committee on Tribal Unity (COTU), which had announced a roadblock on NH-2 two months ago, has not officially withdrawn the agi-

Three killed, five injured in violence

Imphal: At least three "village volunteers" were killed and five others injured in an exchange of fire with unidentified gunmen in Manipur's Bishnupur district, police said on Sunday. The incident took place in Khoijumantabi village late on Saturday night when the "village volunteers" were guarding the area in a makeshift bunker, a police officer said. While two bodies were found initially, the third one was recovered later. Five people were injured in the shootout that lasted for several hours. A couple of them, the condition of whom was stated to be serious, were brought to a hospital in Imphal, police said.

tation yet. Manipur has two national highways -- NH-2 (Imphal-Dimapur) and NH-37 (Imphal-Jiribam).

IN HOPE OF BIG CATCH



A fisherman casts net on the River Hooghly during sunset, in Nadia, Sunday.

Five killed in accidents involving heavy vehicles

Korba, Jul 02:

Five persons were killed in two road accidents involving heavy vehicles in Chhattisgarh's Korba district, police said on Sunday.

The first accident took place on a newly-constructed bridge under Darri police station area around 1.30 am on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, a senior official said. Three men were killed when their speeding car overturned after hitting a cow and colliding with a heavy vehicle on the bridge. In another accident, two men were killed when the heavy vehicles they were driving collided with each other on Pali-Bilaspur Road in the early hours of Sunday.

adding that the cow also died in the accident due to the severe impact of the crash. In another accident, two men were killed when the heavy vehicles they were driving collided with each other on Pali-Bilaspur Road in the early hours of Sunday, another official said.

About the mishaps

The first accident took place on a newly-constructed bridge under Darri police station area around 1.30 am on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday. Three men were killed when their speeding car overturned after hitting a cow and colliding with a heavy vehicle on the bridge. In another accident, two men were killed when the heavy vehicles they were driving collided with each other on Pali-Bilaspur Road in the early hours of Sunday, another official said.

Baghel emphasises on increasing milk production in Chhattisgarh

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: On Sunday, a day-long convention of Chhattisgarh Jheria Yadav Samaj was organized at Patan. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel attended the programme organized at Dewangan Samaj Bhavan as the chief guest. Chandrapur MLA Ramkumar Yadav was present as the special guest.

While addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel greeted the office bearers of the Yadav Samaj who had arrived from all the districts of the state. He said that the Yadav Samaj has been serving the cattle generation after generation.

The identity of the Samaj has been made as Gau Sevak. Today, due to the decrease in the number of farmers who own cattle, the system of Gauthans in the villages is also getting extinct. Keeping the situation in mind, the government has re-developed Gauthan in the villages for serving the Gau Mata.



He said that giving importance to cow dung, the government is buying cow dung in Gauthans. Today, people are making their dreams come true by selling cow dung. The Chief Minister said that like the Green Revolution, milk production has to be promoted in the state through white revolution.

The government is making Krishna Kunj for greenery in villages and cities. He said that land and funds have been made available to all so-

cial organizations during the Bhet Mulaqat programmes. Referring to the demands of the society, the Chief Minister assured to provide funds after getting the estimate for the construction of a community building in Patan.

Special Guest Chandrapur MLA Ramkumar Yadav threw light on the objectives of



the state government's ambitious Narva, Garuva, Ghurwa, Bari scheme. Samaj President Jagnik Yadav, in his welcome speech, drew the attention of the Chief Minister towards various demands. On this occasion, all the office bearers of the Samaj, local public representatives and a large number of people were present.

Union Secretary Govind Rathore said that there is no proper system to inform the family members of the patients admitted in the ICU of Sector 9 Hospital. He said that there is a need to install an announcement system so that the family of the patient can be contacted. He also complained about

Safety Warriors accord grand farewell to CGM GP Singh

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: Chief General Manager (Safety and Fire Services) of SAIL Bhilai Steel Plant, GP Singh was accorded a grand farewell by BSP's Safety Warriors and Safety Engineering Department on his retirement on 30 June 2023. Safety warriors showered flowers on GP Singh, who came out from the Main gate in an open jeep. People walked in front of his jeep singing and dancing amidst the drum beats. Escorting his jeep were safety warriors on 18 motorcycles. Popularity of GP Singh can be gauged from the fact that there was a long queue of people to wish him. Very few people get such a grand farewell. The Safety Warriors were dancing with full enthusiasm. People had gathered in large numbers to bid farewell to GP Singh. This procession started from the main gate of BSP



and moved to his Talpuri residence.

DK Srivastava, Executive Director, QCFI, Hyderabad Head Quarter witnessed his grand farewell ceremony. He also honoured Singh with a bouquet. On this occasion, Singh's wife Babita Singh and her daughter Richa Nikhil were also present.

It needs to be mentioned here that GP Singh has played an important role in giving a new dimension to the safety culture of Bhilai

Steel Plant. Singh has made outstanding contributions in giving shape to innovative concepts like Safety Warriors and Safety Circle. He has 6 patents and 2 copyrights registered in his name. Singh has been awarded the Vishwakarma National Award several times at the national level for his innovative works. Presently, Singh is the Secretary of Bhilai Chapter of Quality Circle Forum of India and Director on the National Board of QCFI.

Seminar organised at Rawatpura Pharmacy Kumhari

To create awareness about cheap generic medicines available for treatment under PMJAY

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: A seminar was organised at Shri Rawatpura Government Institute of Pharmacy Kumhari to make students aware about Jan Aushadhi and generic medicines on the occasion of Doctor's Day. The program was attended by Chief Guest Dr JK Upadhyay, Retired IFS, Special Guest Dr Omesh Bhagat MBBS Chief Medical Officer VY Hospital and Program Coordinator Anish Voditelwar Manager Sales & Marketing PMBJP. The program started with the worship of Maa Saraswati. Manager Anish Voditelwar gave presentation to the students on the Pradhanmantri Bharatiya



Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) theme of the year 2023 was 'Jan Aushadhi - Cheap Bhi Achhi Bhi'. Through it he stressed on the need to encourage people to avail affordable and quality generic medicines under PMJAY. Anish Voditelwar also distributed first aid kit to the staff and informed them to use the first aid kit as per their requirement to help themselves and the needy.

Dr JK Upadhyay retired IFS said, the achievements of PMBJP are quite satisfactory. This has not only removed the worries of crores of people of

the country regarding the cost of treatment, but has also made their lives easier. Dr JK Upadhyay encouraged the Director and Principal to organize more and more informative seminars. The program was successfully organized by Training and Placement Coordinator Aastha Verma and Pharmacy staff. The program was attended by Director Dr Preeti Gurnani, Nursing Principal D Chennamma Bhaskar, Pharmacy Principal Dr Alankar Srivastava, all the staff of Pharmacy and Nursing along with students.

Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: The executive committee meeting of Steel Employees Union (INTUC) was held at the office located in Sector 3. It was decided to stage a demonstration at Boria Gate from 8:00 am to 9:00 am on July 5. The union is going to press various demands of the workers and organise a NJCS meeting. The office bearers expressed their displeasure over the poor arrangements of the hospital and township.

Union General Secretary Vansh Bahadur Singh said that the SAIL management is adopting a very discriminatory attitude between the officers and employees. Even after 20 months of the MoU, the wage revision has not been finalized yet. The employees are waiting for the arrears of 39 months. The employees are suffering

INTUC to stage protest on July 5



loss of House Rent Allowance and Night Shift Allowance. Young employees are waiting for the CTC committee meeting to transfer from one unit to another. It seems that SAIL management is not bothered about the problems of personnel. He said that the incentive scheme in Bhilai has not been revised for a long time. In the meeting, the executive members decided that they will stage a protest at Boria Gate on July 5 and send the charter of de-

mands to the SAIL Chairman. If the management does not call the NJCS meeting soon, the union will take further strict steps.

Union Secretary Govind Rathore said that there is no proper system to inform the family members of the patients admitted in the ICU of Sector 9 Hospital. He said that there is a need to install an announcement system so that the family of the patient can be contacted. He also complained about

falling roof plaster of houses in the township and said that despite continuous incidents, the township management is not paying attention.

Deputy General Secretary Ramashankar Singh said that the demand for allotting quarters up to 650 sq under licence scheme is pending yet. He said that the licence scheme for quarters up to 650 square feet should be introduced as soon as possible so that the company quarters

could be saved from illegal possession in the township.

Working President SK Baghel, Senior Vice President Santosh Kumar Kitchlu, Chandrashekhar Singh, S Ravi, Vice President Sachchidanand Pandey, Ajay Kumar Martin, Madanlal Sinha, Deputy General Secretary Dhanesh Prasad, Ramashankar Singh, Vipin Bihari Mishra, CP Verma, Shiv Shankar Singh, Senior Secretary Resham Rathor, K Raman Murthy, GK Agrawal, Deputy Treasurer GR Suman, Secretary D Shankar, Arif Manjar, SP Singh, Prakash Mahle, Rakesh Kumar Tiwari, M Sundar Murthy, Ramakant Nishad, Tamradhwaj Sinha, Madan Mohan Soni, office incharge Jitendra Agarwal and other members of the working committee were present.

Health & Hygiene awareness programme organised on National Doctor's Day



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: On National Doctor's Day, Bhilai Education Charitable Trust (BECT) in collaboration with Inner Wheel Bhilai Steel City organised a Health and Hygiene awareness program at Government Middle School Risali. The program aimed to educate primary and middle school students on various aspects of health, hygiene, and well-being. The event featured sessions conducted by expert doctors specializing in different areas of healthcare.

The Health and Hygiene awareness program commenced on National Doctor's Day, providing an excellent opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of medical professionals.

The program focused on imparting essential knowledge to students, ensuring they understand the significance of maintaining good health and hygiene practices.

In the first session, Dr Abiya Khan (HOD physiotherapy, Hitek hospital) led a session on correct sitting posture and instructed various exercises. Students were educated on the importance of maintaining a proper posture while studying or engaging in other activities. Dr Abiya demonstrated exercises to improve flexibility, strengthen muscles, and prevent musculoskeletal issues related to incorrect posture.

In the second session Dr Niharika Baghel (Ayush Medical Officer, National Health Mission, Durg) conducted an interactive session to address

nutrition-related concerns and promote healthy eating habits. She guided students on the importance of balanced meals, explained the role of nutrients in growth and development, and discussed strategies for maintaining a healthy diet. Dr Niharika emphasized the use of food and nutrition to promote overall health and manage potential diseases.

The third session was related to menstruation hygiene. Dr Aarti Choudhary (Homeo Doctor) delivered an informative session specifically aimed at girls, focusing on menstruation hygiene. She sensitized the students about the menstrual cycle, discussed proper hygiene practices, and provided guidance on managing menstrual health. Dr Aarti aimed to

promote awareness and ensure that girls felt comfortable discussing this important aspect of their well-being.

The Health and Hygiene Camp organized by BECT in collaboration with Inner Wheel Bhilai Steel City on National Doctor's Day was a resounding success. Through the expertise of Dr Aarti, Dr Abiya Khan, and Dr Niharika Baghel, the students gained valuable knowledge about correct sitting posture, nutrition, and menstruation hygiene. This initiative not only educated the students but also empowered them to make informed decisions regarding their health and well-being.

BECT took the opportunity to felicitate these doctors on the occasion of National Doctor's Day. Sanitary pads were distributed to the girl students. The Program was graced by the presence of Devendra Tiwari (HM, Govt MS Risali), Inner Wheel Bhilai Steel City President - Reema Rajeev, Club Secretary- Pranoti Gajbhiye, Inner wheel team members and the school staffs. The Complete program was coordinated and handled by EP Ritesh (Chief program officer, BECT). By organizing such health and hygiene awareness programs, BECT strives to create a healthier and more informed generation, equipping them with the necessary tools to lead healthier lives.

Bhilai Steel Plant's several departments register back-to-back records in June-end



Central Chronicle News

Bhilai, Jul 02: As the month of June 2023 came to an end, several new records of production were set by SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant in several areas of production as well as productivity parameters on June 30, 2023. The Plant's finishing mills including Universal Rail Mill, Merchant Mill, and Wire Rod Mill, along with Coke Oven & Coal Chemical Department have set several new day and shift records.

Plant's Merchant Mill has created history by setting new records in production of Angle 75 on three consecutive days. On June 28, 2023, Merchant Mill achieved record day production of 2225 tonnes and record shift production of 838 tonnes in Angle 75x8 profile. On June 29, 2023, the Mill set another record with a day production of 2202 tonnes and a shift production of 862 tonnes in Angle 75x10 profile. On June 30, 2023, the Mill surpassed this record as well by achieving a day

production of 2342 tonnes in Angle 75x10 profile.

The Plant's Wire Rod Mill too has set new production and dispatch records. Rolling plain wire rod coils in combination of 6,6.5 mm, the Mill surpassed the previous best production record of 1598T in the same combination on March 26, 2023. On June 30, 2023, the Mill scaled new heights by producing 1603 Tonnes, thereby serving a new day record. The month of June 2023 has also witnessed a new dispatch record of wire rod coils produced through SMS 3 route. Surpassing the previous dispatch record of 39064 T created in March 2019, Wire Rod Mill set a new monthly record by dispatching 40693 T in June 2023. Direct dispatch of 25179 T by WRM in June 2023 is also the best ever monthly record, surpassing the previous best of 19550 T in Sept 2019.

Another record was set by Universal Rail Mill, the Modex unit of SAIL Bhilai Steel Plant, that rolls out the world's longest 130-



metre rail as a single piece. The Mill has also recorded an ever best day rolling record on June 2023 by rolling 416 blooms, with support from all the associated Departments.

On the other hand, Plant's Coke Oven & Coal Chemical Department (CO&CCD) has also recorded a best ever pushing of 794 eq ovens (23831) on June 30, 2023, surpassing previous best of pushing 763 ovens in June 2010. Another best ever coke pushing record was also made on the same day by CO&CCD by pushing 801 eq ovens (72850), against the previous best of pushing 771 eq ovens (70197) in 2010-11.

These remarkable achievements were made with collective efforts and coordination of employees of the respective departments. Plant personnel worked together with utmost dedication and completed given tasks on time, under the leadership of the concerned Departmental Heads, resulting in improved productivity and breaking of

previous records.

The Bhilai Steel Plant Management has congratulated the URM, WRM, MM and CO&CCD collective for these achievements, along the Research & control Lab team of the Plant and other central and supporting agencies and departments for the superlative performances recorded on the day.

OBITUARY

George Varghese



Bhilai: Retired BSP employee George Varghese left for heavenly abode at the age of 88 years on July 01. Funeral procession will be taken out from his residence situated at MIG-1/560, Hudco on July 03 around 10:30 hrs and last rites will be performed at Nehru Nagar Christian Cemetery. He is survived by wife - Mary Kutty; son - Lal George; Meijo, Jiomol, Laila, Shaji, Sebin, Jeol and family.

