

PM Modi to launch BJP's nationwide membership drive in Varanasi today

Agency
Varanasi July 6.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate a nationwide membership drive of the Bharatiya Janata Party from Varanasi on Saturday. He will also launch a membership drive helpline from Kashi. Kashi region BJP spokesperson Navratan Rathi said that soon after landing here, Modi will unveil a statue of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport. He will then hand out plants to school children as tree guardians in a school at Harahua and launch a plantation drive by planting saplings in Anand Kanan Vaika. Ahead of his visit, Modi also tweeted about the membership drive. Under the plantation drive, UP government led by Yogi Adityanath has set a target to plant 22 crore saplings across the state and Varanasi district administration has decided to plant more than 27 lakh saplings in the district. Modi will launch the BJP's



nationwide membership drive from the Deendayal Upadhyay Trade Facilitation Centre and Museum. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the nationwide membership drive and will also launch a helpline number here today," Rathi said. "The nationwide membership drive of the BJP will continue till August 11." He will welcome of 11 people from different sections of society to the party to mark the beginning of the membership drive and will

address around 5,000 BJP members. Thereafter, PM Modi will visit virtual experiential museum at Man Mandir Mahal adjacent to Dashashwamedh Ghat here. The virtual museum based on first floor of Maan Mandir Mahal famous for its observatory. The virtual museum gives glimpses of rich heritage of Kashi. Superintending Archeologist Dr Neeraj Sinha confirmed the development. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a visit

to visit the virtual museum. We have completed all preparations regarding the visit and welcome PM Modi." Modi inaugurated the museum in February this year. The state of the art Virtual Experiential Museum (VEM) gives a 3D view of the world famous Kashi ghats, lanes and heritage to its visitors. PM Modi last visited Varanasi on May 27 on a thanksgiving visit after the BJP's victory in the Lok Sabha elections.

Rahul Gandhi to appear before Patna court today

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Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi will appear before a court in Patna on Saturday in connection with a defamation suit filed against him by Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi. The senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader had filed the case before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's (CJM) court here in April, taking exception to a snide remark made by Gandhi at an election rally in Karnataka's Kolar district that all thieves had the surname Modi — referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, bank-fraud accused Nirav



Modi and former Indian Premier League (IPL) commissioner Lalit Modi. The case was referred by CJM Shashikant Roy to ACJM Kumar Gunjan. Gandhi, who resigned as the Congress chief earlier this week taking moral

responsibility for his party's Lok Sabha election debacle, had last visited the Bihar capital in May, when he held a roadshow for actor-turned-politician Shatrughan Sinha, who failed to retain the Patna Sahib seat on a Congress ticket in the parliamentary polls held

in April-May. There were reports in a section of the media that Gandhi might also visit Muzaffarpur, about 60 km from here, which has been the most affected by a state-wide outbreak of brain fever, which has claimed more than 150 lives. However, Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC) working president Kaukab Qadri told PTI that the full itinerary of the former party chief's visit was not made available here yet, "though we see little possibility of Gandhi visiting Muzaffarpur since had it been on the cards, advice would have been given to the state unit for making the necessary arrangements".

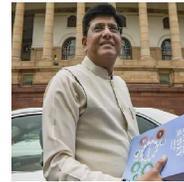
'2022 was never a deadline for bullet train project': Piyush Goyal

Agency
New Delhi July 6.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented her first Budget of the Modi 2.0 government, one that comes after an overwhelming mandate. As the government promises to modernise its railways and other modes of transport, rail minister Piyush Goyal spoke to Faizan Haider about the plans. Excerpts from the interview. The Railways has been allocated Rs 1,60,76 crore, which is 20% higher than the previous year. Do you think the money is sufficient and how do you plan to spend it? We have got exactly what we asked for. Railway has improved its performance over the years quite significantly and we have been meeting our capital expenditure target to a large extent, particularly last year. I am grateful to the honourable finance minister for providing adequate funds that we require for our expansion and modernisation plans. The finance minister talked of Public Private Partnership (PPP) for faster growth. Have you identified areas where you will push for PPP? We have an open mind,

wherever it's viable, and there will be investor interest, we will offer it to people. But at the end of the day, Indian Railway remains the government railway. Recently, there was a controversy over a coach factory in Rai Bareilly, where the Opposition said the Railway is planning to privatise it. There was no controversy, it's just a lack of understanding of some people. Either they don't have a good understanding or they pretend not to understand. Do we see trains being run by private players in future? We will cross the bridge when we come to it. Nothing has been finalised and we are open to ideas. What is going to be your focus in the second term? Last time you had focused on reducing the number of accidents and managed to bring it down to lowest ever in the history. For me, we have a holistic vision to make this the world's best railway. It includes better passenger amenities. It includes better infrastructure, more safety, more capacity to serve our passengers and obviously it also includes freight as an

