

Monsoon Session From 2 July

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari will present the full-fledged Budget for the financial year 2022-23 before the Odisha Legislative

While the Budget will be presented on 2 July, official business will be taken up for discussion on 4 July. There will be general discussion on the annual Budget on

bly between 14 July and 20 July (excluding Sundays). The Appropriation Bill will be tabled on 29 July. In the month of August, there will be two

first four months (April to July) of the financial year 2022-23.

The government has opted for a vote-on-account instead of the regular budget in view of the model code of conduct imposed due to the Panchayat and Urban elections in the State. Out of the Rs 2 lakh crore, the total programme expenditure outlay was Rs 1,10,000 crore, which is 33 percent higher than that of 2021-22. Similarly, the outlay for disaster response funds was Rs 3,210 crore while the outlay for Transfers from State to the local bodies was Rs 7,170 crore.

Official sources indicate that the full-fledged budget will be little more than the estimation made while seeking permission of the House on vote-on-account.



Assembly on July 2, the first day of next session of the House. The Monsoon Session of the House will begin on 2 July and continue till 4 August. There will be 24 working days in this session of the House, as per a notice issued by the Assembly Secretariat on Friday.

5-6 July. The House will remain closed from 7-12 July. Reports of the Departmentally Related Standing Committee will be presented before the House on 13 July.

As per the schedule, discussion on demands for grants will be held in the Assem-

official business days (1& 3 August) and two Private Members' Bill days (2& 4 August).

On 30 March, the State Government had presented a budget of Rs 2 lakh crore and sought vote-on-account to make expenditure upto Rs 1.06 lakh crore for the

Ukraine crisis will result in global food, fuel, fertiliser crisis: Jaishankar

BENGALURU(KCN): A prolonged Ukraine conflict will lead to a global crisis of three 'Fs' -- food, fuel and fertiliser. "The fertiliser shortage will impact the next harvest and lead to global hunger," said External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, during a discussion on 'Eight years of National Security' at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) on Thursday.

NIAS Director Dr Shailesh Nayak and

present. "Some consequences

ing. It can shift the global thinking on



former diplomat PS Raghavan were

of the Ukraine conflict are still unfolding.

energy," Jaishankar

ED issues fresh summons to Sonia Gandhi for appearance on June 23

NEW DELHI(KCN): The Enforcement Directorate

questioning on June 23 in a money laundering case linked to

on June 8 but as she got infected with Covid-19, she sought

before the Enforcement Directorate in Delhi where her statement will be recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, officials said. Her son and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi is expected to be questioned in the same case on June 13. The case pertains to the probe into the alleged financial irregularities in the party-promoted Young Indian that owns the National Herald newspaper.



torate has issued a fresh summons to Congress president Sonia Gandhi to appear before it for

the National Herald newspaper, officials said Friday.

Gandhi, 75, was earlier asked to depose

a fresh date from the federal probe agency. Gandhi has been given the fresh date for June 23 to appear

Prophet remarks row: Muslims protest across Maharashtra to demand action against Nupur Sharma, Naveen Jindal

MUMBAI(KCN): Members of the Muslim community staged protests in several cities of Maharashtra on Friday demanding action against suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma and her former party colleague Naveen Jindal for their alleged objectionable remarks

against Prophet Mohammad. No untoward incident

The protests were staged by various organizations following

In Panvel city in neighbouring Navi Mumbai, at least 3,000 protesters including around 1,000 women took out a protest march, seeking the arrest of Sharma and Jindal. A delegation submitted a memorandum to Panvel tehsildar and the protest was over peacefully by 4 pm, CONTINUED ON: P-7



was reported from anywhere during the protests, police said.

the Friday prayers after 3 pm, a police official said.

PM Modi meets his former school teacher during Gujarat visit



NAVSARI(KCN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on a one-day visit to Gujarat, met his former school teacher in Navsari town on Friday. After arriving here to inaugurate Nirali Multi-speciality Hospital, Modi spent some time with his former teacher from Vadnagar, Jagdish

Nayak. A photo of their meeting on the hospital premises went viral on social media.

Nayak (88), who now lives at Vyara in Tapi district and shuns publicity, taught Modi when the latter lived with his family in Vadnagar town of Mehsana district. "Though it was a

short meeting, I do not have words to describe how I felt. His respect and feelings for me have not changed all these years," Nayak told reporters at his residence in Vyara later. His grandson Parth Nayak told reporters that he called the PMO as his grandfather wanted to meet the PM.

"My grandfather wanted to meet Modi ji during his Navsari visit, so I called the PMO yesterday and sought an appointment. To my surprise, the PM called me back and talked with us. He is so humble and down to earth. I also met him today and learnt so many things from him," Parth said.

Arukha Filed Speaker Papers

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Senior BJD lawmaker and former

Dasharathi Satapathy here in the Assembly premises

Governing party. Mr.Arukha thanked the Chief Minister

honourability of the House intact in the coming days," he said.



Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha on Friday filed nomination papers for the post of Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly. Arukha submitted his nomination papers before Assembly Secretary

in presence of BJD Organisational Secretary Pranab Prakash Das, Ministers Niranjan Pujari, Ashok Panda and Samir Ranjan Dash, government chief whip Prasanta Muduli and many senior legislators of the

Naveen Patnaik for choosing him for the crucial post, which is lying vacant following the resignation of Surya Narayan Patro due to his health issues. "I will try my best to maintain the tradition and

For the purpose of the election, a meeting of the Assembly will be held on June 13, 2022 (Monday) at 10.30 AM in the Assembly Hall. All MLAs have been asked to attend the above meeting.

Recently, the Chief Minister has revamped the Council of Ministers. All 20 Ministers resigned from their respective posts last Saturday. Along with them, Patro had also resigned from the post of Speaker due to health issues.

Prakruti Bandhu Naba Kishore Panda Felicitated at Bhubaneswar



Cuttack Sadar(KCN) : Cuttack Sadar 42 Mouza belongs to Brahmapur GP villagers of Sriram who is previously received Honorable Governor award Prakruti Bandhu Mr. Naba Kishore Panda felicitated for his 30 years of environment seva,safety,awareness work regarding create good environment etc, on the occasion of World Environment day - 2022 by Jatiya Sabuja Mission organization Prerana the program Jaga Pai Gachatiye Laga Aviyan at Jayadev Bhawan Bhubaneswar. In this program the honorable guest are The Sambad Editor Soumya Ranjan Pttanik,Odisha Bira

Mahasangha president Dr.Prakash Chandra Srichandan,Rotary Club district governor Santanu Kumar Sahoo,MLA Suresh Routray,President Prerana Dr.Dilip Srichandan present and eminent social worker Mr. Nabakumar Ji gifted to all guest Kamala flower with tree safety message designed Ghee Kumari trees respectively. The environmental safety group Lates create forest,Longlive Human coordinator Social worker Basanta Kumar Panda & Chitta Ranjan Mohapatra also felicitated in this stage.