Sahu community has a significant contribution in devp: CM

● CM attends the inauguration ceremony of Arjun Sadan organized by Ch'garh Pradesh Sahu Sangh

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, July 02: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel graced the inauguration of Arjun Sadan, a newly constructed building for the community, organised by Chhattisgarh Pradesh Sahu Sangh on Sunday. In his address, he lauded the hard-working and enterprising nature of the Sahu community, noting their participation in charitable endeavours. The Chief Minister acknowledged the community's significant contributions to the development

and progress of Chhattisgarh. He said, "The dreams of our forefathers are coming true, which is evident through the self-respect and pride on people's faces. The current state of our society reflects the efforts of our ancestors, for which we should remember and honour them".

Chief Minister Baghel announced that the government would allocate land to communities at a subsidized rate of 10 per cent for the construction of community halls. Recognizing the financial burden of renting hotels or marriage halls, the government aims to support communities by providing them with their own spaces. The decision was made after receiving requests for land and financial support for building construction



during the 'Bhent Mulakat Abhiyan'. Currently, land allocation is underway for some communities, while construction has already begun for others. The completion of these community halls will facilitate marriages and other community events for all communities, ensuring collective co-operation and support. CM Baghel announced that the present Chhattisgarh

Government has initiated the process of reserving land for Gauthans and allocating land to communities for community halls. Unlike other states, Chhattisgarh boasts a proportionally good availability of land relative to its population. This significant step makes Chhattisgarh the first state to provide substantial assistance in terms of land and building for all communi-

ties. The Chief Minister highlighted the government's commitment to fostering economic prosperity among farmers and artisans in rural areas, as well as preserving and strengthening traditional businesses. Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu and Urban Administration Minister Shiv Kumar Dahariya also addressed the program. Various talented persons were also honoured in the program. MP Chunnilal Sahu, Chairman of Chhattisgarh State Mineral Development Corporation Girish Dewangan, Chairman of Chhattisgarh Telghani Board Sandeep Sahu, Chairman of Municipal Corporation Raipur Mr. Pramod Dubey and office bearers of Sahu Samaj were present.

CM Baghel invites Dalai Lama for upcoming World Buddhist meeting

● To be held in Sirpur's Gurugram

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel extends an invitation to Dalai Lama for a visit to the state. The Chairman of Sirpur Special Area Development Authority, Satish Jaggi, met Dalai Lama in Dharamshala and extended the invitation on behalf of the Chief Minister. Jaggi presented the Dalai Lama with a state 'gamchha' and a memento representing Chhattisgarh.

Chairman of Sirpur Special Area Development



Authority, Jaggi, discussed Chief Minister Baghel's plan to develop and establish Sirpur as a World Buddhist Heritage Site for Buddhist Mr. Jaggi conveyed the

Chief Minister's invitation to the Dalai Lama for the upcoming World Buddhist Meeting in Sirpur's Gurugram, scheduled from September 6th to September 9th, 2023.

Shala Pravesh Utsav held in SAEHMS CM inaugurates the newly constructed Khokhsa Railway Overbridge

● Students welcomed with 'tilak' and sweets

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, Jul 02: Shala Pravesh Utsav was observed at Swamy Atmanand Excellent Hindi Medium (Model Girls) School (SAEHMS) in Kawardha and the chief guest was member Chhattisgarh Raj Yoga Commission Ganeshnath Yogi, VVIP guest was Gangotri Yogi, district Mahila Congress President and President Shala Prabandhan and special guest was Tarani Thakur-District Mahila Congress. All the guests welcomed the children by applying 'tilak' and offering sweets and welcomed all the newly admitted stu-



dents in the School. Speaking as the Chief Guest- Ganeshnath Yogi said that both the School and its teachers are the supreme and the children who will come to school on time and follow the rules and discipline as given by teachers would get full success, said President Shala Prabandhan Samiti and special guest of the programme and extended greeting to all the stu-

dents. All the children have been blessed with knowledge and passion to excel and the need is to take right decision at the right time and do the right work. All children should study with due sincerity and they can become what they want in their life. One should not lag behind in doing hard work and it is the God who help the one who do not

hesitate to take an extra step. Special guest Tarani Thakur also extended greetings to all the children present.

Presiding over the programme, the Principal RP Singh presented the School's annual report and apprised the chief guests and others about the activities as well and wished all the best for the future of students. He also made an appeal to all the teachers to work with commitment for development of the school and its students.

On this occasion Sankul Co-ordinator Durgesh Pandey was specially present. In the Shaha Pravesh Utsav, the teachers, and other teaching staff of Middle and Higher Secondary department were present in large number.

● At Jangir-Champa

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel virtually inaugurated the newly constructed Khokhsa Railway Overbridge at Jangir-Champa at his residential office on Saturday.

It is worth noting that the construction of a railway over-bridge on the Howrah-Mumbai rail route in the Jangir-Champa district will provide a smooth traffic flow for the residents of the area throughout the year.

With its construction, over 10,000 people will be able to travel to district and tehsil headquarters



every day. The length of the bridge is 1168 meters and is build at a cost of over 29 crore rupees.

Two reps from Tadmethla Panchayat killed by Naxalites

● Including Dy. Sarpanch Madvi Ganga, Shikshadoot Kawasi Sukka

Central Chronicle News

Konta, Jul 02: Deputy Sarpanch of Tadmethla Panchayat under Chintagufa police station of Sukma district, Madvi Ganga and Shikshadoot Kawasi Sukka were killed by the Naxalites in village Duled area under Jagargunda sub-division about 8 days back. Madvi Ganga and Kawasi Sukka were murdered by the Naxalites by setting up a public court on June 28.

For their release, the villagers of Tadmethla and surrounding areas went to the

Naxalites, who have returned and all are safe. Madvi Ganga was also called by Naxalites 2 years ago and was released after a few days. This time too, knowing the situation as normal, the family members did not inform the police, thinking that Madvi Ganga would be released again this time too. Deputy Sarpanch Madvi was making aware the villagers of the area about the benefits of public welfare schemes like Aadhar Card, Ration Card, Food Scheme, Ayushman Card etc. of the Central Government and by teaching rural children of sensitive areas like Shikshadoot Kawasi Sukka Tadmethla was working to educate, so that the children get

educated and become partners in the development of the society and the region. But the Naxalites did not want that the children should be educated, people should be made aware of the schemes of the government, so to save their crumbling mass base, the Naxalites brutally murdered both the persons by holding a public court.

As soon as the police got information about the incident, the police tried to rescue everyone. At present, advance legal action is being taken by the police party after going to Tadmethla village and conducting the panchnama of the dead bodies of both of them. All the Naxalites involved in this incident are being ascertained.

Addition of names in voter list in progress

Final voter list to be published on October 4, 2023

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: For the General Assembly Election 2023, the second special brief revision of electoral rolls is in progress in the state. Meanwhile, door-to-door surveys are being conducted to identify and add the new unregistered citizens, to omit the names of the dead and permanently transferred voters and to create an accurate error-free voter list.

Names of the new unregistered citizens of age 18 years will be added to the voter list through form 6. Form 7 will be filled for deletion of the names of dead or perma-

nently transferred voters and form 8 will be made available for any amendment or transfer in voter's details. This time, for the revision, October 1, 2023 has been decided to be the qualifying date, i.e. the names of all the citizens who have completed 18 years of age on or before this date can be added to the voter list.

Voter Helpline App and Voter Service Portal are available for the general public to fill online form for addition, alteration and deletion. BLO App will be used to fill the form by BLO. Interested citizens can also fill the form offline on paper and submit it to

the BLO.

According to the program issued by the Election Commission of India, the voter list will be published at first on August 2, 2023, and the final publication will be done on October 4, 2023, in all the polling stations of the state as well as on the website of the Chief Electoral Officer's office.

In the 30-day review period from August 2 to August 31, extensive publicity and other awareness programs will be conducted under an intensive campaign to collect the forms in all the booths of the state. Special camps will also be organized on 12 and 13

August and 19 and 20 August 2023.

The forms received for the revision will be resolved by the concerned Electoral Registration Officers by 22 September 2023, after which the final voter list will be published on 4 October 2023.

Chief Electoral Officer, Chhattisgarh Reena Babasaheb Kangale said that to ensure transparency, the recognized political parties can appoint their booth level agents to provide necessary support in identifying new unregistered voters, deceased and transferred voters.

For this, a meeting of

all the recognized political parties at the state and district level were held and they were informed in the context. She further informed that after the electoral roll was published on January 5, a total of 1,96,671 new names have been added so far and as of today, a total of 1,95,87,994 voters are registered in the state.

Post revision, the number of voters is expected to increase. Chief Electoral Officer has appealed to people to come forward and participate in the process of creating an accurate and error-free electoral roll.

Repair, renovation of School buildings being done under MSJY

● Govt has sanctioned Rs 25.44 cr for additional rooms
● 387 works of repair completed; 284 by July 10

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, Jul 02: Under the state government's Mukhyamantri School Jatan Yojana (MSJY), the Schools in the state are getting transformed. Under this Scheme, there is repair, renovation and re-construction work being carried out in the Schools and for which sanction from the state government has been received.

In the above repair, renovation and re-construction work, a total of Rs 25.44 cr has been sanctioned for 663



construction work of additional rooms. Out of these 86 works have been completed and other 301 are in progress and out of which 120 would be completed by June 30. For the remaining 284 repair works, they are also nearing completion and are expected to be completed by July 10.

The remaining 46 works will also be completed soon. In this way, the construction of 120 additional rooms is also going on in full swing and would be completed by the department by 15 Sept and there

are just 7 such works which have been cancelled.

Collector Janmajay Mohobe is regular conducting review of works sanctioned under MSJY. Collector had recently conducted combined meeting with field staff of Kawardha, Bodala, Pandaria, Sahaspur, Lohara block-level and directed to complete the same soon. For this he directed to hold regular meetings in order to conduct regular monitoring. He directed the officers

right from district level to District Education officer, to District Mission Co-ordinator and all Block-level officers to ensure quality in the construction work and conduct constant monitoring of the same and the work agency was asked to complete the work on time ensuring quality in the construction work.

It is notable here that under MSJY, both the School Education Department and Samagra Shiksha head, the repair and renovation works in the Schools is being carried out, so that the students get good teaching and studying atmosphere.

It is notable that the above work is being done by the Rural Engineering Services department and out of which many works have been completed and schools have been started.

CAIT urged for a fresh review of GST tax system: Amar Parwani

● Central GST and Excise Commissioner felicitated CAIT CG Chapter on the completion of 6 years of GST

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Jul 02: National Senior Vice President of Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Amar Parwani, Chairman Mangal Malu, Amar Gidwani, State President Jitendra Doshi, Working President Vikram Singhdeo, Parmanand Jain, Vashu Makhija, General Secretary Surinder Singh, Working General Secretary Bharat Jain and Treasurer Ajay Agarwal informed that on completion of 6 years of GST, the Central GST and Excise Commissioner Mr. Mohammad Abu Shama felicitated CAIT CG Chapter.

A delegation of CAIT under the leadership of Mr. Amar Parwani, National Senior Vice President of CAIT participated in the program. National Senior Vice President of CAIT, Amar Parwani and State President, Mr. Jitendra Doshi said that Confederation of All India



Traders (CAIT), describing the completion of 6 years of implementation of GST in the country, said that one country - one concept of tax has got wide success across the country, which is proved by the fact that the revenue of GST has now become more Rs. one lakh sixty thousand crore per month which is a record. There has been a tremendous increase in revenue collection of both Central and State

Government. The contribution of the business class across the country is very important in this growth.

Mr. Parwani and Mr. Doshi congratulated on the success of GST and said that a special task force should be formed to make the GST tax system permanent and remove the existing anomalies to create a more simplified tax system, in which senior government officials would be involved. Apart

from this, representatives of traders and industry should also participate. While this task force will give suggestions to rationalize the GST tax system and reduce the multiplicity of laws and regulations on traders, on the other hand, how to develop the more tax revenue, suggestions will also be given to prevent fake billing and taking wrong inputs. Mr. Parwani and Mr. Doshi said that the central and state governments and traders have had many experiences regarding the GST tax system implemented in the country for the last 6 years and on the basis of those experiences, this tax system should be reviewed afresh and Based on the vision of Ease of Doing Business, GST should be developed as such a simple and convenient tax system that even a common businessman can easily follow.

He also suggested that a GST coordination committee should be formed at each district level in the country under the chairmanship of the collector, in which local tax and other officials and people from local business organizations should be included.

Successful is the one who learned more from life than from books: Collector

Central Chronicle News

Balod, Jul 02: 'Garbo future program' was organized by the district administration here in the community building of Gurur Nagar in Balod district, where hundreds of children participated in the program showing interest for placement.

District Collector Kuldeep Sharma also gave guidelines to all the beneficiaries regarding employment and said that apart from books, we should also learn from life.

The Collector told that for self-employment and placement related programs, registration is being done in the administration portal according to development blocks,



Gurur block where the event is being organized, so far more than 1000 registrations have been done through online medium, which is increasing continuously.

Work has also started on

906 registrations, he said. He also said that apart from setting up camps in development blocks in the entire district, camps will also be organized at the district level so that youths can be given jobs in

good companies with better guidance.

The Collector in his address gave inspiration to all the unemployed youths here at Gurur Community Hall to move forward in life. The collector said that

this is not my first job, before that I did many jobs after which I got this post.

He said that the skill never goes away; it is connected with our life. The collector said that understanding life is also very important, a successful person is one who learns not from books, but from the things around us.

Through the 'Garhbo Bhavishya' placement camp, the eligible beneficiaries of the district are getting the best opportunity to get self-employment under the unemployment allowance scheme and more than 1000 educated unemployed youths of Gurur development block participated in the first 'Garhbo Bhavishya' placement camp of the district.



Simga: State Working President Bharatiya Rashtriya Mazdoor Congress Federation (BRMCF) Pappu Ali extended greetings to people of the state on occasion of 'Eid-ul-Adha' here on Thursday.

Ways of alliance with like-minded parties are open: JCC(J)

Central Chronicle News

Dongargarh, Jul 02: District President of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC(J)) Jogi, Vishnu Lodhi has opined that through a press release and said that the important meeting of the core committee of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh J, the only regional political party of Chhattisgarh state, will be held on June 28 at Anugrah Teak Bungalow. It was held under the chairmanship of Tilak Ram Dewangan, who holds ministerial status, and in the presence of party president Amit Jogi.

In the meeting, the core committee unanimously decided not to consider



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the proposal of merging the Congress with any other party, if necessary it would go ahead with the like-minded parties. Consensus was made to contest the assembly elections 2023-24 and during this, it was decided to gherao the assembly on July 18, 2023, before the upcoming Monsoon session,

regarding the problems of the people of the state.

Addressing the meeting, senior party leader Tilakram Dewangan said that the founder of the party, the first Chief Minister of the state Late. Ajit Jogi's Chhattisgarhiism, party's policy-principle and party's election symbol plow farmer is paramount for us, the way of alliance with like-minded parties is always open in front of us, but the merger of our party is not possible at any cost. Party President Amit Jogi said that the sentiments of 3 crore people of Chhattisgarh are attached to Janata Congress Chhattisgarh, Jogi Congress.

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jul 02: Nagarnar police station of the district received information from the informer that two smugglers from Orissa state were coming towards Jagdalpur with Ganja. Both the ganja smugglers are passengers in the passenger bus of Payal Travels and they are keeping Ganja in their bags.

Based on this information, the passenger bus of Payal Travels was stopped and checked near Village Dhanpunji Forest Naka NH 63 main road. In the investigation, two suspects of the character told

by the informer Suraj Santosh More S/o Satosh More R/o Maharashtra and Praful Vaman Mohite S/o Vaman Mohite R/o Maharashtra were present.

The bag recovered from the joint possession of the suspects contained a total of 20.574 kg of the drug Ganja. The accused were arrested after recovering the narcotics.

The NDPS Act was registered against the said accused in police station Nagarnar and after proceeding, they were produced before the court. As per the order of the court, the accused were sent to jail.



In the memorandum statement of arrested Ganja smuggling the accused Suraj Santosh More and Praful Vaman Mohite, it was informed that the seized Ganja was purchased from Koraput district Koraput resident Arshad Ali alias Ayub, Odisha.

On the statement of the accused, the accused Arshad Ali alias Ayub was interrogated. On accepting the crime, accused Arshad Ali alias Ayub's S/o Abdul Rehman, R/o of Koraput Orissa has also been arrested and produced before the court after the proceedings.

Three drug smugglers arrested with 20.574 kg Ganja

DCC (Arang) distributes fruits to CHC patients

• Greets Mohan Markam on completion of 4 yrs as PCC Chief

Central Chronicle News

Mandir-Hasoud, Jul 02: On completion of successful four years as President of PCC by Mohan Markam on June 29, 2023, DCC (urban) Arang distributed fruits among the patients of CHC in Arang and planted saplings here on Thursday and extended greetings to PCC Chief Mohan Markam for the same.

On this occasion Bharti Dewangan- President DCC (Arang) (urban),



Chandrashekhara Chandrakar President Nagar Panchayat Arang; Dineshwar Tamboli - V-P DCC (Arang); Laxaminarayan Lodhi, Zone President; Sadiq Balim, member Urdu

Academy, Sharad Gupta, corporator; Deepak Chandrakar corporator; Rammohan Lodhi corporator; Ganesh Bandhe Alderman; Rajeshwari Sahu Alderman; Upendra Sahu

Alderman; Bharat Lodhi Alderman; Tulsii Bhai Patel, Rakesh Mishra, Poshan Sahu Sarpanch Khamtarai; Tikeswar Gilhare, Gopi Gupta and other DCC office bearers were present.

School lock opened in Devkot Primary School

Central Chronicle News

Balod, Jul 02: In village Devkot under Gurur development block of Balod district, due to the resentment in running of Devkot Primary School, after the intervention of the Collector and administrative officers, the entrance festival is being celebrated enthusiastically.

As per information, on discussion with the Balod DEO and Block Education Officer in this context, they told that the indiscipline of the teacher Mohan Sinha has also come to the fore in the whole matter, even after the teacher was attached, instead of going to the original school; he stayed in Devkot against the order of the government. The teacher has also been accused of inciting the villagers; the whole matter



will be clear after the investigation.

Taking cognizance of the matter, Collector Kuldeep Sharma had sent Tehsildar Development Block Medical Officer and other officials to the spot, after which the matter

was pacified after a long discussion with the villagers. The administration has talked about taking it to the government because this order has come from the government and it is a matter of government level.

In the whole matter, DEO Mukul Saw told that there are enough teachers in Devkot Primary School, here the registered number of student is 43 and behind this registered number, 2 teachers are posted, which is adequate.

BJP Nagar Mandal honours officials of SBI



• On occasion of SBI's foundation day

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jul 02: On the foundation day of the State Bank of India (SBI), the Branch manager Shailesh Patil was felicitated by giving a bouquet of flowers by members of BJP Nagar Mandal going to the collectorate branch located in Jagdalpur. Workers of BJP Nagar Mandal and Mahila Morcha wished all the staff on Bank Day. It is noteworthy that the

State Bank of India was formed on 1 July 1955. It is the largest and oldest bank in India. On 14 September 2022, State Bank of India has become the third lender and seventh Indian company to cross 5 trillion market capitalization on Indian stock exchanges for the first time. Since the re-naming of Imperial Bank as State Bank of India on 1st July, 1955, the foundation day of the bank is celebrated every year on 1st July in SBI branches in India and abroad.

During this city President Suresh Gupta, city General Secretary

Sangram Singh Rana, Mahila Morcha District President Sudha Mishra, State Working Committee Members Mahila Morcha Mamta Singh Rana, Laxmi Kashyap, Maheshwari Thakur, Ila Sheikh, Poonam, Gopi Manikpuri, Suresh Kashyap, Kusum Parihar, Alka BJP workers and bank staff including Sengar, Gayatri Kashyap, Basanti Nayak, Kiran Dewan, Bharti Rao, Chameli Jiram, Kamal Kumari, Laxmi Sahu, Anita Thakur, Dhakeshwari Pandey were present.

Health workers to go on indefinite strike from July 4

65 DMFT employees were terminated from service by the management

Central Chronicle News

Jagdalpur, Jul 02: On July 4, 2023, on the provincial call of the Chhattisgarh Health Employees' Association (CHEA), an indefinite strike will be held in Bastar district on 24-point demands. Ajay Pratap Singh Parihar, District President and Deputy Provincial President of Chhattisgarh State Health Employees Union district branch, informed that, repeated requests and applications have been made to the government to solve the problem of regular and contractual employees of the health department.

Even after making a request, no meaningful initiative was taken by the government in the interest of the employees. Due to which the path of indefinite agitation has to be



adopted. He told that the regular, irregular, sub-contracted, NHM DMFT and daily wage workers of the health department will participate in the strike starting from July 04. Due to which the work in the Medical College and District Hospital, Community, Primary and Sub Health Center will be stopped completely. It is noteworthy that in

Bastar district, many posts are vacant against the sanctioned posts of doctors to paramedical staff. Despite this, the health workers are working with full dedication. Due to the work of the doctors and paramedical staff of the district, the health department's work has been appreciated at the state level as well. Due to the good work

done towards eradication of malaria, the spread of malaria disease has reduced nowadays. Even during the Covid period, the doctors and paramedical staff worked with all their heart. Due to which the lives of many people could be saved. Despite doing so much, the government is not serious about the legitimate demand of the health work-

ers. The problems of DMFT employees working in Medical College Dimrapal is not coming to an end. Late on Friday, a list came regarding extension of tenure of DMFT contract employees.

In which only 30 people had their names. That is, the tenure of these 30 people has been extended till March. On the other hand, the services of the remaining 65 income employees were terminated without any notice on Saturday.

In which Ward Boy, Ward Aaya and others are included. After this, there is great deal of resentment among the terminated employees. President of DMFT Union Rikeshwar told that after paying the salary of 2 months, an order came out, in which the services of 65 employees has been terminated.

BRIEF



BSP supremo Mayawati addresses a press conference in Lucknow, Sunday.

Session

■ Agartala: The four-day monsoon session of Tripura Assembly will commence on July 7, Speaker Biswabandhu Sen said on Sunday. Finance Minister Pranajit Singha Roy would table the budget for the current financial year on the opening day of the monsoon session, he said. Although the budget session took place in March, Finance Minister Pranajit Singha Roy could not table the budget for the 2023-24 financial year because of the Assembly elections in February and March, Sen said.

Mishap

■ Mumbai: Two persons were killed when two buses of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) collided and then one of them hit an auto-rickshaw in Mumbai on Sunday, police said. The accident took place at 1.45 am on a slippery road near Aarey flyover on the Western Express Highway, they said. Mumbai has been receiving rains since the past one week, making roads slippery.

Search

■ Jammu: Security forces on Sunday launched a search operation in a forward village near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The joint search and cordon operation by army and police was launched in Dabi Dharti area of Balakote sector at around 9 am following inputs about suspicious movement, the officials said.

Arrested

■ Chandigarh: An assistant sub-inspector of the Punjab Police was held in Ferozpur for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000, officials said. According to a statement issued by the Punjab Vigilance Bureau here, ASI Gurdeep Singh was posted at a police station in Zira. Sanjeev Kumar, a resident of Zira, accused the ASI of demanding Rs 10,000 for helping him and his family members in a case registered against them in August 2021, it said.

Seize

■ Guwahati: Drugs worth nearly Rs 12 crore were seized on Sunday and three traffickers nabbed by police in Kamrup district, an officer said. Assam Police's Special Task Force (STF) Deputy Inspector General Partha Sarathi Mahanta said acting on a tip-off, the Kamrup district police led by Additional SP Kalyan Pathak launched an operation against trafficking of the consignment.

TMC worker killed, several others injured

● In rural poll violence

Kolkata, Jul 02 (PTI)

A Trinamool Congress (TMC) worker was killed and several other members of the ruling party and opposition outfits were injured in clashes in panchayat poll-bound West Bengal, police said.

A TMC worker, identified as 52-year-old Jiyarul Molla, was shot dead in Phulmalancha area in Basanti in South 24 Parganas district late on Saturday night while he was returning home, a police officer said.

The man was taken to a local hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead. A local Indian Secular Front (ISF) leader claimed that Molla, who

was a close associate of TMC leader Amarul Laskar, was a victim of infighting within the ruling party.

Molla's daughter Manwara, who is a TMC candidate in Kathalberia gram panchayat, also alleged that her father had complained to the police about frequent threats from a rival faction which asked him to quit politics but the law enforcers did not take any action.

"I am a first-time candidate. My candidature is not liked by another local faction in the party. I demand a high-level probe into the incident," she told reporters. Local TMC MLA Saokat Molla said the police should probe the matter and take prompt action against whoever is responsible. With the fresh

death, 10 people have been killed so far in West Bengal in poll-related violence since the filing of nominations for the rural elections began on June 9, according to police reports. Meanwhile, at least 10 people were injured in clashes between CPI(M) and ISF supporters on one side and those of the TMC on the other in Paschim Medinipur district on Sunday, police said.

The incident took place in Krishnapur area in Chandrakona in the morning after the TMC members tried to erect party flags, and faced resistance from opposition activists.

The 10 injured people, who belong to both camps, have been admitted to hospitals, where they are undergoing treatment, another police officer said,

adding that their condition is stated to be stable.

A large contingent of police team has been deployed on the spot, he added. The police did not mention the number of people detained or arrested after the clashes.

In another incident, Ibrahim Mollah, TMC candidate in Chaltaberia gram panchayat, was seriously injured when he was thrashed and stabbed allegedly by ISF activists while he was returning home in Bhangar area in South 24 Parganas on Sunday night after campaigning, police said.

TMC leader Saokat Molla alleged that ISF's Bhangar MLA Naushad Siddique was behind the attack as he wanted to unleash a "reign of terror" in the area.

Bengal Guv supervises situation in violence-hit Cooch Behar

● As fresh clashes reported

Cooch Behar (WB), Jul 02 (PTI) West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose supervised the situation in poll violence-hit Cooch Behar district, where fresh overnight clashes were reported, officials said.

Five people were injured in the clashes that took place in Dinhatata area on Saturday night.

A TMC candidate's kin was among those injured, police said.

Bose monitored the situation throughout the night from Cooch Behar circuit house, where he is staying, and issued instructions to State Election Commissioner Rajjiva Sinha, SP and District Magistrate, officials said.

"The governor on Sunday morning visited the hospital where the five injured people are undergoing treatment and may also visit the spot where the clashes took place," a

senior official of the Raj Bhavan told PTI over the phone. Bose also spoke with the hospital authorities and asked them to ensure best treatment to the injured people.

He dialed the DM and SP of Cooch Behar and asked them to maintain law and order and arrest the culprits.

Bose, who is on a trip to the northern districts of the state, has visited families of deceased as well as those injured in incidents of violence in Dinhatata.

The Raj Bhavan has opened a 'peace home' and a 24x7 phone number to address complaints of violence and intimidation. The matters are instantly taken up with the SEC or the chief secretary.

Around 5.67 crore people are eligible to cast their votes in the three-tier panchayat elections in the state on July 8 for nearly 74,000 seats in zilla parishads, panchayat samiti and gram panchayats.

MAHA BUS FIRE Mass cremation of 24 bodies held

Buldhana, Jul 02 (PTI)

A mass cremation was held on Sunday of 24 out of the 25 victims charred to death after a private bus caught fire in Maharashtra's Buldhana district, a senior official said.

The body of one of the victims will be handed over to the family for burial, an official said earlier in the day.

As most of the victims were charred beyond recognition after the bus caught fire in the early hours of Saturday, efforts were made to convince their families for mass cremation of the bodies instead of their DNA analysis, the official said.

The DNA testing is a lengthy procedure which may take days to ascertain the identity of the deceased, as per sources.

The mass cremation of 24 bodies was held at Vaikunth Dham Hindu Smashan Bhoomi in Buldhana on Sunday.

Relatives of the de-



People, who were killed in the bus fire tragedy, being cremated at Vaikunth Smashanbhumi, in Buldhana, Sunday.

ceased and Maharashtra minister Girish Mahajan were present during the cremation and paid homage to the deceased.

The 25 passengers were charred to death as the private bus they were travelling in caught fire after hitting a divider on the Nagpur-Mumbai 'Samruddhi Expressway' in eastern Maharashtra's Buldhana district at around 1.30 am on Saturday, police earlier said. The deceased included 11 male and 14 female passengers. Ten of the victims were from

WATER CRISIS



People collect drinking water from a Municipal Corporation tanker on the outskirts of Bhopal, Sunday.

Punjab delegation visits Kerala to learn about use of tech

● To plug excise revenue leakage

Chandigarh, Jul 02 (PTI)

A Punjab government delegation led by Finance and Excise Minister Harpal Singh Cheema visited Kerala to learn about technological interventions in plugging revenue leakage and raising excise revenue.

The delegation also comprised Financial Commissioner, Taxation, Vikas Partap, and Excise Commissioner Varun Roojam. Their visit to Kerala also included learning about the supply chain management ERP software and point of sale system being used by the Kerala Excise department, said an official release.

"The purpose of the visit was to learn about the technological interventions which are important from the point of view of plugging revenue leakages and enhancing the excise

revenue," Cheema said.

He said the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software will provide the Punjab Excise Department an integrated and real-time view of its core processes. These would be easily accessible through one centralised system, the minister said.