Janhit Mein Jaari Releases Worldwide with a Social Message

Kolkata(KCN): Singh entertains as punchlines, humor dialogues and



Kolkata's Janhit Mein Jaari, a light-



well as educates the audience. It also and performances thought-provoking along with its songs subject. Interest-



hearted comedy- features Anud drama by Vinod Singh Dhaka,



have become a talking point. The trailer of the movie ingly given the central message of the film and its dire



Bhanushali, Raaj Paritosh Tripathi, Shaandilyaa, Vimal Vijay Raaz, Tinu Lahoti and Vishal Anand, Brijendra Gurnan, addresses Kala & many oth- the social stigma. Janhit Mein Jaari, The film headlined by Nushrratt Bharuccha directed which releases nationwide today, has been appreciated by critics. The



piqued the need in current audience's curiosity, and the positive reviews have added to the excitement around it. The film encompasses the journey of a young girl, who sells condoms for a living, despite societal resistance, and decides to teach her family, in-laws and society at large an important lesson. Janhit Mein Jaari promises to entertain with its power-packed performance, hilarious

Duroflex launches eco-friendly range of sleep solutions under Natural Living

Kolkata (KCN): India's leading sleep solutions brand, Duroflex, is at the forefront of research and those who need extra care. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Mohanraj J, CEO, Duroflex, said, and well-being while being eco-friendly. The fact that we are one of the few brands with our own latex production in the country bears testament to the kind of quality we want to provide to our consumers."



and innovation. The brand has wide product portfolio that caters to every kind of consumer. Over the past few years, there has been an upward trend in the number of consumers who seek products that not only meet their needs but are also good for the planet. To help these consumers extend their conscious choices to their sleep space, Duroflex has revamped and extended their eco-friendly range of mattresses and sleep accessories - Natural Living. Duroflex has introduced mattresses, mattress toppers, pillows and bed linens made entirely of natural materials - 100% Natural Latex, Rubberised Coir, Cotton, Tencel and Ethicot.

the only brand in India using GOLS certified

"As a responsible consumer brand, our

The mattresses under Natural Living range comprises four variants - Tatva, Prana, Kaya and Avaasa. The sleep accessories under Natural Living includes Meha mattress topper, Nidraa Pillows



The products in this range are crafted from ethically sourced sustainable materials and are produced without any intervention of heavy machinery. The GOLS certified latex used for the produc-

latex. The chemical free pure cotton and bamboo fabrics contributes towards one's health and well-being. They are hypo-allergenic, soft to touch, naturally resilient and highly breathable. The natural coir used in the mattress keeps the person naturally cool. Because of its use of natural materials this range is also highly recommended for people with allergies, respiratory disorders,

endeavour is to support our consumers towards a sustainable lifestyle. With our Natural Living range, consumers will find everything they need for an eco-friendly and safe sleep space. The mattresses and sleep accessories under the range are made of GOLS certified latex, chemical free pure cotton and bamboo-cotton blend fabrics which contribute towards one's health

and two types of bed linens under the name Sarrva made from different combinations of natural materials. Each product offers different levels of comfort and support based on individual needs. All these products will be available across the brand website, major e-commerce platforms, retail outlets, as well as the company's exclusive experience centres.

Heritage Academy Film Festival 2022 witnessed 100 entries across Bengal

Kolkata(KCN): The Department of Media Science of The Heritage Academy organized its annual 2-day film festival, Heritage Academy Film Festival (HAFF) 2022 on the 7th and 8th

as possible. He said that there should be a hunger to do good work. Veteran Bengali Commercial Professional Actor and Writer, Mr. Barun Chanda elaborated on the techniques of Satyajit Ray's filmmaking and provided insights on the grammar of photography. Radio Jockey from Radio Mirchi Mr. Somak



June 2022 at the THA auditorium. There were 5 events: Fiction Films, Non-Fiction Films,



Photography, One-Take films, and Trailer Making. Over 100 entries were received from various students across the state. The special pre-event began on 6th June with a masterclass by the Dean of SRFTI and filmmaker, Mr. Ashoke Viswanathan on the topic 'Narratives: Then & Now'. The event witnessed some eminent personalities from the industry. On day 1, the students interacted with popular Director, Mr. Raj Chakraborty, who told the students to read and watch as many films

Ghosh launched the department's podcast channel 'The Heritage Pod'. The first day concluded with the screening of One-Take Films, Trailers, and the opening of the Photography exhibition. The second day began with the screening of fiction and non-fiction films. It was followed by a panel discussion on the topic 'Editing Through the Ages' with the renowned Film Editor, Mr. Arghyakamal Mitra, and Director, Mr. Judhajit Sarkar. Mr. Mitra told students 'Watch and relook at the masterpieces, look at paintings, and increase your horizon of music, as editing is all about rhythm. Towards the grand finale, Director and Producer, Aritra Sen with actors, Mr. Sujoy Prasad Chatterjee, Vikram Chatterjee, and Rahul Dev Bose talked about their upcoming release 'Shohorer Ushnotomo Dine'. They gave away the awards to the winners from the different categories who came from different colleges of the city like Jadavpur University, St Xaviers, and the University of Calcutta.

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Pankaj Tripathi Starrer 'Sherdil: The Pilibhit Saga' trailer out now

Directed by five times National Award winning Director, Srijit Mukherji, the film also Stars Neeraj Kabi and Sayani Gupta

Mumbai(KCN): T-Series and Reliance Entertainment along with Match Cut Productions unveil the trailer of their film, 'Sherdil: The Pilibhit Saga,' a dark humour laced satire.

Inspired by true events, Srijit Mukherji, has brought forth an insightful story about the adverse effects of urbanization, man-animal conflict and poverty leading to a bizarre practice in a village that resides on the edge of a forest.

The trailer interestingly portrays the story of Gangaram, played by Pankaj Tripathi. Gangaram adopts the infamous tiger practice and is willing to give up his life so that the families of his village will benefit from the government scheme money which is promised to the family of any tiger attack victim.. One fine day, he enters the forest and waits for his death. There he meets Jim, played by Neraj Kabi, who is a poacher and what follows next is



a series of unprecedented and interesting

NRI accuses Shilpa Shetty, hubby Raj Kundra of cheating in 'gold scam'

MUMBAI(KCN): Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty and her husband Raj

Khar Police Station in Mumbai. When contacted, an official of Khar Po-

lice Station told IANS that "the complaint is currently under investigation" but declined to elaborate. Despite repeated attempts by IANS, Shilpa Shetty was not available for her comment.