Cheema said this software will help in enhancing transparency in governance.

During this visit, officials of the Kerala government also gave a detailed presentation regarding the technological solutions they have been using in their excise department. Cheema also held a meeting with the Kerala Excise Minister M B Rajesh. He apprised his Kerala counterpart that the Punjab Government is very keen to adopt the software-based technological solutions to streamline the process of excise revenue collection and plug leakages within the system to check revenue loss.

AWARENESS RALLY



Police personnel along with civilians take out a march to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs, in Mumbai, Sunday.

13 more bodies of Balasore train tragedy handed over to families

Bhubaneswar, Jul 02 (PTI)

At least 13 more bodies of the June 2 Balasore train accident kept at AIIMS Bhubaneswar were handed over to their family members, official sources said.

Of the 29 bodies identified using DNA sampling, six were handed over to their families on Friday and 13 on Saturday, a railway official said.

"On the basis of DNA test results and with coordination with AIIMS Bhubaneswar, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and GRP, 13 bodies of the Bahanaga train accident victims have been handed over to the kin of the deceased on Saturday," the railway official said.

Of the 13 bodies, four have been sent to Bihar, eight to West Bengal and

one to Jharkhand, he said.

An ex-gratia amount of Rs 10 lakh each have been paid to the kin of the family members as announced by the railways, the official said. Stating that the process of handing over of the bodies will continue till claimants come, the official said as many as 62 bodies still remain unidentified and preserved in the containers in AIIMS, Bhubaneswar.

Of the 293 people killed in the accident involving Shalimar-Chennai Coromandel Express, Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express and a stationary goods train, 287 had died on the spot or brought dead to hospital while six succumbed to injuries in hospitals.

The accident took place near Bahanaga Bazar station in Balasore district on June 2 evening.

174 Indian students win scholarship

● For higher studies in Europe

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI)

In the biggest ever annual selection of Indian students, as many as 174 candidates — over 50 per cent of them women — have been awarded the prestigious Erasmus Mundus scholarships for the degree programmes starting in the academic year 2023-24. The selected Indian students of the Erasmus Mundus 2023-2025 batch, under the fully-funded scholarship programme by the European Union, will have the opportunity to study and conduct research in at least two universities located in different European countries and obtain a joint, double or multiple degree.

The delegation of the European Union to India on Friday organised an

ERASMUS MUNDUS

event for the departing Indian students to mark this milestone. In 2022, 161 Indian students received the Erasmus Mundus scholarship. "I am pleased to share that 174 Indian students have won the Erasmus scholarship this year, beating the figure of 161 Indian students from last year. Given how competitive the Erasmus programme is, this deserves a big applause. "The Erasmus+ programme not only offers students state-of-the-art education opportunities and professional development, but also allows them to gain rich cultural experience and a unique opportunity to explore Europe's diversity. I wish all the students an enriching journey," said HE Seppo Nurmi, Charge d' Affaires of the EU delegation to India and Bhutan. Hailing from 21 states and union territories across India, the

largest number of this year's Erasmus Mundus scholarship recipients come from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi and Kerala.

Collectively, over the next two years Indian students will be hosted primarily in 17 different EU countries.

The first host countries for the students who fly in for the current academic year include, France (48), Italy (27), Belgium (20), Finland (11), Spain (10), United Kingdom (5), Portugal (17), The Netherlands (04), Germany (06), Sweden (02), Austria (06), Denmark (04), Ireland (02), Hungary (02), Turkey (02), Czech Republic (04), Estonia (01), Greece (01), Norway (01) and Serbia (01).

Worldwide, 2,835 students from 143 different countries have been awarded scholarships under the programme.

Gen Kalita flags off Army bike expedition

● From Kohima to Kargil

Kohima, Jul 02 (PTI)

Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen R P Kalita on Sunday flagged off 'Kargil Vijay Ride' of the 2nd Naga Regiment from Kohima to Kargil (K2) at the Assam Rifles garrison here.

In his address, the GOC-in-C of Eastern Army Command said that it is one of the first ever motorcycle expedition from K2K being conducted to commemorate the commencement of 25 years of

Operation Vijay wherein the brave Naga warriors enriched the soil of our northern borders by their blood towards safeguarding the territorial integrity of our motherland.

The 2nd Naga Regiment had valiantly fought and won the Kargil War, he said, adding that this is a great tribute to celebrate the supreme sacrifice and bravery of the valiant martyrs.

Lt Gen Kalita said that the riders will reach Kargil on the eve of Kargil Vijay Diwas and wished the expedition a success.

The expedition has 25 valiant Mashkoh (2 Naga

Regiment) warriors led Lt Col Saini on bikes who will traverse over 3,700 km from Kohima to Kargil crossing through eight states and two union territories.

The team has taken the honourous task of collecting the soil from the villages of the fallen heroes of the Kargil War, along the entire route and carry them as a tribute to the Kargil War Memorial in Drass. Enroute to Kargil, the team will also interact with all sections of society highlighting the role of the Indian Army in nation-building, motivating youth and addressing the

grievances of ex-servicemen and Veer Naris, said Lt Gen Kalita, who is also Colonel of the Kumaon, Naga Regiments and Kumaon Scouts.

"This is also an effort to connect the North Eastern region with the next of the nation and to spread awareness about the brave soldiers of Nagaland who participated in the Kargil war," he said.

The GoC-in-C also paid homage to the brave martyrs of the Kargil War for the supreme sacrifice and handed over the soil of the battlefield to the next of kin of the martyrs at the flagging-off ceremony.

'BJP-JJP govt in Haryana sitting on pile of failures'

Rohtak (Hry), Jul 02 (PTI)

Senior Congress leader Bhopinder Singh Hooda alleged on Sunday that the BJP-JJP government in Haryana is sitting on "a pile of failures" and that it does not have a single achievement to show in the last nine years.

The leader of opposition in the state Assembly said this after participating in various social and religious programmes in Rohtak. "The BJP-JJP government is completely cut off from people and the ground reality. It has finally remembered the people now as elections are near," Hooda said in a statement.

The Congress, he said, has been with the public throughout thanks to programmes like "Vipaksh Aapke Samaksh", "Bharat Jodo Yatra", the "Haath se Haath Jodo" campaign and "Jan Milan". The opposition party has so far organ-



Bhopinder Singh Hooda

ised "Vipaksh Aapke Samaksh" programmes in seven Lok Sabha constituencies of the state. The eighth programme is scheduled to be held in Bhiwani on July 9 and preparations for the same are on, Hooda said. The former Haryana chief minister further said Congress leaders and workers have not been sitting at home since the 2019 (Lok Sabha and Assembly) elections and are constantly engaging with the people.

Four security personnel killed in attack in restive Balochistan

Karachi, Jul 02 (PTD):

At least four security personnel and a terrorist were killed in an exchange of fire between them in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province on Sunday.

The attack took place in Dhana Sar area in the province.

Sherani Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bilal Shabbir confirmed the fatalities, adding that the exchange of fire between the security forces and the terrorists continued for almost two hours.

Three police officials and security personnel were killed in the attack in

the Sherani sub-district, Shabbir said, adding that a terrorist was also killed.

DC Shabbir added: "The companions of the injured terrorists succeeded in taking them away. The body of the dead terrorist has been handed over to the CTD (Counter-Terrorism Department).

"The terrorists were well armed and they attacked the checkpoints after which the police and security responded and the firing lasted for some two hours," he said.

"One security personnel was also injured but is out of danger," Shabbir said.

He further said that the bodies of those killed have

been taken to Zhob District Headquarters Hospital. Stating that law enforcement agencies have cordoned off Dhana Sar and the surrounding areas, the DC added that the CTD has collected evidence from the incident's site and has initiated its probe.

Meanwhile, Sherani District Health Officer Dr Daulat Khan has said that a state of emergency has been put in place at the Zhob Civil Hospital and that all hospital staff had been called to duty despite the weekend.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo condemned the "rocket attack

and firing" on the checkpoints and expressed his grief on the killing of the four security personnel.

He also lauded the police's and the FC's efforts in killing one terrorist. "The terrorists cannot demoralise the security forces by their cowardly actions," he said in a statement.

"The sacrifices of the security forces are a beacon for the nation. The security forces are ensuring the security of the country and the nation with their firm determination and courage," Bizenjo added.

However, no one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

UK police have new expanded powers to crack down on protests

London, Jul 02 (AP):

New and expanded powers for British police took effect on Sunday, including measures targeting activists who stop traffic and major building works with protests.

Authorities have repeatedly condemned environmental protest groups, including Just Stop Oil and Extinction Rebellion, which have sought to raise awareness about the urgency of climate change by staging multiple high-profile protests at the busiest highways and roads.

Their protests in recent years often caused serious disruption for motorists. From Sunday, police will have powers to move static protests. Critics have argued the toughened laws are a threat to the right to protest, but UK officials say the measures were to stop "disruption from a selfish minority." "The public have had enough of

their lives being disrupted by selfish protesters. The mayhem we've seen on our streets has been a scandal," Home Secretary Suella Braverman said.

Authorities say that under the new Public Order Act, protesters found guilty of "tunnelling" or digging underground tunnels to obstruct the building of new infrastructure works could face three years in prison.

Anyone found guilty of obstructing a major transportation project could be jailed for up to six months.

Hundreds of protesters were arrested last year in the UK for blocking major roads and bridges. Many activists protested by sitting in the middle of the roads or gluing themselves to the roadway to make them harder to move. Police have said it's costly to deal with the protests and that they diverted thousands of officers.

CANADA DAY PARADE



Participants entertain the crowd during a Canada Day parade in Montreal.

Rishi Sunak speaks of 'sting' of racism growing up in UK

London, Jul 02 (PTI):

Rishi Sunak, Britain's first Indian-origin Prime Minister, has spoken of the "sting" of racism that he experienced growing up in the UK during a special appearance at the England versus Australia Ashes Test match at Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

The 43-year-old cricket lover was interviewed on the BBC's iconic 'Test Match Special' (TMS) radio show on the fourth day of the second Ashes Test on Saturday when he was asked about a recent independent report which found "widespread and deep-rooted" racism, sexism, elitism and class-based bias at all levels of cricket and prompted an unreserved apology by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

"I haven't experienced that in cricket, but of course I've experienced



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak (front row R) watches on day four of the second Ashes cricket test match between England and Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London.

racism growing up," said Sunak, in response to a question by BBC cricket correspondent Jonathan Agnew.

"It stings you in a way that very few other things do. I'm in a job where I take criticism on a daily, hourly, minute-by-minute basis. But racism, it stings you, it does hurt," he said.

Sunak said the

Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) report had been "hard to read" and "really sad" for cricket lovers like him. "All of us who love this game want it to be inclusive, open, accessible to absolutely everybody, to welcome people from all backgrounds and for it to be a place where everyone can feel respected and supported," he said.

Hundreds more arrested in France amid violence

Paris, July 02:

Protests that erupted in France in response to the killing of a 17-year-old by a police officer continued for a fifth night, The New York Times reported.

Authorities arrested hundreds of people nationwide overnight and protesters clashed with police officers in riot gear.

Taking to his Twitter handle, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said that 427 people had been arrested overnight on Saturday.

On Friday, more than 1,300 people had been detained in France.

He further said that 45,000 police officers were deployed nationwide on Saturday evening, a number similar to the night before, according to The New York Times report.

A government minister said that the evening was calmer than the recent ones.

However, local media reported rioting, looting, and clashes in Marseille, the report said.



Police officers on motorcycles patrol on the Champs Elysees in Paris. President Emmanuel Macron scrapped an official trip to Germany after a fourth straight night of rioting and looting across France in defiance of a massive police deployment. Hundreds turned out for the burial of the 17-year-old whose killing by police triggered the unrest.

Gerald Darmanin noted that the number of officers deployed across the nation was not increased and added that more officers were sent to control protesters in Lyon, Grenoble, and Marseille, The New York Times reported. Tensions remained high in France after the funeral of the 17-year-old by a police officer on Tuesday in Nanterre.

The funeral of a French teen, whose shooting by police provoked violent protests across the nation, was held after more than

1,300 people were detained overnight on Saturday, CNN reported. The service was held at a mosque in Nanterre, a suburb of Paris, on Saturday afternoon local time. Mounia, the mother of the teenager who was shot dead, told France 5 on Friday that she alone held the cop who shot her son, Nahel Merzouk, accountable for his demise. However, the murder has led to widespread damaging unrest and inquiries into whether race played a role in his passing.

Baltimore mass shooting: 2 killed, 28 injured

Baltimore (US), Jul 02 (AP):

Two people were killed and 28 were wounded in a mass shooting in Baltimore Sunday morning, including three who are in critical condition, police said.

Baltimore Police Department Acting Commissioner Richard Worley confirmed there were a total of 30 victims during a press conference at the scene.

The shooting took place just after 12:30 am at a block party in the Brooklyn Homes area of South Baltimore in the 800 block of Gretna



Avenue, Worley said.

All of the victims were adults. Nine victims were transported by ambulance and 20 victims walked into area hospitals with injuries from the shooting, Worley said.

"I want those who are responsible to hear me, and hear me very clear-

ly," Mayor Brandon Scott said at the scene. "We will not stop until we find you, and we will find you. Until then, I hope that every single breath you take, that you think about the lives that you took, think about the lives that you impacted here tonight."

No arrests were made immediately after the shooting. Scott asked anyone with information to come forward to assist investigators locate the "cowards" who were responsible for the shooting.

"Treat this as if it were your family," Scott said. "How you would want people to treat it if you were mourning, if this was your neighbourhood, if this was an event in your community that this happened at. We want you to treat it that way because that's how we have to treat each other as Baltimoreans."

Haiti urgently needs international aid, security: UN Chief



Port-Au-Prince (Haiti), Jul 02 (AP):

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited Haiti and again called on foreign governments with strong security forces to help the struggling country fight a surge in gang violence. The appeal was made after Guterres met with Prime Minister Ariel Henry, civil society leaders, U.N. staff and the heads of various political parties during his one-day trip. "Now is not the time to forget Haiti or weaken our solidarity with its people," he said. Guterres met with re-

porters at Haiti's international airport in Port-au-Prince, who pressed him on whether an international security force would be deployed as requested by the prime minister last October.

Guterres said he spoke about the issue with Henry, as well as the need to hold credible elections.

"I am not here to tell Haitians what to do. I am here to listen to them and to encourage them to build consensus as broadly as possible to move the transition process forward," he said. Henry, who has been running the country since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Mo se, has been under pressure to hold elections. But experts have noted it is impossible to do so given the current level of violence in the country, with gangs controlling an estimated 80% of the capital.

Russia launches first drone strike on Kyiv in 12 days

Kyiv, Jul 02 (AP):

After a relative lull, Russia launched a drone attack early on Sunday on Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, officials said. It was the first such attack of the war in 12 days.

All of the Iranian-made Shahed exploding drones were detected and shot down, according to Serhii Popko, the head of the Kyiv city administration. In addition to the city itself, the surrounding Kyiv region was targeted. Kyiv regional Gov. Ruslan Kravchenko reported that one person was wounded by falling debris from a destroyed drone.

Officials in the Ukrainian capital didn't provide an exact number of drones that attacked the city. But Ukraine's air force said that across the country, eight Shaheds and three Kalibr cruise missiles were launched by the Russians. Further

south, a 13-year-old boy was wounded in overnight shelling of Ukraine's partially occupied southern Kherson province, said Oleksandr Tolokonnikov, spokesman for the Ukrainian administration of the province.

The child was wounded when the Russian army shelled the village of Mylove on the banks of the Dnieper River in the Beryslav district, Tolokonnikov said.

"The child was hospitalized, there is no threat to his life," Tolokonnikov added," he said on state TV. Shelling of Kherson province continued Sunday morning, wounding four people in the regional capital, also called Kherson.

The regional prosecutor's office said that a residential area of the city was targeted by Russian troops operating in the Russia-occupied part of the Kherson province.

Trump returns to campaign rallies

● Draws thousands to small South Carolina city ahead of July 4

Pickens (US), Jul 02 (AP):

Former President Donald Trump on Saturday marked a return to the large-scale rallies of his previous presidential campaigns, speaking to thousands gathered in the streets of a small South Carolina city on a blazing day ahead of the July 4 holiday.

"There's nowhere else I'd rather be to kick off the Fourth of July weekend than right here on Main St., with thousands of hardworking South Carolina patriots who believe in God, family and country," Trump said to a roaring crowd standing on asphalt as temperatures climbed into the 90s.

It wasn't immediately clear how many people had gathered in the streets of downtown Pickens, a small city in South Carolina's conservative Upstate of around 3,400



residents. Law enforcement officials told some media outlets that around 15,000 people had gathered by 11 a.m., two hours before Trump's remarks.

The heavily Republican area is a popular one for GOP hopefuls as they aim to attract support for South Carolina's first-in-the-South presidential primary. In recent months, other candidates including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence and biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy have all held events in the Upstate, as well as the two South Carolinians in the race: former Gov. Nikki Haley and Sen. Tim Scott.

But none drew a crowd like Trump, whose appearance effectively shuttered Pickens' quintessential southern downtown.

Contrasted with his 2016 and 2020 campaigns, which drew thousands to rallies in states across the country, Trump's 2024 effort has been markedly different. Earlier this year, instead of addressing voters in a gymnasium or airplane hangar, Trump held his first South Carolina campaign event inside the Statehouse in Columbia, rolling out his state leadership team at an invitation-only gathering in an ornate lobby between the House and Senate chambers. In other states, the

former president has focused his efforts on smaller events, including a series of speeches before state party organizations, as he works to bolster his standing with delegates and local officials.

This was only Trump's second large rally of the 2024 campaign. In March, he rallied in Waco, Texas, disparaging the prosecutors then investigating him on hush-money charges on which he was later indicted and predicting his vindication. A planned outdoor rally in Iowa in May was canceled due to tornado warnings.

The rallies are also expensive to put on, although Trump has continued to bring in millions in fundraising, after both the New York indictment and also federal charges related to his retention of classified documents after leaving the White House. Last month, senior Trump aide Chris LaCivita told the conservative Ruthless podcast that the rallies "are half a million bucks a pop."

Elon Musk imposes daily limits on reading posts on Twitter

San Francisco, Jul 02 (AP):

Twitter owner Elon Musk has limited the amount of tweets that most users can view each day restrictions he described as an attempt to prevent unauthorized scraping of potentially valuable data from the social media platform.

The site is now requiring people to log on to view tweets and profiles a change in its longtime practice to allow everyone to peruse the chatter on what Musk has frequently touted as the

world's digital town square since buying it for USD 44 billion last year.

The restrictions could result in users being locked out of Twitter for the day after scrolling through several hundred tweets. Thousands of users complained Saturday of not being able to access the site.

In a Friday tweet, Musk described the new restrictions as a temporary measure that was taken because "we were getting data pillaged so much that it was degrading service for normal

users."

Musk has pushed back on what he calls misuse of Twitter data to train popular artificial intelligence systems like ChatGPT. They scour reams of information online to generate human-like text, photos, video and other content.

Musk elaborated on the limits Saturday, saying unverified accounts will temporarily be restricted to reading 600 posts per day, while verified accounts will be able to scroll through up to 6,000.

After facing backlash, he tweeted that the thresholds would be raised to 800 posts for unverified accounts and 8,000 for verified accounts before later settling on 1,000 and 10,000 tweets, respectively.

The crackdown began to have ripple effects, causing more than 7,500 people at one point Saturday to report problems using the social media service, based on complaints registered on DownDetector, a website that tracks online outages.



CENTRAL Chronicle

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Financial Titans Unite

HDFC Bank and HDFC Merger Shakes Industry Foundations

The merger between HDFC Bank and HDFC marks a significant milestone in the financial landscape of India. As the largest merger between a private sector bank and a non-banking financial company (NBFC), this union will undoubtedly bring forth a multitude of changes for investors and stakeholders. Although the merger is an in-house affair, with HDFC Bank acquiring its parent company HDFC and subsequently delisting the latter from exchanges, the impact on portfolios will be tangible. The effective commencement of the HDFC twins merger on July 1, 2023, ushers in a new era of financial synergy. HDFC Bank recently announced the successful completion of the merger after securing the necessary shareholder and regulatory approvals. This strategic decision, conceived in April last year, comes to fruition within the estimated time frame of 15 to 18 months. Sashi Jagdishan, CEO & MD of HDFC Bank, expressed his confidence in this transformative event, stating that it would enable the creation of a holistic ecosystem of financial services. By welcoming the talented team of HDFC Ltd. into the HDFC Bank family, Jagdishan envisions a journey defined by agility, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to excellence. As challenges arise, they will be viewed as opportunities to learn and grow, striving to become the benchmark of success and integrity in the financial services industry. Deepak Parekh, who played a pivotal role in HDFC's journey, bids farewell as he exits following the merger. The mantle of leadership now falls on Sashi Jagdishan, as the merged entity embarks on an exciting future of growth and prosperity. Parekh's parting words assure shareholders that the execution capabilities of HDFC Bank will pave the way for new opportunities, further enhancing the combined entity's potential. The merger brings together the complementary strengths of both entities, poised to create meaningful value for stakeholders, including customers, employees, and shareholders. This amalgamation facilitates increased scale, comprehensive product offerings, balance sheet resilience, and the ability to drive synergies across revenue opportunities, operational efficiencies, and underwriting processes. As a result of the merger, HDFC shares will be delisted from both the BSE and NSE on July 13, 2023. However, shareholders need not fret, as their HDFC shares will continue to be traded under the HDFC Bank scrip codes on the exchanges. The share swap between eligible shareholders entails HDFC Bank issuing and allotting 42 new equity shares, each with a face value of Re 1/-, for every 25 equity shares held in HDFC as of the record date. This transaction signifies a pivotal moment for both individual and institutional investors. Experts predict that the merged entity will revitalize HDFC Bank's performance, as it has previously underperformed the Nifty over the past three years. With a proven track record and exceptional execution capabilities, the bank is expected to benefit from the synergy unleashed by the merger. Presently trading at a discount to its average price-to-earnings and price-to-book ratios, HDFC Bank offers an attractive investment opportunity. The merged entity, set to become the second-largest firm in India in terms of market share, showcases the tremendous potential of this merger. With a combined market capitalization higher than that of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), it underscores the significance of this financial convergence. Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries will retain its position as the largest firm, followed by the HDFC Bank-HDFC merged entity and TCS. In terms of index weightage, the merged entity is projected to account for approximately 15% of the Nifty index. This substantial presence demonstrates the merged entity's impact on the broader market and its influence on investors' portfolios. The merger enhances the diversified financial services offered by HDFC Bank, transforming it into a financial conglomerate that encompasses banking, insurance, mutual funds, and more. Previously acting as a distributor for these products, HDFC Bank now solidifies its position as a comprehensive provider of financial solutions. The merger also highlights the importance of HDFC Bank's subsidiaries, including HDFC Securities, HDB Financial Services Ltd., HDFC Asset Management Co. Ltd., HDFC ERGO General Insurance Co. Ltd., HDFC Capital Advisors Ltd., and HDFC Life Insurance. These subsidiaries contribute to the diversified portfolio of services offered by the merged entity, further expanding its reach and potential for growth. Overall, the HDFC Bank and HDFC merger marks a significant milestone in the financial sector, signaling a new era of possibilities and growth. The combined strength, resources, and expertise of these two giants have the potential to reshape the industry landscape. As shareholders and investors witness the unfolding of this union, they can expect enhanced value, increased opportunities, and a more robust financial ecosystem.

Turbulent Tolerance

India's recent summoning of a Pakistani diplomat has underscored its strong protest against the appalling attacks on members of the Sikh community in Pakistan. These incidents, occurring between April and June, have raised grave concerns in India, prompting a demand for a thorough investigation into the violent acts and a plea for Pakistan to guarantee the safety and security of its minority communities. It is distressing to note that these attacks are not isolated occurrences but part of a pattern of religious persecution faced by Sikhs in Pakistan. The Islamic State Group has claimed responsibility for the murder of a Sikh community member in Peshawar, Pakistan, making the situation even more alarming. The motive behind these attacks is rooted in religious intolerance, with the extremist organization targeting Sikhs due to their affiliation with a sect perceived as "polytheistic." This tragic incident follows another attack where a Sikh individual was injured, solidifying concerns about the safety and well-being of the Sikh community. After the partition in 1947, many Sikhs migrated to India, while a significant number chose to remain in Pakistan. Sadly, over time, the Sikh population in Pakistan has dwindled due to religious atrocities, targeted killings, and forced conversions. This continuous decline underscores the urgent need for Pakistan to protect its minority communities. Pakistan's leaders claim to use religion as a unifying force for the nation, positioning themselves as guardians of Islamic principles. However, this approach has left minority communities increasingly vulnerable. Discrimination, evident in law enforcement and the judicial system, further compounds the challenges faced by minorities. Additionally, political and religious organizations often provide support to criminals, making it incredibly difficult for victims to seek justice against their perpetrators. Despite Pakistan's claims of championing minority rights, the reality exposes a stark contradiction. Disturbing accounts frequently emerge, shedding light on the mistreatment of Sikhs and Hindus within Pakistan. Blasphemy cases are manipulated to settle personal scores, while the government exhibits favoritism towards the country's Muslim majority. Sikh shrines are indirectly controlled, and significant decisions regarding the Sikh community are made without their input. The safety of Sikhs in Pakistan remains a paramount concern, as they are targeted through killings, abductions, and forced conversions. Religious or sectarian motivations often drive these attacks, which have dire implications for the Sikh community and other minority groups. The presence and activities of extremist groups like ISIS further exacerbate the precarious situation, threatening not only Sikhs but also the stability of the entire region. It is evident that these acts of violence aim to instill fear and compel mass conversions. India's summoning of a Pakistani diplomat demonstrates the deep worry of Sikh individuals' safety in Pakistan, particularly concerning their relatives residing in India. Pakistan must take decisive action against radical ideologies to curb violence targeting Sikhs and other minority communities. Targeted killings have no place in a civilized society, and it is crucial for the Pakistani government to combat terrorism and extremism by dismantling these networks. Ensuring the safety and security of all citizens, especially religious minorities, requires serious efforts in investigating and bringing the perpetrators of these attacks to justice. Pakistan cannot shirk its responsibilities towards its minority populations.

Central Chronicle invites articles, write-ups, and comments on a wide range of issues for our editorial page. Submissions should be between 800-900 words in length. In addition, we welcome letters to the editor for this page. While letters may be edited for clarity, we aim to preserve the integrity of the original message, and ask that they be kept to around 50-60 words. Submissions can be sent via emailto:editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com.

VAN MAHOTSAV

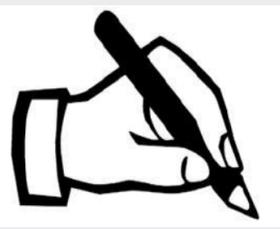


School students participate in a march during 'Van Mahotsav' week, in Moradabad, Sunday, July 1.

Gurus: Pillars of Society, Guides of Light



PRABHAT KISHORE



Guru Govind Dou Khade, Kake Lagoo Paay; Balihari Guru Aap Ne, Govind Diyo Batay. Yah Tan Vish Ki Bel Ri, Guru Amrit Ki Khan; Shish Diyo Jo Guru Mile, To Bhi Sasta Jaan. Sab Dharati Kagaj Karu, Lekhani Sab Vanray; Saat Samudra Masi Karu, Guru Gun Likha Na Jaay.

This Doha (verse) of Sadguru Kabir describes the greatness of a Guru, who is necessary for the life of a human being and an important pillar of society. They are friends, philosophers and guides who teach, philosophise and enrich students. From academic knowledge to moral-ethical or social, the Gurus are a treasure trove. A Guru's contribution to the world is priceless and irreplaceable. Gurus are known to form the minds of the youth, they bestow good qualities on their students and make them responsible citizens. It is a profession and mission taught by the saint. The Vedic Mantra "Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu, Gurur Devo Maheshvarah; Guruah Sakshat Param Brahma, Tasmai Guruve Namah" explains that Guru himself is the Tridev i.e. Brahma-Vishnu-Mahesh and is verily the supreme Power or Absolute truth. It signifies the unchallenged position of the Guru, who helps us in solving all troubles that we encounter in the path of learning & wisdom in our life.

Guru is composed of two Sanskrit words "Gu", meaning darkness and

"Ru", meaning light. Thus Guru means the one who brings from darkness to light. The word Guru itself resembles the message "Asto Maa Sadgamay, Tamo Maa Jyotirgamay, Mrityor Maa Amritgamay" (i.e. lead us from ignorance to truth, from darkness to light and from death to deathlessness). A guru is one, who has imminence knowledge, wisdom and command over a subject and makes use of it to guide his disciples. Guru is the building block of society, who helps to become a person better human being. The word "Guru" is untranslatable and "Teacher", "Master", "tutor" or other equivalents give only a partial meaning. Parents as well as all those persons, who are responsible for the career building of the disciples, are their "Guru".

In Indian culture and civilization, the concept of Guru is found in the earliest Vedic texts. The Guru and Gurukul were the established tradition in ancient Bharatvarsha. Guru had the highest position in King's Rajdarbar and society. Archeological and epigraphical evidence certify the existence of numerous Gurukuls, where

Shishyas were equipped not only with bookish knowledge but also had an all-round development. Philosophy, grammar, farming, animal husbandry, weapon training, music, painting and other essential life skills in human life were part of the study.