According to Joshi, under the five-year gold plan, sold as 'Satyug Gold Scheme' the buyer was offered a 'Satyug Gold Card' at a discounted rate and promised a certain fixed quantity of gold redeemable after a five-year period.

As per Kundra's statements at the 'gold dream' launch, an investor who bought a certain sum of gold at the then current rates with full advance

payment would be entitled to a Satyug Gold Card, redeemable in stages with

attractive discounts -- 15 per cent after two years, 26 per cent after three years, 30 per cent after four years and 37 per cent after five years. Joshi had purchased One kg gold for nearly Rs 18.58 lakhs in March 2014 at the then prevailing rates. It would be redeemable on or after March 25, 2019 at the promised discount on presentation of the Satyug Gold Card to the SGPL, his spokesperson told IANS.

Explaining the stakes, the spokesperson said that at current rates, the original investment would have fetched around Rs 44 lakhs or more than double as today the gold

prices crossed the Rs 4.40 million per kg mark. However, when

vealed more office addresses at Andheri east, Malad West and Andheri

to the company revealed more shocking details: that Shetty and Kundra



Kundra have been named in another alleged scam -- this time, concerning the Satyug Gold Pvt. Ltd, a gold trading company of which they are ex-directors.

A Non-Resident Indian businessman, currently in Mumbai, Sachin J. Joshi has claimed in a police complaint that he was reportedly lured and then cheated by SGPL's 'Satyug Gold Scheme', launched around 2014. Joshi has lodged a criminal complaint of cheating, fraud and other charges against Shilpa Shetty, Raj Kundra and officials of SGPL such as Ganpati Chaudhary, Mohammed Saifi and others with the

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Joshi attempted to redeem his one-kilo golden asset on the due date in March last year, he discovered that the SGPL office in Bandra Kurla Complex, suburban Mumbai, was shut with no employees or representatives available at its address. Upon enquiring he learnt that the office had been closed down a long ago, the SGPL website showed a new office address, at Shalimar Morya Park in Andheri west. When Joshi's team visited the new office, they were informed that the address did not belong to SGPL. Further online searches and scanning the company's annual returns re-

West, but again he encountered the same reply that these addresses did not belong to SGPL. Ditto was the experience with the company's helpdesk and customer care numbers (18002679090) which elicited no response, Joshi said. In November 2019, Joshi's representative happened to meet one of the company officials at the Malad West address who claimed that it was not possible to redeem the claim as the company was processing multiple claims, and suggested he should return in December 2019. A search on the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) website pertaining

had resigned as the company directors in May 2016 and November 2017 respectively. "It became clear from all these facts that SGPL was a fraudulent entity being used to run the fake 'Satyug Gold Scheme' using the name of celebs like Shilpa Shetty. I have suffered a loss of Rs 18.58 lakh on my gold investment," Joshi said. Sources in the gold industry hinted that many more such investors may have been lured by SGPL and only a detailed police investigation would reveal the extent of the alleged scam. SGPL was formerly known as Aavyaan Gems & Jewellery Pvt Ltd with its offices in Bandra Kurla Complex.

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India's abortion rights: Why we need to do more

At 25, and into the fourth year of an abusive marriage, N*, discovered that she was eight weeks into an unwanted pregnancy.

She approached a doctor at a public hospital for an abortion, and also disclosed that she had endured sustained spousal abuse.

The doctor insisted on getting her husband's permission for the abortion. She somehow managed to get her husband to sign an informal application for the procedure, but was then asked to get a no-objection certificate from the police as well. The law does not require spousal consent or police permission for an abortion but N's experience is not uncommon in many parts of India.

N is among the 72 women and two children interviewed for a 2019 research paper by the Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT), a Mumbai-based research institute. All of them were rape survivors who had sought an abortion and, of them, 57 (77%) could not get procure one. Last week, Politico reported that the United States Supreme Court, in an initial draft opinion, has voted to overturn the 1973 Roe vs Wade judgement that legalised abortion in the country. Not only did the news set off protests across the US but also renewed the debate about abortion rights in countries across the world.

An analysis of the country's legal framework and social attitudes show that terminating an unwanted pregnancy is still a fraught experience for a woman.

India's abortion rights are generally perceived as being liberal but an analysis of the country's legal framework and social attitudes show that terminating an unwanted pregnancy is still a fraught experience for a woman. The law also leaves the final decision on an abortion to medical practitioners, who themselves are not impervious to the notions of morality, shame and guilt surrounding the procedure, concluded a 2021 study conducted by the National Law School of India University.

In India, the medical termination of a pregnancy is still not provided on request. Under section 312 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), abortion is a criminal offence but with one exception—the MTP Act. Enacted 50 years ago, it allows an abortion up to 24 weeks of a pregnancy but only under specific conditions. The act was amended last year, allowing a registered medical practitioner to medically terminate a pregnancy if she/he believes in "good faith" that its continuation could risk the pregnant woman's life or result in "grave physical or mental injury". The pregnancy can also be terminated if there is a substantial risk of the child being born with physical or mental "abnormality".

In 2017, the Supreme Court said that a woman's right to make reproductive choices is a constitutional right because it relates to her "right to privacy, dignity and bodily integrity". Despite this, the amendment to the MTP act failed to incorporate a rights-based approach to abortion so that it still remains an exception.

The law and the overlapping mandates of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, social and cultural factors and the limitations of the healthcare system mean that abortion is still not easy to access, as we detail later.

Shame, guilt and stigma

Abortion is still stigmatised in India, several studies have established.

"There is a very strong stigma attached to abortion, which emerges from socio-cultural notions and the glorification of motherhood," Suchitra Dalvie, a gynaecologist and coordinator of Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) told Behanbox. "As a result, it is seen as something that 'good women' won't do."

This stigma ensures silence and ignorance around the issue.

In 2018, a survey conducted in Assam and Madhya Pradesh showed that nearly 62% of the 500 young women respondents believed that abortion is a "sin". A third believed that it is not acceptable to talk about abortion and said they would stop associating with friends who sought one.

This stigma affects the thinking of medical practitioners as well, said Dalvie. "Just because there is an abortion law in the country does not mean all gynaecologists are pro-choice," she said. "Medical education is very much about biomedical training and does not incorporate gender rights or the socio-cultural context [of medical practice]."

Medical jurisprudence textbooks are grounded in patriarchal assumptions about women's sexual and reproductive behaviour and these reinforce the stigma around abortion, said the NLSIU report. It cites this passage from a 2014 medical textbook: "In India, criminal abortion is resorted to mostly by widows who are prevented from remarriage by social customs, by unmarried girls who have [sic] pregnant from illicit intercourse, or when family honour is at stake." The stigma among medical practitioners becomes apparent in the interviews conducted by the authors of the report. A leading gynaecologist in Chennai told the authors that according to her, abortions are "ethically not advisable". A doctor in Pune maintained that a woman cannot demand an abortion because the foetus is not the "property of the woman". The report says that some doctors also tell women that "God is watching and that they will suffer for the rest of their lives if they get an abortion".