The Guru-Shishya Parampara were also part & parcel of other sects like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, which originated from Sanatan Dharma. Sikh is the transformed form of the Sanskrit word Shishya and Shikshism is completely based on Guru tradition. Thus Guru tradition-based learning was the backbone of enriched Indian society and India was the hub of knowledge and culture.

Nalanda Vishwavidyalaya, Vikramshila Vishwavidyalaya, Udanpuri Vishwavidyalaya, Takshshila Vishwavidyalaya, Kashi Vidyapeeth etc. are some such evidences, where learners from all over the world illuminated their mind and body.

Undoubtedly, Guru is the one who shapes the nation inside his/her classroom. After cessation of the Guru-Shishya Parampara (system) and the adoption of the Macaulay education system, the goal and meaning of education has completely transformed. The teacher/tutor's duty has narrowed down to just teach the students certain subjects in classroom and now they have nothing to do with their all-round development. Gradually the teachers lost their dignity in society.

After the governmentisation of schools, the teacher no longer remain a Guru, but became a salaried employee. The government used them in various jobs, other than teaching. They are the soft targets for engagement in various non-teaching works like elections, human census, animal census, pulse polio works, ration card verification & many more. The entry of politics and unionism among teachers has also badly hampered the education system. Several factions of teachers' organization have evolved

only to establish leadership, which time & again organise strikes for their demands. The ultimate sufferers are the learners, for whom the schools have been established and teachers have been appointed.

The two-fold system of education i.e. Government and Private, has bifurcated the education scenario in two distinct identities. Policy makers, themselves do not accept the government schools and send their wards to private schools. Even teachers, working in government school, have no faith in their school and they prefer to admit their wards to private schools. Generally, government schools are now meant for poor and downtrodden classes, who have no better option. Even after 75 years of independence, the education system has not been transformed as job-oriented and the graduates find themselves empty handed after passing out. The mind-set of teachers has totally been transformed. Due to downgrading from "Guru" to "teacher", the country's foundation is at stake.

It is heartbreaking that the major section of present-day teachers is apathetic towards the high-valued job of learner's career building through teaching. Education has become a profitable business, and teachers have become its marketing managers. Although the enriched growth of science and education has made us capable to reach on the moon and mars, but unfortunately the human values have been lost. The need of the hour is to relook the prevailing education system in India. We must shift our strategy from the present education system, which is producing graduates having only bookish knowledge, to Gurukul system, where the all-round development of the disciple was the main objective. By adopting the Guru Parampara, the country will once again become a Vishwa Guru.

(The Author is a technocrat and educationist)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Governor's Liability

The actions of the governor of Tamil Nadu have raised concerns about the role of governors and whether they are becoming liabilities for the states. The governor dismissed a state minister without consulting the chief minister, only to retract the order later. This dismissal was deemed illegal, as the governor himself acknowledged by putting the order on hold. The governor's power to dismiss a minister is limited and can only be exercised under specific circumstances, such as when the government loses a majority. However, in this case, the minister's dismissal was based on corruption charges, raising questions about due process and the governor's authority. These incidents highlight the need for governors to have a thorough understanding of the constitution and for a screening mechanism to be implemented to ensure their knowledge and commitment to upholding constitutional principles.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

UCC Controversy

Prime Minister Modi has recently advocated for the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC), deeming it an opportune time to discuss this controversial issue. However, as the situation in Manipur continues to deteriorate, serious questions arise for the BJP government regarding their handling of safety and integrity concerns in the region. The pressing problem of high unemployment, which stands at over seven percent, remains unsolved despite grand endeavors such as constructing new temples, erecting statues, or altering the status of Kashmir. The crucial question remains: How will the implementation of UCC effectively tackle the prominent issues of unemployment, poverty, and inflation? It seems that political parties are increasingly exploiting this matter for electoral gains rather than focusing on resolving fundamental challenges faced by the population. Unfortunately, the plight of the poor seems to be of little concern amidst this political trend.

Krishna Kumar KT, Kollam

Sacrifice and Compliance

Muslims around the world participate in the symbolic act of animal sacrifice, as permitted by their respective countries' laws, to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim's (Abraham's) willingness and obedience to God when he offered his son Ismael as a sacrifice. It is of utmost importance to ensure that these actions do not cause harm to anyone. Every Muslim is encouraged to adhere to government guidelines while performing the sacrifice during Eidul Adha and to refrain from sharing pictures of slaughtered animals on social media. Eidul Adha, also known as the festival of sacrifice, will be celebrated over the course of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Md Abdul Ali, Jalandhar

Why India's mobile phone story is a major manufacturing success!

Rajesh Kumar Singh and Kumar V Pratap

Several recent newspaper articles have tried to create a narrative that the role of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme in promoting mobile phones exports is questionable on account of low value addition in India. The key elements of such criticism include the following: only due to imposition of higher tariffs the net imports of mobiles have turned positive, that the incentive payment in PLI scheme may outweigh the value added in India, that India became import dependent since the PLI scheme was announced and that there is a need to reassess whether jobs have been created under the PLI schemes and the associated cost for such jobs. These points are largely incorrect as is detailed below:

Tariff policy changes are part of a deliberate strategy to increase domestic capabilities in manufacturing and exports. Compared to 2015, 99.2% of the mobile handsets now being used in India are Made in India. The PLI incentives are not even 6% (will come down in stages to less than 2%), and it is only on the incremental production. While the

beneficiaries of the PLI Scheme constituted only 20 percent by market share, they accounted for 82% of the mobile phone exports in FY 2022-23. Analysis shows that domestic value addition in mobiles is between 14-25 percent depending upon the model and complexity. Robust development in subassemblies and supply chains for Chargers, Battery Packs, Headsets, Mechanics, Camera Module, Display assembly is being seen. New markets have been added for exports including Western Europe, Americas and developed Asia, besides the shifting of global supply chains to India. Green shoots in the component ecosystem are also visible wherein large Indian companies like Tatas have entered and thus the externalities generated by such a policy intervention are significant.

We need to consider what would have happened to imports of mobiles and its components in the absence of the PLI Scheme and the time period for supply chains to be established as evident from the experience of other countries. China has built a USD 1.3 trillion electronics industry over 25 years but still lacks the capacity to manufacture key smartphone components such as semiconductors, memory and OLED displays, which are 45

percent of its value. China's import of electronics was ~USD 650 billion in 2022. Vietnam, after 15 years, has a USD 140 billion electronics industry with an 18 percent value addition. The experiences of both countries highlight the importance of scale, particularly in exports, for increasing domestic value addition. Many of the critical reports give a static picture of a policy intervention while the perspective should be dynamic.

For fostering a robust electronics manufacturing ecosystem, one must appreciate that various elements of the production process are at different stages of localization. While the initial focus has been on attracting large-scale mobile phone assembly to India, the next phase is geared towards deepening the manufacturing value chain with localization of components. A nuanced understanding of this progressive transition seems to be missing in most of the critical reports. Government of India has adopted an ecosystem approach to position India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM). In 2014-15, electronics production was USD 37 billion with minimal value addition and high import dependency. Over the last 9 years, India has made sig-

nificant progress in electronics production which has grown nearly three-fold to USD 101 billion in 2022-23 (industry estimates), exports have increased over four-fold to USD 23 billion, and value addition has increased to approximately 23%. India's share in global electronics manufacturing has risen from 1.3 percent in 2012 to 3.75 percent in FY 2021-22.

Consequent to the launch of the PLI scheme for electronics, India emerged as the second largest manufacturer of mobile phones in the world in volume terms from 60 million mobile phones in FY 2014-15 to about 320 million mobile phones in FY 2021-22, and from making 3% of the world's Mobile handsets in 2014, to a projected 19% this year. In value, the production of mobile phones has grown from Rs.190 billion in FY 2014-15 to Rs.3.5 trillion in FY 2022-23. Of the USD 101 billion total electronics production, smartphones constitute USD 44 billion, including USD 11.1 billion in exports. There is sufficient evidence to establish that mobile manufacturing in India is becoming deeper as well as broader, with added domestic value addition, employment and incomes.

The PLI Scheme for LSEM has attracted investment of Rs.65.62 billion

till end-FY 2022-23, which has led to total production of Rs.2.84 trillion, including exports of Rs.1.29 trillion and generated direct employment of over 100,000 and indirect employment of about 2,50,000. Women employment is 70 percent of all new jobs created, which would help address gender balance in formal sector employment in India. Since 2014, more than 1 million jobs have been added in the sector. India scored a coup with the decision by Apple to significantly expand iPhone production in India, including manufacturing of its most advanced models. Projections are that a quarter of all Apple iPhones will be made in India by 2025. To conclude, the success of PLI schemes can be seen through its contributions in terms of employment generation, increased FDI in manufacturing, increased exports and diversification of the exports basket as well as significant value addition and the creation of a growing local value chain in many of the PLI products, especially mobiles.

(The authors respectively are Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Government of India and Senior Economic Adviser in the same department.)

BRIEF

Vantage Circle

Guwahati: HR technology firm Vantage Circle on Sunday said it will almost double its manpower to over 400 people within the next 2-3 years as it looks to foray into Latin America with its various products. The Guwahati-based company, which began as a less than 10-member startup in 2010, has now established operations in over 70 countries catering to more than 700 global clients with approximately 18 lakh corporate employees.

NMDC

New Delhi: State-owned NMDC has posted 20 per cent growth in iron ore production to 10.70 million tonne (MT) in the first quarter of FY24. NMDC produced 8.92 MT of iron ore during April-June of FY23, the company said in a regulatory filing. Sales rose to 11.15 MT from 7.66 MT in the year-ago period, registering a 45 per cent rise. "NMDC's contribution to the country's economy continues to make massive headway in meeting the increase in the demand for iron ore."

UltraTech Cement

New Delhi: Leading cement maker UltraTech's consolidated sales increased 19.64 per cent to 29.96 million tonne (MT) in the first quarter ended June 2023. The company produced 25.04 MT of cement in the April-June quarter a year ago, Aditya Birla Group firm said in a regulatory filing on Saturday. Its total sales volume in the domestic market rose 19.87 per cent to 29.01 MT during the quarter under review.

Tata Motors

New Delhi: Tata Motors on Saturday reported a 1 per cent rise in total domestic sales at 80,383 units in June 2023 as against 79,606 units in the year-ago month. Domestic passenger vehicle sales, including electric vehicles, were at 47,235 units as compared to 45,197 units in the same month a year ago, a growth of 5 per cent, Tata Motors said in a statement. Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd and Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd Managing Director Shailesh Chandra said the passenger vehicle industry in Q1 FY24 witnessed a robust demand driven by new launches, especially in the SUV segment and EVs.

Diesel sales fall

New Delhi: Diesel sales dropped in June as the arrival of monsoon cut demand in the agri sector and reduced vehicular movement, preliminary industry data showed. Demand for diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country -- accounting for about two-fifths of the total demand, fell 3.7 per cent to 7.1 million tonnes in June compared to the year-ago period. Diesel had soared 6.7 per cent in April and May, respectively, as agriculture demand picked up and cars yanked up air-conditioning to beat summer heat. Month-on-month sales were almost flat compared to 7.09 million tonnes of diesel consumed in May.

PTC India likely to clock 20 pc growth in power trading in FY24: CMD Mishra

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI):

Power trading solutions provider PTC India Ltd has clocked 16 per cent growth in its power trading volumes during the first quarter of this fiscal and hopes for around 20 per cent rise in the entire 2023-24, driven by targeted segment wise trade and innovative products, according to CMD Rajib Kumar Mishra.

PTC India's trading activities include long-term trading of power generated from large power projects and short-term trading arising from supply and demand mismatches, which inevitably occur in various regions of the country. The company also has a mandate to trade electricity with Bhutan, Nepal, and Bangladesh.



In an interview with PTI, the company's chairman and managing director was extremely bullish about the growth prospects in the current fiscal, buoyed by the operational performance in the first quarter. "Our daily power trading volumes have increased by 16 per cent year-on-year in the April-June period of this fiscal. We crossed the 300 MU/day

traded volume on June 25, the highest in this fiscal. We expect the volumes to increase further and clock a growth of 20 per cent for the full year," Mishra said. At an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) held last week, shareholders of PTC India approved the appointment of Mishra as the company's chairman and managing director with requisite majority

votes. He expected the growth momentum to strengthen in the remaining period and hoped for around 20 per cent growth for the full fiscal.

PTC India's consolidated total income stood at Rs 16,002.51 crore last fiscal as against Rs 16,879.77 crore in the year-ago period, while net profit was Rs 507.15 crore during 2022-23 as compared with Rs 551.67 crore a year ago.

In the last fiscal on the operational front, the power trading volumes stood at 70,610 million units as against 87,515 million units in the year-ago period.

The trading volumes were down by 19 per cent in the last fiscal on account of a decline in low-margin power exchange-traded volumes, he said.

Bandhan Bank triples its branch

Mumbai, Jul 02:

Bandhan Bank, has achieved a milestone of tripling its branch presence in less than 8 years of its operations. The Bank now has a total of more than 1,500 bank branches. With a network of another 4,500 banking units that the Bank already has, the total number of banking outlets is now more than 6,000 across the country. The Bank started its journey with 501 branches on August 23, 2015. The Bank currently serves more than 3 crore customers through a strong network of over 6,000 banking outlets spread across 34 states and union territories in India. It is committed to fulfilling the diverse financial needs of every Indian irrespective of where they reside, what financial product they need or which banking channel they may prefer - physical or digital. Chandra Shekhar Ghosh, MD & CEO, said, "Today marks an exciting milestone for Bandhan Bank. The rapid growth of the Bank in the past eight years has been a result of the confidence and trust that customers from every corner of the country have reposed on us."

NSL commences trial production of HR Coils



Hyderabad, Jul 02:

NMDC Steel Limited (NSL) commenced trial production of Hot Rolled Coils from its Rolling Mill on 30 June, 2023. The occasion was graced by Amitava Mukherjee, CMD (Additional Charge) of NMDC and NSL and Functional Directors of NMDC and NSL Dilip Kumar Mohanty, Director (Production); Vishwanath Suresh, Director (Commercial); Vinay Kumar, Director (Technical) and K Praveen Kumar, Executive Director (NSL). The team of NSL, MECON & Danieli completed the integrated trial runs by charging 70mm semi-rolled plates sourced from Rourkela Steel Plant. This was followed by Ghost Rolling and other synchronisation activities on 29 June 2023 which culminated in taking slabs in the Tunnel Furnace on 30 June 2023, result-

ing in successful rolling of Hot Slabs. This state-of-the-art Hot Strip Mill is supplied by technology provider M/s Danieli, Italy. After stabilisation, it will produce around 2.89 Million Tonnes of Coils, Sheets and Plates of different grades. The HR plates manufactured in the plant will be widely used for LPG cylinders, bridges, automobile grades, pipes, storage tanks, boilers and railway wagons. Speaking on the occasion, Amitava Mukherjee said, "It is indeed a moment of pride for NMDC Steel Limited as they commence the trial of their Hot Strip Mill today. This achievement has paved the way for concluding the commissioning and integration of all the packages and roll-out steel in a month or so. This ambitious project commissioning of 3.0 MTPA Steel Plant will be a landmark in the history of NMDC and NSL."