Doctor examining a pregnant woman's ultrasound as a nurse looks on_Gates Archive-abortion

"Just because there is an abortion law in the country does not mean all gynaecologists are pro-choice." | Picture courtesy: ©Gates Archive/Mansi Midha

'Illegal' pregnancy

This stigma manifests in different ways for women in different situations. Married women dealing with an unwanted first pregnancy are often told that the abortion will lead to secondary infertility and are "counselled" to continue the pregnancy. Not wanting children at a particular time or seeking to space pregnancies—neither are considered legitimate reasons for demanding termination, the study found.

The situation is even more precarious for unmarried women because many practitioners consider sex outside marriage "illegal". "Unmarried pregnancy is illegal pregnancy and in such cases we have to give police information," the medical officer-in-charge of a community health centre in Ranchi told the authors of the NLSIU study, "How will you manage the illegal at a legal place?" the official asked.

Unmarried women are also shamed, scolded and verbally abused for their sexual behaviour, said the study.

Women with disabilities are routinely branded as incapable mothers. This, in addition to other communication and societal barriers, puts them at risk of forced abortions, we reported in November 2021.

All this means that most decisions on abortion are guided by the personal biases of medical practitioners and the stigma surrounding it.

Criminal liability

The legal framework also instills the fear of legal repercussions among medical practitioners, further impacting abortion access. In addition to the IPC that criminalises abortion and the exception under the MTP Act, two other acts govern the access to abortion in India, as we said earlier. These are the POCSO Act and the Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PCPNDT), which criminalises sex determination.

"For medical practitioners, denying abortion

Shreya Raman

has no consequence, but if they provide abortion and it does not fall under the parameters of the act, then there is a criminal liability," said Aparna Chandra, associate professor at NLSIU and the first author of the study on barriers to abortion.

Moreover, the POCSO and PCPNDT acts create gray areas of criminal liability for medical providers. Under section 19 of the POCSO act, doctors, who have knowledge of sexual activity between minors, with consent or otherwise, are required to mandatorily report the case to the police. Not doing so is punishable and can lead to imprisonment up to 6 months. Medical practitioners therefore end up turning away adolescents who seek abortion or any other kind of sexual and reproductive health service, said Chandra. "They say that if we provide you the service, we will have to report you to the police," she said.

Though the PCPNDT act is aimed at tackling sex determination, it is tracked through abortion. For example, if a sex determination test shows up a male foetus and the parents decide to go ahead with the pregnancy, it counts as an offense under the act. But the crime will not be detected because the act only tracks violations through abortion. The law requires medical practitioners to report abortions only in the case of a rape allegation or if the woman is a minor.

These issues make medical providers nervous about undertaking abortions and it explains why they seek unnecessary consents and documents, as was the case with N.

In a government hospital in Mumbai, Emergency Police Reports (EPRs) are filed in "suspicious" abortion cases, which include unmarried women seeking abortion or cases where women may later file an assault case, found the NLSIU study. The law itself requires medical practitioners to report abortions only in the case of a rape allegation or if the woman is a minor.

In Tamil Nadu, the study found that doctors routinely ask for permission from child welfare committees or the court for terminating the pregnancy of underage girls though the law does not ask for this.

"All this has a chilling effect on the doctors and because of this, they make women run through hoops," said Chandra. "A single woman going to a doctor and asking for an abortion is very rarely going to be allowed to get one. The doctor will say that someone has to vouch for her. It can be a parent or a partner or if there is no one else, then the state. This is where police reporting comes in."

Unwittingly, campaigns against female foeticide also end up affecting abortion rights, the NLSIU study found. While discussing the declining sex-ratio in Tamil Nadu with the researchers, a government official shared two presentations—one titled 'Missing Angels' showed emotive images of little girls, and another, was an imaginary poem, 'I love you, Mommy', "written" by a terminated female foetus. This kind of imagery portrays a foetus as an independent rights-bearing entity, said the study, even though under the IPC, life begins only "once any part of the child's body is brought forth".

Limitations of healthcare

These legal and social barriers to abortion also exist within an inadequate healthcare system that is understaffed and ill-equipped. The MTP act only allows abortion in hospitals or in settings approved by the government. The act also only allows gynaecologists with three years of experience, and MBBS doctors with specific training, to conduct the termination.

"There are around 30,000-40,000 OBGYNs in India and though we have about 700,000 MBBS doctors, only about 100,000 are trained to provide abortion services," said Vinod Manning, the chief executive officer of Ipas Development Foundation, the non-profit that conducted the survey in Assam and Madhya Pradesh, "So we are looking at a cadre of around 140,000 ser-

vice providers who can terminate pregnancy as per the act."

In rural areas, there is a nearly 70% shortage of obstetricians and gynaecologists at community health centres.

The stigma, legal issues and the shortage of medical providers mean that most abortions conducted in India are illegal. As per a 2018 Lancet study, nearly 78% of the 15.6 million abortions in 2015 were conducted outside of health facilities, making them illegal as per the MTP act. However, most (73%) of these abortions are done by injecting abortion pills that can be acquired without a prescription. While this method is not completely safe—medical supervision is advised—experts say it is relatively safe. For early pregnancies upto 12 weeks, there is no reason why somebody other than a doctor cannot supervise pill-based abortions, said Dalvie. "Nurses are also trained on how to check for pregnancy, so they do have that kind of an experience. There is no reason why a reasonable amount of supported self-management should not be possible." The World Health Organization also recommends self-administration of medical abortion pills till 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Despite the safety of these pills, drug controllers across the country are trying to clamp down on their supply because of concerns that they will be used to abort unwanted female foetuses, violating the PCPNDT act, said Chandra of NLSIU.

"Our laws are completely behind global standards. We require everything to be under the supervision of doctors and we require it to be at facilities. Even if the doctor is prescribing the pills for consumption at home, there are all sorts of facilities that the doctor is required to maintain, all sorts of qualifications that the doctor is required to have," she said.

The shortage of qualified doctors impacts another aspect of access to abortions. Women who are denied abortions often approach High Courts and the Supreme Court. The courts then constitute a medical board consisting of doctors with multiple specialties for advice.

In a country short of specialised doctors, this often entails multiple trips to distant tertiary centres. A lawyer told the authors of the NLSIU study about a client who had to withdraw her plea for a late abortion because the board demanded several visits though the family lived far from the hospital.

"Every day, [the Board] would only do one examination and they kept asking them to come back," said the lawyer, "[They] were so fed up, they had called me about it, and at the time I [told them] 'Listen you have to, I do not know what else to do'—and then eventually they stopped going to the board and they stopped answering my calls. So, the case had to be withdrawn because I had no instructions."

Doctors also tend to be judgemental about women seeking an abortion: a senior gynaecologist told the authors of the study this: "We leave our big OPD [out-patient department] aside and concentrate on one woman who had forgotten that she had a child [sic] inside her for 4-5 months. We internally decided [that] she can wait for 3 more days for the board to respond."

For safe abortion to become a reality for women, three aspects need to be addressed said Manning. "One is to get providers at the periphery trained, the second is to improve awareness about the legality of abortion and create pathways for women to come and get abortion services and third is to find ways to normalise abortion so that the stigma is not there," he said.

Shreya Raman is an independent journalist based in Mumbai covering gender, health, and public policy. In 2019, she was a finalist for the Impact Journalism Grant for a report on women farmers in India. Her reports have been published in Scroll?, The Wire?, The Quint?, Business Standard?, and Bloomberg Quint?. She has a postgraduate diploma in journalism from the Asian College of Journalism, Chennai.

Impossible to 'fence off' country like ours: Russian President Putin

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that Moscow has the opportunity to build partnerships not only with India and China but also with Latin America and Africa, asserting that it is impossible to "fence off" a country like Russia from the outside. Putin, during a meeting with young entrepreneurs here on Thursday, said that the world is big and diverse. Russia has the opportunity to build partnerships not only with China and India, but also with Latin America, as well as Africa, which "is still sleeping, but is about waking up", Putin said. Bilateral ties with Russia are a key pillar of India's foreign policy. India sees Russia as a longstanding and time-tested friend that has played a significant role in its economic development and security. Apparently referring to the economic sanctions imposed by the West on Moscow following its military operation in Ukraine, Putin said "it is impossible to fence off a country like Russia from the outside."

Amidst the European Union's calls to look for alternatives to Russia's energy supply, Putin said that the abandonment of Russian energy resources is unlikely in the coming years. Rejection of Russian energy resources in recent years appears to be unlikely, he said. "As regards abandonment of our energy resources, the probability is low in several years to come and nobody knows what will occur during several years. Nobody will set concrete plugs in wells, there is no such need," Putin said. The Russian President visited a multimedia exhibition at the All-Russian Exhibition Center, dedicated to the 350th anniversary of the birth of Peter I, the first Russian Emperor. He praised Peter the Great's role in building the Russian state. Drawing an analogy to the time of Peter the Great, Putin said that Peter I did not seize any Swedish territories during the Great Northern War but "got them back." When Peter the Great had founded Russia's

new capital, none of the European countries recognised Russia's right to that region, he said. "Everyone viewed it as part of Sweden but Slavic people lived there from time immemorial along with the Finno-Ugric peoples, and the region was controlled by the Russian state. The same went for the western direction," Putin said. Putin said that Peter I was "a prominent statesman and military leader," a patriot who had fully committed himself to serving his country. According to him, Peter I's ambitious reforms

in state management, the economy, science, culture and education "helped strengthen Russia's authority on the international stage and largely determined the country's development as a strong and sovereign power for centuries to come." Putin on February 24 announced a 'special military operation' in Ukraine, leading to a series of sanctions by the West along with condemnation by the UN, the EU and others. Many multinational companies suspended their business in Russia as a fallout of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Shah says had Veer Savarkar not written his account of 1857 mutiny, truth would have remained hidden

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said

these immortal spirits that Indian culture and religion has re-



that "had Veer Savarkar not written the account of the 1857 mutiny, the truth would have remained hidden from later generations" and that "despite being crushed (by the British), they (the mutineers) achieved victory". Speaking at the launch of historian Umendra Ratnu's provocatively titled book 'Maharana: Sahastra Varshon Ka Dharma Yudh' (Maharanas: A Thousand Year War for Dharma), Shah said, "Many historians

have written extensively on the Mughals but there has hardly been much work on the Ahoms, Pallavas, Chalukyas, Mauryas, Satavahanas or the Guptas although each of these dynasties ruled for hundreds of years." Identifying his reasons for attending the book launch programme, which was held at the NDMC Convention Centre, Shah said that he was moved by, the "selfless sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of valiant people over a period of 800-900 years." "It was because of

these immortal spirits that Indian culture and religion has remained alive, flourished and even been victorious," he added. Pointing out that he was a history student and that he was schooled in history since his early childhood, Shah said that Ahoms, the Marathas under Shivaji, the Guptas, Mauryas and the Rashtrakutas had "fought many valiant battles". While adding that Rajput King Sawai Man Singh had "settled with Akbar" it was for this reason that in some parts of Gujarat he is often referred to "Hawai Man Singh".

Claiming that "many historians have made big contributions to the Indian history" and that in the past jhoot (lies) have been propagated, Shah gave the examples of Bappa Rawal and Rawal Ratan Singh, who, 500 years ago did not allow any foreign invasion, before referring to the battle of Haldighati which is now obscured by the "sands of time". But this book, Shah said, "Would banish many wrong perceptions of India's glorious past and that that history which is wrong will become scarce on its own." He added, "It becomes problematic when governments write history." Asserting that the time has "now come to stand tall in all our glory" and that "jaagruti" (awakening) has happened after years, Shah said, "We all are watching that India's culture and glory have been widely accepted."

RS polls: BJP suspends Rajasthan MLA for voting in favour of Congress candidate



JAIPUR: The BJP on Friday suspended its Rajasthan MLA Shobharani Kushwah for cross-voting in favour of Congress candidate Pramod Tiwari in the Rajya Sabha elections.

Leader of Opposition Gulab Chand Kataria issued an order stating Kushwah voted for Tiwari despite a whip and that she was being suspended from the BJP's primary membership.

In the letter, Kataria also asked the MLA to clarify why she voted against the whip. BJP state president Satish Poonia said the party high command has been informed

about the matter. The Congress fielded three candidates for the four Rajya Sabha seats in Rajasthan, while the BJP fielded one, besides supporting an independent candidate.