BoB plans to divest up to 49 pc in credit card arm

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI):

State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) plans to sell up to 49 per cent stake in credit card business arm BOB Financial Solutions Ltd. Currently, it is 100 per cent owned by BoB.

The bank has floated a Request for Proposal for roping in a strategic investor, and the process is expected to complete in one year, a senior bank official said.

BoB intends to offload up to 49 per cent in a combination of primary and secondary capital from one or multiple investors to create more value in BOB Financial Solutions and take it to the next level of growth, the official

said. BOB Financial doubled the acquisition of new credit cards in FY23 by issuing close to 1.2 million credit cards compared to 0.5 million a year ago.

"Retail spends too more than doubled compared to FY 2022, clocking approximately Rs 17,300 crore (compared to Rs 7,000 crore in FY 2022)," BoB said in its annual report.

At the same time, the net profit of the NBFC also more than doubled to Rs 24.62 crore against Rs 10.07 crore in the year-ago period. BOB Financial Solutions Ltd, formerly known as BOB Cards Ltd, was established in 1994 as a non-banking financial company, a wholly-owned arm of BoB.

Leading Taiwanese firms looking at relocating production bases to India

Taipei, Jul 02 (PTI):

Leading Taiwanese technology firms are looking at relocating their manufacturing bases to India to bring down their exposure to the Chinese market, top policymakers in the Taiwan government have said, amid the self-governed island's increasingly tense relations with China.

Deputy Minister for Taiwan's National Development Kao Shien-Quey said there is huge scope for collaboration between New Delhi and Taipei in areas of emerging and critical technologies including manufacturing of semiconductors and electronics equipment. In an interaction with a group of international journalists, she said major Taiwanese technology giants are looking at India as a key destination to strengthen their global supply chains.

Kristy Tsun-tzu Hsu, the director at premier policy think-tank Taiwan ASEAN Studies Center at Chung-Hua Institution of Economic Research, described India as an important country for Taiwan and said Taiwanese companies operating in China are looking at "decoupling" the global supply chain from that country while maintaining it for the domestic consumers. Leading Taiwanese companies are increasingly looking at relocating their

production bases from China to countries in Europe, North America, the US and India in view of Washington's trade dispute with Beijing and the Chinese military's increasing muscle-flexing around Taiwan. The relationship between China and Taiwan has become increasingly strained after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to the island in August last year. India is keen on having production facilities of leading Taiwanese chip producers including Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation (TSMC), the world's largest chipmaker whose clients included Apple.

Indian Bank rolls out digital services under 'Project WAVE' initiative

Chennai, Jul 02 (PTI):

Public sector lender Indian Bank has unveiled new services under its digital transformation initiative -- Project WAVE -- the bank said on Sunday.

Accordingly, the city-headquartered bank in collaboration with National E-Governance Services Ltd, has introduced an electronic bank guarantee (e-BG) service to ease traditional paper-based processes.

This move will also reduce the turn-around time of the bank guarantee issuance and delivery to the beneficiary from an industry average of 3-4 working days to a few minutes, a bank state-

ment said. Besides, the facility would replace the need for physical stamp paper and physical signatures of customers by replacing them with digital stamping and e-signing making the entire process digital. Indian Bank has launched a facility to avail pre-approved business loans, an end-to-end digital journey, for eligible individuals and proprietor firms to cater to their respective businesses. "The newly launched digital vehicle loan product enables individual customers of the bank to get their dream vehicle with hassle-free loan processes. This facility would be available for loan value up to Rs 25 lakh" the bank said.

Merger raises HDFC Bank's total business to over Rs 41 lakh cr

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI):

The reverse merger of HDFC with its subsidiary HDFC Bank effective Saturday has increased the total business of the merged entity to over Rs 41 lakh crore, closer to the country's biggest lender SBI.

The total business (deposit and advances) of State Bank of India (SBI) stood at Rs 70.30 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2023. However, the combined profit is higher at Rs 60,000 crore as compared to Rs 50,232 crore recorded by SBI in FY23. Post-merger, HDFC Bank became the fourth most valued lender in the world, and narrowed the gap by asset size with state-owned SBI to be the second largest Indian bank. The total business of the merged entity stood at Rs 41 lakh



crore at the end of March 2023. With the merger, the networth of the entity would be over Rs 4.14 lakh crore. Following the merger, the capital of HDFC Bank increased to Rs 1,190.61 crore with the power to increase or reduce the share capital. HDFC Investments and HDFC Holdings have been amalgamated with and into HDFC Limited, and have stood dissolved without being wound up, without any further act or deed, on July 1, 2023, HDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing.

AKSHAR RIVER CRUISE



'Akshar River Cruise' at the Sabarmati waterfront after being virtually launched by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, in Ahmedabad, Sunday, July 2.

Axis Mutual Fund launches 'Axis Nifty IT Index Fund'

Mumbai, Jul 02:

Axis Mutual Fund, announced the launch of their New Fund Offer -- Axis Nifty IT Index Fund, an open-ended index fund tracking the NIFTY IT TRI. Mr. Hitesh Das (Fund Manager) would be managing the fund. Axis Nifty IT Index Fund will track the NIFTY IT TRI and aim to provide returns before expenses that correspond to the total returns of the NIFTY IT TRI, subject to tracking errors. The minimum investment amount is Rs. 5,000 and in multiples of Re.1/- thereof.

The main objective of an Index Fund is to replicate a stock market index in terms of the portfolio. All the stocks in these indices will find some representation in their investment portfolio. Essentially, this ensures a performance fairly identical to that of the index being tracked.

TVS Motor expects growth momentum

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI):

TVS Motor Company expects growth momentum to continue in the current fiscal, with the overall economy anticipated to grow at a robust pace and a continuous improvement in the road infrastructure.

According to the company, the premium bikes and scooter segment is likely to grow on the back of a rise in overseas shipments and higher penetration of electric two-wheelers this fiscal. In its Annual Report for 2022-23, the company stated that it maintains a cautiously optimistic view regarding the current fiscal. In spite of the difference in the specific forecast, the almost common agreement is



that India's GDP growth will remain the highest among all major economies, it stated.

Improving road infrastructure and the economic environment with mass transit systems will further drive the demand for mobility for the masses, TVS Motor said. This demand is today best served by the

two-wheeler segment, making its fundamentals very attractive considering a resurgent India, it added. "Due to the above fundamentals and strong product lineup, unwavering focus on consumer, quality and cost, the company is confident going into FY 2023-24," the company informed its shareholders.

Oil companies scout for retail outlets

Mumbai, Jul 02:

BPCL, HPCL, and IOCL, the leading PSU Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have started the process for establishment of new retail outlets across the country. The aim is to meet the growing demand for petrol and diesel in line with the country's fast-growing economy. The demand for Retail Sales of Petrol and Diesel is increasing over the years. With the country's economy experiencing significant development, the need for energy has increased manifold. As a result, OMCs are undertaking the expansion of their retail outlet network to cater to this rising demand. The expansion will cater to emerging markets such as urban areas, upcoming highways, agricultural pockets, rural, remote, and far-flung areas.

Share of housing loans in total advances rises to 14.2 pc in 11 years: RBI report

Mumbai, Jul 02 (PTI):

The share of residential housing loans in total advances has increased over the last eleven years to 14.2 per cent in March 2023 from 8.6 per cent in March 2012, as per the Reserve Bank's latest Financial Stability Report (FSR).

It also said the housing sector is witnessing a healthy growth with sales growing by 21.6 per cent in the fourth quarter (January-March) of 2022-23. In addition to rising sales, new launches also maintained healthy growth, reflecting strength in demand by end-users. The share of residential

housing loans in total loans has increased over the last eleven years to 14.2 per cent in March 2023 from 8.6 per cent in March 2012, the report said.

During this period, the share of commercial real estate (CRE) in total loans has hovered between 2.0-2.9 per cent.

"Total exposure of the banking system to real estate stood at 16.5 per cent of total loans in March 2023. Given the secured nature of these loans and loan to value (LTV) ratio regulations, loan defaults remain less than 2 per cent," it said.

Pradeep Aggarwal, Founder and Chairman,

Signature Global (India), said historically, Indians have shown a preference for avoiding loans, and if they do take one, their inclination is to repay it as quickly as possible.

"This approach is particularly evident when it comes to home loans, as buyers seek to clear their debts promptly. Home ownership is viewed as a source of pride and accomplishment, and individuals are motivated to avoid loan defaults and the potential loss of their homes. As a result, the non-performing asset (NPA) rate in the home loan segment remains low," he said.

Yuki Bhambri wins maiden ATP doubles title in Spain

Indian tennis player Yuki Bhambri poses after winning the men's doubles trophy at the Mallorca Open 2023, Spain, Sunday, July 2.



Mallorca (Spain), Jul 02 (PTD): Yuki Bhambri clinched his maiden title on the ATP World Tour, winning the doubles trophy at the Mallorca

Championships with South African partner Lloyd Harris. The Indo-South African pair defeated the Dutch-Austrian duo of Robine Hase and Philipp Oswald 6-3 6-4

in the final of the grass court event, the last in the build up to the Wimbledon Championships. The 30-year-old Indian finished the match with a forehand winner between the two

opposition players across the court and raised his arms in celebration. "It's incredible to win the tournament on grass. Winning without dropping even one set on grass is un-

heard of in doubles. It obviously helps playing with a partner who was performing exceptionally well in singles," Bhambri told PTI.

"We played to our potential and came through. We took it one match at a time and got the result. Hopefully many more (titles) to come," he added.

Bhambri, who is ranked 75, will move up to career-best 58 after this win as he presented himself an early birthday present. He will turn 31 on Tuesday. His singles career marred by injuries, Bhambri had decided to switch to doubles on the Tour to prolong his tennis career. He mostly played with compatriot Saketh Myneni. They won two Challenger titles this season -- in Nonthaburi and Girona.

They did not play this tournament together because Myneni wanted to take a break, according to Bhambri, who added that he will play the Wimbledon Championships with his Indian partner.

China ends Japan's long reign to win women's basketball Asia Cup title



Sydney, Jul 02 (AP):

China rallied to claim its first women's basketball Asia Cup title since 2012 as they beat five-time defending champion Japan 73-71 in an epic final on Sunday.

Trailing at halftime it appeared China may fall for a third consecutive time in a title game as reigning champions Japan scored the last 14 points of the first half to lead by nine points.

Led by player of the tournament center Xu Han, China seized the mo-

mentum early in the third quarter and took what proved a match-winning lead late in the game to end their 12-year wait for a gold medal in front of a large crowd in Sydney.

Xu finished with a match-defining 26 points and 10 rebounds to complete the feat of recording a double-double in every game of the tournament. Siyu Wang scored 17 points.

Maki Takada led Japan with 17 points and four rebounds, with Saki Hayashi scoring 12 points for Japan.

China's title follows its silver medal at the women's basketball World Cup, also held in Sydney, late last year.

Japan and China met in the 2019 and 2021 title games with the Japanese prevailing in both to claim their fourth and fifth titles.

Earlier Saturday, host nation Australia claimed its third consecutive bronze medal as they cruised past New Zealand 81-59 to repeat its result from Bengaluru, India in 2019 and Amman, Jordan in 2021.

Territorial mindset needs to change in West Indies cricket: Jason Holder

Harare, Jul 02 (PTD):

West Indies all-rounder Jason Holder appealed fellow cricketers to shun "territorial" mindset and come together "as a region" for the good of the sport after the team failed to qualify for the ODI World Cup in India. The two-time former title winners will not feature in the 50-over World Cup for the first time since the competition's inception in 1975. The team from the Caribbean was on Saturday eliminated after its seven-wicket loss to Scotland in a Super Six match of the World Cup Qualifier here. West Indies scored 181 and Scotland



chased down the target with more than six overs to spare. "It's (cricket) not an individual thing or a territorial thing. We've got to come together as a region... and really, really think about how we want to go forward as a group and make it happen," one of the world's top all-rounders said during the post-match press conference here on Saturday. Holder scored 45 and took a wicket on Saturday. Cricket West Indies (CWI), the governing body of the team, consists of six associations, namely Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Leeward Islands, Trinidad & Tobago and Windward Islands.

Theekshana, Nissanka hand Sri Lanka ODI World Cup ticket

Bulawayo, Jul 02 (PTD):

Opener Pathum Nissanka anchored the chase with a stylish century after spinner Maheesh Theekshana grabbed four wickets as Sri Lanka thrashed hosts Zimbabwe by nine wickets to ensure qualification in the upcoming ICC ODI World Cup in India, starting October 5.

After Chennai Super Kings spinner Theekshana took 4 for 25 to effect a middle-order collapse to bowl out Zimbabwe for 165 in 32.2 overs, right-handed Nissanka scored unbeaten 101 off 102 balls with the help of 14 boundaries as Sri Lanka knocked off the pal-

try target in 33.1 overs.

Sri Lanka's victory took them to eight points and even if they lose their final Super Six encounter, the champions of the 1996 edition are assured of a top-two finish.

"See coming for the qualifiers. It's always tough but still, if you go through the process...and we know with the team we got, we are going to qualify for the World Cup. Credit to the other teams; they played really well in the tournament. Some other teams gave us some good fights but still, we are the better side," Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka said after the match.

Aus survive Stokes blast to take 2-0 series lead

London, Jul 02 (AP):

Australia survived Ben Stokes' explosive century to secure a 2-0 series lead against England after an intense match in London. The game had echoes of the Headingley Test in 2019, as Stokes threatened to stage another remarkable comeback with his brilliant innings of 155. However, once he was dismissed by Josh Hazlewood, Australia quickly regained control. England were eventually bowled out for 327, handing Australia a 43-run victory. There were several notable moments during the match.

Overnight batsmen Ben Duckett and Jonny Bairstow were both dismissed by the Australian bowlers, with Bairstow falling victim to a controversial run-out decision. Bairstow's confusion and immediate departure from the crease led to accusations of cheating from the crowd, resulting in heated exchanges between players and spectators. Stokes, visibly frustrated by the run-out incident, unleashed his anger on the field by punishing the Australian bowlers. He smashed boundaries all around the ground, particularly targeting Cameron Green, who bore the brunt

of Stokes' assault. In a sensational display of power hitting, Stokes scored 24 runs off Green's next over, including three consecutive sixes, propelling him from 62 to 100 in just 16 balls. Despite Stokes' heroics, Australia managed to maintain their composure and clinch the victory.

The win puts them in a commanding position with a 2-0 series lead, leaving England with an uphill battle to stage a comeback. Three more games remain in the series, ensuring there will be plenty more excitement and drama in the coming matches.

India beat Lebanon 4-2 in penalty shootout to enter final

Bengaluru, Jul 1 (PTD)

Defending champions India held their nerves to beat Lebanon 4-2 in a tense penalty shootout after a goalless 120 minutes of play to enter the final of the SAFF Championship football here.

The home side face Kuwait, a 1-0 winner over Bangladesh in the other semifinal of the day, in the summit clash on July 4.

India will be playing in the final of the regional tournament for the 13th time and ninth on the trot. They have won eight times in the earlier 13 editions. The only time India did not make it to the top two was in 2003. In the



Indian players celebrate after they won in penalty shoot out during the 2nd semifinal of SAFF Championship 2023 between India vs Lebanon at Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru.

penalty shootout, skipper Sunil Chhetri, Anwar Ali, Mahesh Singh and Udanta Singh found the back of the net for India.

Lebanon could only score twice through Walid Shour and Mohammad Sadek. India goalkeeper Gurpreet Sandhu saved

the kick from Hassan Maatouk while Khalil Bader's sailed above the crossbar. It was also India's second successive win over Lebanon after defeating them 2-0 in the recent Intercontinental Cup in Odisha. Before the late drama unfolded, the first half began with Lebanon dominating the proceedings. India were not even in the picture for the first 10 minutes. Lebanon had a brilliant chance to go ahead in the second minute. But Nader Matar was a bit too eager to execute a volley, failing to impart direction as it sailed over the bar. India found their bearings soon and got their first crack at the opposition goal in the 16th minute.

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTD):

Shimron Hetmyer's Rs 8.50 crore annual IPL fees earned from Rajasthan Royals or Andre Russell's Rs 16 crore retention fee from Kolkata Knight Riders is an indication how cricket's financial landscape has changed and playing for the West Indies isn't a motivation anymore.

It is the money that matters and has created the biggest hindrance for Cricket West Indies (CWI) from at least keeping the top players interested throughout the year.

During the ongoing World Cup qualifiers, West Indies didn't have the services of Hetmyer, Andre Russell or Sunil Narine, all of whom are not in

2 months of IPL: Pooran earns nearly 8 times, Hetmyer 4 times of what they would for representing WI

the 18 member central contract list released last year by CWI. All of them had voluntarily opted out as they do freelance in T20 leagues throughout the year. Nicholas Pooran, who got a Rs 16 crore deal from Lucknow Super Giants this year, played in the qualifiers, scored a hundred, but how long can Caribbean cricket establishment force him to wear the maroon in the wake of multi-year deal that his IPL franchise might offer to play in IPL, as well as SA T20? Add with it, a CPL, BBL and possibly a contract in Major League Cricket (MLC) in hand, the

dashing left-hander could well be on his way out.

The last documented match fees for West Indies players, which was published by ESPN Cricinfo in 2017 -- was USD 5750 for Tests (Rs 4.72 lakh per game), USD 2300 for ODIs (1.88 lakh per game) and USD 1735 (Rs 1.42 lakh).

Now there is no official document available on the internet to ascertain whether CWI had revised these figures but if these are the numbers, they earn at least three-and-half to four times less than their Indian counterparts who get Rs 15 lakh (nearly USD 18,000) for Tests, Rs 8 lakh for ODIs (USD 9800 approx) and Rs 4 lakh (USD 4800) for T20Is.

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'PM only diverts and distracts'

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI)

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi making a strong pitch for a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) ahead of next year's general elections, the Congress on Sunday said the ruling BJP is raising "divisive and polarising" issues to divert the attention from the failures of its government. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh accused Modi of working overtime to raise such issues and not addressing the day-to-day concerns of the common man.



Jairam Ramesh

burning, China is sitting on Indian territory, people are struggling with rising prices and unemployment, the prime minister is on a different note," the former Union minister said.

He further alleged that the prime minister is trying to raise such divisive and polarising issues only to divert the attention of people from the failures of his government. The Congress has been adopting a cautious approach on the UCC issue.

The top leadership of the party discussed the issue at length at its strategy group meeting on Saturday. Insiders say the opposition party is hoping that the debate on the issue will settle soon.

The Congress has said there is no change in its stand on the issue, as enumerated in its June 15 statement where it questioned the law commission for changing its stand on a UCC by inviting fresh public opinion. Ramesh said since there has been no significant development in the matter in the last 15 days, the party has nothing to add to it as of now.

"We issued a statement on June 15. There has been no change in our stand on a UCC," he added.

"When there is a draft and a discussion, we will participate and examine what is proposed. As of

now, all we have is a law commission public notice for responses. The Congress reiterates the statement as nothing new has happened," he said.

The Congress had alleged that the law commission's latest attempt to seek fresh public opinion on a UCC represents the Modi government's desperation for continuing with its agenda of polarisation and diversion from its failures. Ramesh had earlier said the law commission's attempt to seek fresh public opinion on the issue shows the government's desperation for continuing with its polarisation agenda. He had also said it is strange that the law commission is seeking a fresh reference when it acknowledges that its predecessor, the 21st Law Commission, had published a consultation paper on the subject in August 2018.

COMMUNAL HARMONY



Muslims take part in the funeral of well-known Kashmiri Pandit and veteran trade union leader Sampat Prakash who died due to heart attack, in Srinagar, Sunday

Heavy rains cause flood-like situation in many areas of Gujarat

Ahmedabad, Jul 02 (PTI)

Heavy rains in several parts of Gujarat created a flood-like situation and led to many villages getting cut off, officials said on Sunday.

Some parts of Valsad and Navsari districts received extremely heavy rainfall in a 24-hour period till Sunday morning, data from the State Emergency Operation Centre revealed.

Several villages were cut off as roads were flooded or had been washed away, with the National and State Disaster Response Forces (NDRF and SDRF) engaged in operations to rescue stranded people, officials said.

Jamnagar is one of the worst-affected districts with

police saying 11 people have died in rain-related incidents since Friday.

A three-year-old girl died after falling into a well while scooping water out of her flooded house there on Friday, while bodies of two men who had gone missing after heavy rainfall were found on Saturday by a rescue team, police added.

Villages in Limbdi taluka of Surendranagar district were cut off due to the flooding of approach roads, with seven people being rescued by local residents from one of the villages, state government officials said.

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the Gujarat government was taking all efforts to provide relief

to people amid heavy rains. "The government is working hard to provide all possible help to the people affected by the flood-like situation in many places due to heavy rains in Gujarat. Talked to Chief Minister @BhupendraBj and got information about the situation.

"Teams of NDRF and SDRF as well as local administration are busy helping people in these areas. The central and state governments stand with the people in these difficult times," Shah tweeted.

In the last 24 hours, the state has received 32 millimetres average rainfall, with Dharampur taluka in Valsad district leading with 234 mm, the SEOC said.

Surge in solo travel; J&K, Manali preferred travel destinations

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI)

Jammu and Kashmir, Manali and Shimla are the most preferred destinations for solo travellers as more people are inclined to explore places at their own pace and preference, said a recent travel trend report.

The research, conducted by leading travel fintech SanKash, found that almost "35 per cent" of solo travellers prefer Jammu and Kashmir for vacationing, followed by Manali (25 per cent) and Shimla (14 per cent). Mussoorie, Sikkim, and Goa are among the other top preferred destinations, with bookings clocking in at nine per cent, seven per cent, and five per cent, respectively.

"Destinations renowned for their natural beauty, cultural richness have witnessed a surge in popularity, captivating the hearts of

travellers. As of March 2023, domestic travel is becoming more popular, and domestic capacity has already surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Bookings are back to 100 per cent of pre-pandemic levels for domestic travel," said Akash Dahiya, co-founder and CEO of SanKash.

The insights indicate a notable shift in travel patterns, with travellers displaying a strong inclination towards "self-exploration, adventure, and reconnecting with nature". According to the report, the most interesting trend has been a shift towards solo travel, as there has been a whopping surge of "250 per cent" in Q1-FY23.

"Solo travel has topped the chart as the most preferred trend, as travellers are inclined to explore not only themselves but the world at their own pace and preference," it added.

Friends pool resources to rebuild Alwar school

● Lying in ruins due to neglect

Jaipur, Jul 02 (PTI)

A group of friends, some of them civil servants and some Non-Resident Indians, pooled Rs 18 lakh to revitalise a long-neglected government school that languished in a dilapidated state for over 15 years in Rajasthan's Alwar district.

Motivated by their shared belief in the power of education and desire to improve the lives of future generations in their district, they contributed voluntarily for the renovation and construction efforts which took two years to complete. The rebuilt Government Primary School, located in Dalapura village of Alwar, was inaugurated on Sunday by local public



A dilapidated primary school being renovated in Dalapur village

representatives at an event attended by several dignitaries. For the school that suffered years of neglect and disrepair, with its ceiling leaking, walls crumbling and facilities non-existent, the transformation has been breathtaking.

The leaking roofs have been replaced, the crumbling walls rebuilt, and modern basic facilities made available. The school exudes an air of vibrancy with classrooms equipped

with state-of-the-art technical facilities and comfortable furniture. It also now boasts of abundance of educational material.

Resplendent in colourful paints, the school building now has six rooms, including four classrooms, one office, one aaganwadi room and one kitchen. Toilets have been reconstructed, water tank and water filter are in place and swings have been installed.

UP village carving out a niche in making artificial braids

Shahjahanpur (UP), Jul 02 (PTI)

The artificial braids woven here give the perfect hair look and style, say artisans in Feel Nagar who are earning a place for themselves in Uttar Pradesh and in several parts of the country with their work.

However, artificial braids are not about style alone. Villagers say many hang it outside houses and shops, on vehicles and also tie it around the neck of their livestock to ward off the evil eye.

Ajay Kashyap, a resident of Feel Nagar who lost his job during the COVID-19 pandemic, says he returned home to join the business.

The village, located 35 kilometers from the district headquarters, comes

under the Tilhar block. Almost every household in the village is involved in the work of braid making.

"The business has helped me make ends meet in the tough times of the pandemic. I am planning to expand the business," Kashyap said.

The villagers bring raw cotton thread from Bhillwara, Rajasthan, and some parts of Gujarat. The raw threads are cleaned and cut to the required sizes of braids before being distributed to different households for braiding. People at home, especially women, braid the threads and secure them by tying knots at the end.

Kashyap explains that other artisans decorate the braid by making flowers on braids. In this way,



Workers prepare artificial braids at a workshop in Feel Nagar village of Shahjahanpur.

after the efforts of many people, a braid is prepared.

Every artisan works on contract and is paid for his work. Every artisan earns Rs 300-500 daily, Kashyap said. The braids are collected by contractors and distributed across the country. Afroz Ali, a con-

tractor of braid-making work, said the braids are made throughout the year in the village, but there is more demand from August to October. Ali says a good braid sells for Rs 300 and gives a profit margin sufficient to sustain the business. According to locals, the braids are used as

totems and tied outside homes and businesses. People also tie it to their cattle or holy trees or private vehicles. Braids are particularly popular among truck drivers who decorate their vehicles with more than 40 braids.

Talib Khan, a truck driver, said he utilizes braids to "protect his vehicle from the evil eye and bad omens". "The braids also make the truck look beautiful."

"Once these braids were also popular among women who used them in makeup as hair extension. But it has now been replaced by other braids that use natural hair," said Kashyap.

District Magistrate Umesh Pratap Singh said artificial braids making has generated self-employ-

ment on a large scale in Feel Nagar. "The villagers are engaged in this work due to which they are not forced to migrate in search of jobs."

The officer said the villagers have been engaged in braiding work for many decades. "It used to be done by people of specific castes, but now people of all castes have adopted it. Women use their free time to make braids and get a good income," the DM said. Shahjahanpur Superintendent of Police Ashok Kumar Meena said there is no history-sheeter, rapist, or even a single person with a criminal history in Feel Nagar village.

"A murder took place in the village in 2011, but since then there has been no such incident," the SP said.

IRANI TO CWCs

Review cases of older children who could be made free for adoption

New Delhi, Jul 02 (PTI)

Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani asked the child welfare committees on Sunday to visit child-care homes and review the cases of older children who could be made free for adoption as soon as possible. Many children living in child-care homes are not legally free for adoption. According to official figures, there are around 66,000 children residing in child-care homes across the country and less than 3,000 of them are legally free for adoption.

Speaking at a regional symposium on "Child Protection, Safety and Child Welfare" that was attended by child welfare committee members and officials from

child-care institutions among others, Irani asked the CWCs to visit the child-care homes and review the cases of older children who could be made free for adoption at the earliest.

Irani said the women and child development ministry has already reviewed two states, looked into 9,000 cases of older children and identified 164 such children who could be made legally free for adoption. She also asked the child-care homes to look into the infrastructure gaps in their areas and requested the apex child rights body — National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) — to review these gaps and present them to the ministry so that they can be brought up in the upcoming budget.

ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE



Bulldozers being used to demolish illegal structures during an anti-encroachment drive by PWD, at Bhajanpura area in New Delhi, Sunday.

Congress MP's proposal to shift Kerala capital to Kochi rejected by everyone

Thiruvananthapuram/Kochi, Jul 02 (PTI) Congress MP Hibi Eden's move to propose shifting of Kerala's state capital to Kochi from Thiruvananthapuram has been widely criticised across political lines, including his own party which rejected it as "illogical" and "impractical".

The ruling CPI(M) in Kerala also made it clear that Thiruvananthapuram would remain as the state capital and termed Ernakulam MP Eden's move as "immature" and aimed at improving his chances in the general election next year.

The Left party said that

no one in his right mind would make such a suggestion in view of all the government departments and facilities available in Thiruvananthapuram.

Congress MP from Thiruvananthapuram, Shashi Tharoor, said he completely rejects the proposal by Eden as it is "illogical".

He also said there was some "mischief" on the part of the Centre in seeking views on the Bill by Eden to shift the state capital even before he was given permission to table it in the House.

"Hibi Eden has the right to move such a Bill, but it is an illogical decision. I completely reject it," he

said. He also tweeted — "Some light relief for the weekend! Kerala: Congress MP @HibiEden wants the state capital shifted to Kochi, @CMOKerala notes its impracticality, @ShashiTharoor says 'wholly without merit'."

K Muraleedharan, Congress MP and son of late party leader and former Chief Minister K Karunakaran, too shared similar views when he said Eden's move would consulting the grand old party was "unacceptable".

He said that Thiruvananthapuram was the state capital ever

since Kerala came into existence. There were a lot of facilities, like an international airport and places of worship of all faiths, within the city and therefore, there was no question of moving the capital to Kochi.

"I do not know what prompted Eden to make such a proposal, but the state capital cannot be shifted on someone's wish. He should have consulted the party before such a move," he said.

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the state assembly V D Satheshan said that while Eden was like a younger brother to him, the moment he

came to know about the proposal, he immediately conveyed his "strong dissatisfaction" to the Ernakulam MP.

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