Afghanistan wants its army trained by India; reopening of Indian embassy in Kabul

NEW DELHI: After India extended the olive branch by sending a delegation of officials to Kabul last week, Afghanistan's

bassy in Kabul. Sources in India, however, are dismissive of this comment of Mullah Yaqoob as India has not yet

action against terrorist groups that would use Afghanistan as a base to mount their attacks against India. The caveat is that

Taliban formally, there has been a continuous supply of humanitarian aid to the country in the form of wheat, medicines,



Defence Minister Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob has expressed his intent to send Afghan army personnel to get training in India. Mullah Yaqoob also said that strengthening diplomatic ties with India was the first step – for which a beginning has already been made by the Indian diplomatic visit. It is learnt that Mullah Yaqoob has also been asking India to reopen its Em-

recognised the Taliban regime as its not an elected government. "It's a long shot as of now to consider this, but things seems to be settling on the ground between India and Kabul. The recent trip by Indian officials is proof that India is willing to take the next step. Will have to wait and see how things shape," said an expert on India-Afghanistan relations. Taliban leadership has also assured of

specific information needs to be provided on them. Meanwhile, regarding the opening of the embassy in Kabul, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) had earlier said that even though India stopped operating its embassy in August 2021, it has local staff who maintain the embassy and also help in distribution of humanitarian assistance that comes from India. Even though India hasn't recognised

and clothes. Afghanistan always find a mention from India whenever there are talks amongst various groupings like Quad. The Dushanbe Security dialogue too was focused on Afghanistan. Afghanistan is strategic for India politically and diplomatically and has also had cultural and historic ties with India which both countries are now looking at reviving.

Highway Patrol Enforcement Urged



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about the matter. The Congress fielded three candidates for the four Rajya Sabha seats in Rajasthan, while the BJP fielded one, besides supporting an independent candidate.

Odisha AHPGIC gets full-time superintendent and dean 'Will not hesitate to start war' over Taiwan: Chinese defence minister warns US counterpart



CUTTACK: Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer (AHPGIC), the premier cancer hospital of the State, has finally got its full-time superintendent and dean. With approval of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC), Prof Dr Rekha Das has been appointed as the superintendent

while Prof Dr Padmalaya Devi is the new dean and principal. They took charge on Wednesday.

Earlier, the hospital had no full-time superintendent post. With the State government sanctioning the post recently, the DPC elevated the head of the Anesthesia department Prof

Dr Das as superintendent of the hospital. Similarly, head of Surgical Oncology Prof Dr Devi, who was in-charge dean and principal, and superintendent has assumed charge as the full-time dean and principal. Speaking to TNIE, Prof Das said she would focus on streamlining the treatment besides

making efforts for early setting up of a 19-bed full-fledged intensive care unit and converting the existing palliative care unit functioning under the Anesthesia department to a dedicated Palliative Care department. Dean and Principal Prof Dr Devi said she would focus on improving academic activities of AHPGIC.

Cuttack T20I: Chaos at ticket counters, touts play in open as police turn blind

BHUBANESWAR/CUTTACK: Chaotic scenes marked the ticket sale for the India-South Africa T20 match at Barabati stadium in Cuttack as

already packed with more than 15,000 people. Every counter had long queues and the hot and humid conditions made things

lery number- 7 ticket for `3,000 when its actual cost is `600. He also offered me gallery number 2 and 4 tickets for `3,500 each when their ac-

mitted to buy a maximum of two tickets both on online and offline mode. Going by the appearances of a significant chunk of women in the queue, they won't ever watch a cricket match by buying tickets. The touts engaged women daily wagers to get tickets for them so that they could black-market them. "The touts are not standing near the stadium anymore. They might be carrying out their illegal business at a distance. We are keeping a vigil and necessary action will be taken against any suspect who is found in possession of more tickets than permis-



police failed miserably in crowd management as well as preventing the touts, who deployed proxies in large numbers to get them tickets for black marketing. A stampede like situation prevailed at the ticket counters at the stadium with thousands of people jostling with each other to get ahead in the queue and get their tickets. There was a scuffle as people tried to push forward following which police resorted to mild lathicharge to bring the situation under control.

With Cuttack hosting an international cricket match after two and half years, the excitement among fans was huge. A total of nine ticket counters were opened including two for women. When the counters opened, the area was

tougher for the cricket lovers. Women stand in queue in front of a ticket counter on Thursday | Express

tual cost is `700," said a Cuttack resident, a chartered accountant by profession. A senior police of-



Taking advantage of the situation, touts could be seen strolling outside the barricades of the parking areas and offering tickets at exorbitant prices to people who did not want to join the queue. "A person offered me one gal-

ficer said there could also be a link between the stampede-like situation in the women ticket counters as the touts engaged women, "possibly on wages" to get tickets for them. One person was per-

sible," said a senior police officer. The Odisha Cricket Association (OCA) had made arrangements to sell 12,093 tickets to general public on Thursday and Friday. However, all the tickets were sold on the first day itself.

SINGAPORE: Beijing will "not hesitate to start a war" if Taiwan declares independence, China's defence minister warned his US counterpart Friday, the latest salvo between the superpowers over the island.

The warning came as Wei Fenghe held his first face-to-face meeting with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit in Singapore.

US-China tensions have been soaring over democratic, self-ruled Taiwan, which lives under constant threat of invasion by China. Beijing views the island as its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary.

Wei warned Austin that "if anyone dares to split Taiwan from China, the Chinese army will definitely not hesitate to start a war no matter the cost", defence ministry spokesman Wu Qian quoted the minister as saying during the meeting.

The Chinese minister vowed that Beijing would "smash to smithereens any 'Taiwan independence' plot and resolutely uphold the unification of the motherland", according to the Chinese defence ministry.

He "stressed that Taiwan is China's Taiwan... Using Taiwan to contain China will never prevail", the ministry said.

Austin "reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability across the (Taiwan) Strait, opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo, and called on (China) to refrain from further destabilising actions toward Taiwan", according to the US Department of Defense.

Tensions over Taiwan have escalated, in particular due to increasing Chinese aircraft in-

cursions into the island's air defence identification zone (ADIZ).

- Troubled waters -

US President Joe Biden, during a visit to Japan last month, appeared to break decades of US policy when, in response to a question, he said Washington would defend Taiwan militarily if it is attacked by China.

The White House has since insisted its policy of "strategic ambiguity" over whether or not it would intervene has not changed.

Austin is the latest senior US official to visit Asia as Washington seeks to shift its foreign policy focus back to the region from the Ukraine war. China's expansive claims in the South China Sea have also stoked tensions with Washington.

Beijing claims almost all of the resource-rich sea, through which trillions of dollars in shipping trade passes annually, with competing claims from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Austin arrived in Singapore late Thursday, and held a series of meetings with his counterparts on Friday.

At a meeting with Southeast Asian defence ministers, he spoke about Washington's "strategy in maintaining an open, inclusive and rules-based regional security environment", according to a statement from the Singapore government. His comments were a veiled reference to countering China's increasing assertiveness in the region. Austin will deliver a speech at the forum on Saturday, followed by Wei on Sunday. The summit runs from June 10 to 12 and is taking place for the first time since 2019 after twice being postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



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Auto, home and personal loans become expensive with banks raising interest rates

NEW DELHI: Auto, home and personal loans have become costlier with banks

It followed an off-cycle rate hike of 40 basis points in May to rein in the soaring

Home Loans (ARHL) are benchmarked, by 50 basis points, with ef-

fect. It also raised marginal cost of funds based lending rate



and other financial institutions increasing interest rates following the repo rate hike by RBI on Wednesday.

A number of banks including ICICI Bank, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank (PNB), Bank of India, Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank and the country's leading mortgage lender HDFC Ltd have raised lending rates for their customers. Repo is the rate at which RBI lends to banks for their short-term borrowing needs. In its June 8 second bi-monthly monetary policy meeting review for FY23, RBI raised the benchmark repo rate by 50 basis points to 4.90 per cent with immediate effect.

inflation in the country, mainly triggered by supply side woes due to Russia-Ukraine war. Private sector lender ICICI Bank raised the repo linked External Benchmark Lending Rate (EBLR) with effect from June 8, 2022 to 8.60 per cent from 8.10 per cent earlier.

Public sector lender Punjab National Bank has raised repo linked lending rate (RLLR) to 7.40 per cent from 6.90 per cent earlier. Bank of Baroda, the third largest bank in the public sector, raised the RLLR to 7.40 per cent.

HDFC Ltd has raised its Retail Prime Lending Rate (RPLR) for housing loans, on which its Adjustable Rate

fact from June 10, 2022. This translates into an increase of Rs 31 per Rs 1 lakh for a 20-year loan.

India's largest lender State Bank of India had revised its EBLR to 7.05 per cent plus Credit Risk Premium (CRP), days before the RBI's monetary policy announcement. Indian Bank has raised RLLR to 7.70 per cent, and Bank of India to 7.75 per cent.

Chennai-based public sector lender Indian Overseas Bank has raised RLLR to 7.75 per cent with effect from June 10. Pune-based Bank of Maharashtra in a regulatory filing on Friday said it has raised RLLR to 7.70 per cent per annum from 7.20 per cent with immediate ef-

(MCLR) by 30 basis points each for various tenors, with the benchmark one-year rate to 7.70 per cent from 7.40 per cent earlier.

Canara Bank had raised the one-year MCLR to 7.40 per cent from 7.35 per cent with effect from June 7, 2022. Most of the consumer loans are linked to one-year MCLR rate. The MCLR system came into effect from April 1, 2016.

From October 1, 2019, all banks have to lend only at an interest rate linked to an external benchmark such as RBI's repo rate or Treasury Bill yield. As a result, monetary policy transmission by banks has gained traction.

Fitch cuts economic growth forecast to 7.8 per cent; revises India rating outlook to 'Stable' from 'Negative'

NEW DELHI: Fitch Ratings on Friday upped the outlook on India's sovereign rating to 'stable' from 'negative' after two years, citing diminishing downside risks to medium-term growth on rapid economic recovery. Fitch Rat-

price shock.

ALSO READ | RBI monetary policy: Repo rate hiked by 50 basis points to 4.90 per cent "India's economy continues to see a solid recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic shock,"



ings kept the rating unchanged at 'BBB-'. "The Outlook revision reflects our view that downside risks to medium-term growth have diminished due to India's rapid economic recovery and easing financial sector weaknesses, despite near-term headwinds from the global commodity price shock," it said.

The agency, however, cut the economic growth forecast to 7.8 per cent for the current fiscal (April 2022 to March 2023) from the 8.5 per cent prediction it made in March due to the inflationary impact of the global commodity

Fitch said. Indian economy grew 8.7 per cent in the last fiscal, and the country's central bank RBI expects growth to be 7.2 per cent this fiscal.

Stressing that India's medium-term growth prospects remain solid, Fitch said India's strong growth outlook relative to peers is a key supporting factor for the rating, and will sustain a gradual improvement in credit metrics.

"We forecast growth of around 7 per cent between FY24 and FY27, underpinned by the

Mumbai hard city to live in, take efforts to cut cost of living: Billion dollar startup founders

MUMBAI: The country's financial capital is a "hard" city to live in because of infrastructure woes coupled with high cost of living, founders of multi-billion dollar startups said on Friday.

The city is losing out to others because of its lack of ability to build communities, which deters talent consisting of tech-

nologists who want to have a better place for their kids to grow in which is also cheaper, said Ashish Hemrajani, the founder and chief executive of BookMyShow.

Making it clear that there are a lot of advantages which the megapolis, home to 20 unicorns or startups valued at over USD 1 billion each, possesses, Hemrajani said we need to address the challenges confronting the city to ensure that it stays relevant.

The 48-year-old entrepreneur, who was born and brought up in Mumbai, said that it is home to only the traditional financiers, and losing out on new-age financial services players. "While the city has phenomenal advantages, it's given me everything, we still have to pull up our socks and do a lot more to attract more talent and make it more liveable for the newer businesses," he said, speaking at the annual summit organised by TiEcon here.

Echoing similar concerns, Anupam Mittal of Shaadi.com said the cost of living is a "real challenge" for the city and also made a suggestion to tackle the same.

Pointing out to the space that exists on the eastern side of the city, Mittal said the government has to take lead in developing a 'startup city' which will have companies acting as catalysts courtesy the thousands of people they employ.

He said that the government can control the rents and prices for the first few years in the space, adding that global cities like Seattle have made it big as they are home to companies like Microsoft. Mittal added that Bengaluru, the undisputed startup hub of the country, is also experiencing similar troubles with rents doubling in the last few years.

He said that a flourishing startup ecosystem requires a city to be truly cosmopolitan, and Mumbai scores on this point as it is home to

government's infrastructure push, reform agenda and easing pressures in the financial sector.

Nevertheless, there are challenges to this forecast, given the uneven nature of the economic recovery and implementation risks for infrastructure spending and reforms," Fitch said. The agency in June 2020 revised the outlook for India to 'negative' from 'stable' on grounds that the coronavirus pandemic had significantly weakened the country's growth outlook and exposed the challenges associated with a high public debt burden.

India enjoyed a 'BBB-' rating since the upgrade in August 2006 but the outlook has oscillated between stable and negative.

Fitch forecast that the fuel excise-duty cuts and increased subsidies (about 0.8 per cent of GDP) announced in May to offset higher commodity prices for consumers will push the central government deficit to 6.8 per cent of GDP compared to the budget's 6.4 per cent target, despite robust revenue growth.

The agency said achieving the 4.5 per cent fiscal deficit target by 2025-26 could prove challenging, as revenue/GDP has already returned to pre-pandemic levels.

"High-interest payments/revenue of 26 per cent of GDP in FY22 constrains fiscal flexibility, particularly in the context of rising sovereign bond yields," it added.

Fitch forecast the debt-to-GDP ratio to drop to 83 per cent in the current fiscal from a peak of 87.6 per cent in 2020-21, but it remains high compared to the 56 per cent peer median.

the creative industry, finance and healthcare professionals.

Rizwan Koita of Citiustech also alluded to the infrastructure issues that exist in the financial capital and added that the space is getting very competitive with other cities like Noida and Gurugram also vying to be the preferred choice for



startups.

However, all the founders made it clear that they are not moving out anywhere. Harsh Jain of fantasy sports company Dream11 said his investors have asked for the company to be relocated to Bengaluru. "We are not going anywhere," he said, adding that the spirit of the city is the closest to representing entrepreneurship where a person has to endure challenges before one makes it.

Siddharth Shah of Pharmeasy said the city has given him everything, including friends from his neighbourhood who turned co-founders for the venture, and there is no question of them leaving even the suburb of Ghatkopar.

Ukraine crisis will result in global food, fuel, fertiliser crisis: Jaishankar

Continued from page-1

said, while addressing the partner educational institutes of NIAS, research scholars and diplomats. He said India has faced some uncomfortable times at the United Nations regarding its stand on the ongoing conflict. "But we believe that cessation of fighting is the only way forward," he added.

He said he chose to speak about national security and not foreign policy because very often "we take the former for granted. Guarding of borders by soldiers or commandos alone is not national security. It is the very foundation of any development and progress of society". He said it is important to connect the dots -- the several initiatives taken by the Modi government like girls' education, skill development, Digital India, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Swacch Bharat, Ujjwala Yojana etc, to get a comprehensive picture of India's national security.

POSTER CHILD OF INDIA

Jaishankar said he chose to speak on the issue of national security in Bengaluru because Karnataka is "one of the most progressive states in the country and is the poster child of India's modernity to the world".

Prophet remarks row: Muslims protest across Maharashtra to demand action against Nupur Sharma, Naveen Jindal

Continued from page-1

said a local police official.

A protest was also held at Shivaji Chowk in Vashi, where a delegation submitted their demands to the Vashi Police Station, he said.

Similar protest gatherings or marches were also held in Thane, Aurangabad, Solapur, Nandurbar, Parbhani, Beed, Latur, Bhandara, Chandrapur and Pune districts.

Everywhere, protestors shouted slogans and demanded registration of FIRs and arrest of Sharma and Jindal, police said.

Heavy police security was deployed at all protest venues but there was no untoward incident anywhere, officials said.

State home minister Dilip Walse-Patil said the protests passed off peacefully as police handled the situation well.

Nobody should offend other people's faith, he said.

The BJP suspended Nupur Sharma following her remarks about Prophet during a TV debate, while Jindal was expelled from the party when he tweeted similar remarks.

The Union government has already distanced itself from the controversial statements from the members of the ruling party even as they provoked strong reactions from many Muslim countries.

Zinedine Zidane close to joining PSG as coach: reports

PARIS: French champions Paris Saint-Germain are near to reaching an agreement with Zinedine Zidane to replace Mauricio Pochettino as coach, French media reported on Friday. According to Europe 1, an agreement in principle is in place between the club and 49-year-old Zidane for the former Real Madrid boss to join ahead of the new season. RMC Sport claims sources at the Parc des Princes have refused to deny the reports. Later, a PSG source told AFP that such an agreement would have to be considered with caution. Pochettino has a year left on his contract Emir Qatar for last month's Champions League final at the Stade de France, cial arrival of Zidane at PSG to start discussions about joining the side.



agreement for Zinedine Zidane to replace Mauricio Pochettino as coach, French media reported on Friday. According to Europe 1 an agreement in principle is in place between the club and 49-year-old Zidane for the former Real Madrid boss to join ahead of the new season. RMC Sport claims sources at the Parc des Princes have refused to deny the reports. Later, a PSG source told AFP that such an agreement would

and led the Qatari-backed side to the Ligue 1 title last term but they were knocked out of the Champions League knock-out stages. The outfit's hierarchy have publically stated their desire to win the competition with Zidane having guided the Spanish giants to the title three seasons in a row. At Madrid, the 1998 World Cup winner with France also lifted La Liga as well as the Copa del Rey twice. Zidane was in Paris at the same time as the

which was won by Real. Earlier, PSG announced the arrival of Luis Campos as their football advisor to replace the departed Leonardo. The Portuguese 57-year-old, helped Monaco to the French crown in 2017 as well as Lille four years later and worked alongside Kylian Mbappe on the Mediterranean coast. One of Campos' tasks will be player signings with RMC Sport reporting free agent Paul Pogba is waiting for the offi-

"I am delighted to be joining Paris Saint-Germain, which I consider is the most ambitious and exciting club in world football," Campos said in a PSG statement. "I believe strongly in and share the vision of the club and I cannot wait to get started to further unleash the great potential of this exceptional club." The new French top-flight season begins on August 6 with the French Trophée des Champions five days earlier as PSG face Nantes in Israel.

Sri Lanka fined 40 per cent of match fee for slow-over rate in second T20 against Australia



DUBAI: Sri Lanka have been fined 40 per cent of their match fee for maintaining slow over rate against Australia in the second T20 in Colombo. Ranjan Madugalle of the ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposed the sanction after

Shanaka's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration. "In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate of

fences, players are fined 20 per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time," read an ICC statement. "Shanaka pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing," it

added. On-field umpires Kumar Dharmasena and Prageeth Rambukwella, third umpire Lyndon Hannibal and fourth umpire Ruchira Palliyaguruge levelled the charge. Australia lead the three-match series 2-0.

Wimbledon announces prize money of 2 million pounds each for men's and women's champions

LONDON: Wimbledon on Thursday announced that this year's total prize money will be a

This year's Wimbledon will also see full capacity crowd attending the tournament for the

us as we celebrate 100 years of Centre Court on Church Road," said Ian Hewitt, Chairman of

(men's) and WTA (women's) tours, following Wimbledon's controversial decision to exclude Rus-



record 40.3 million pounds with men's and women's singles champion each will receive 2 million pounds, organisers said on Thursday. The organisers made the announcement as The All England Lawn Tennis Club is all set for this year's Grand Slam event. The 2020 edition of the tournament was cancelled, while 2021 was held with a fewer number of spectators.

first time in three years since 2019. "From the first round of the Qualifying Competition to the Champions being crowned, this year's prize money distribution aims to reflect just how important the players are to The Championships as we look to continue to deliver one of the world's leading sporting events, and with a particularly special tournament ahead of

the All England Club in an official statement released by Wimbledon. There has been a 40% boost in prize money awarded to Wheelchair and Quad Wheelchair events, at the same time as the number of players competing in the tournament has doubled. There had been the assumption that the lessening of ranking points by the ATP

sian and Belarusian players due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, could lead to a reduced prize account. This year's Wimbledon starts on June 27, with Novak Djokovic set to defend his men's singles crown but there will be no defending champion from the women's singles side as last year's champion Ashleigh Barty retired in March.




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