important element. So it's not restricted to one or the other element only. What is the update on ambitious bullet train project? Do you think it will be completed before the 2022 deadline? 2022 was never a deadline; we will try to do a small portion by that time. The deadline as per the Japanese is December 2023. We have requested them if some portion of it can be fast-tracked. Do you think the hike in fuel charge will have an impact on Indian Railway? I don't see any significant impact; we are moving so fast on electrification that I not worried too much about it. The finance minister about talked an investment of Rs 50 lakh crore between 2018 and 2030. Which are the key areas in which you think these money will go? We have drawn up a whole programme and it has been presented to me and we have gone through different iterations, in which some of the old projects like 100% electrification, advanced signalling, better passenger amenities, station development, those are already in public domain. Now, we have worked out



what needs to be done to create additional capacities. So that our modal share of freight can once again start going up, the cost of logistics in the country can start coming down and our passengers, along with good amenities, can get more and more avenues to travel by train to reach their preferred destination. All of which will involve a lot of doubling, tripling, quadrupling, new dedicated freight corridor, some semi high-speed corridors coming up, so it's a very large gamut of investments across different areas, different sectors, for regional connectivity, connectivity to aspirational districts. It's a large, holistic vision that we have worked out, both through government expenditure, through viability gap funding and through public private partnership.

Sport News

Rohit Sharma can break 3 World Records with one big innings

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has a chance to create history by breaking three towering World Cup records when India take on Sri Lanka in their last group stage match of ICC World Cup 2019 on Saturday at Headingley, Leeds, India, having already secured their spot in the World Cup semi-finals with their victory against Bangladesh a few days ago, will eye the top spot by beating Sri Lanka and their vice-captain will have a chance to rewrite the record books of the game. Rohit Sharma's innings of 104 against Bangladesh in India's previous match helped Virat Kohli and Co clinch their 3rd successive World Cup semi-final berth. His tournament tally now reads 544 runs at an average of 90.66 and a strike rate of 96.96. He is currently the highest-run scorer of the

tournament. There are a number of records Rohit Sharma could potentially equal or surpass with another substantial innings against Sri Lanka. The most centuries in a single World Cup edition: Coupled with his century against Bangladesh during the 2015 Quarter Final, Rohit has 5 World Cup centuries. A look at the players with the most World Cup centuries: Most runs in a single edition of World Cup The record for scoring most runs in a single World Cup belongs to India's Sachin Tendulkar. He had amassed 673 runs in the 2003 World Cup. While Rohit is still some distance away from that mark but with India confirmed of playing two more matches in this World Cup — against Sri Lanka and one semi-final — Rohit can very well throw a tough challenge to that

Tendulkar record. On a side note, Rohit's average of 90.66 is the second-best by any batsman who has scored 500+ runs in a single World Cup (after Sangakkara's 108.20 in 2015). Amore likely Tendulkar record that Rohit could breach is the most runs scored in the group stages of a single World Cup (although there are a few competitors in 2019!) How does Rohit fare against Sri Lanka The highest ODI score was by Rohit vs SL (264 at Kolkata, 2014). Rohit's converted his last 3 fifties to centuries against Sri Lanka in ODIs All have come in his last 6 ODI innings versus them. In addition to his 264, he smashed 208* against SL at Mohali in 2017, becoming the first and only person to smash multiple double hundred against a the same opponent in ODIs.

Azharuddin gives solution to India's middle-order woes

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Ahead of India's last group match in ICC World Cup 2019 against Sri Lanka, former skipper Mohammad Azharuddin came up with solution for India's middle-order problems in the ongoing world event. Azhar suggested the inclusion of all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja to strengthen India's batting line-up, which has been found wanting after the dismissal of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma. Azhar believed the inclusion of Ravindra Jadeja will add muscle to the team's faltering middle-order. Virat Kohli's India have already booked their spot in the final four and will aim for a top spot to play the fourth-ranked side in the semi-finals when they take on Sri Lanka on Saturday at Headingley, Leeds but despite winning 6 of their 8 matches - one ended in a no result - there has been lot of questions over India's middle order. India's batsmen have been criticised for losing momentum after the fall of their powerful top-order, which includes in-form opener Rohit Sharma and Kohli. Azhar suggested that Jadeja, who is yet to feature at the World Cup, would be a useful addition with his left-arm spin and powerful batting.



"Maybe try Jadeja, he is a utility player," Azhar, who is the only Indian captain to lead the team in three World Cups (1992, 1996, 1999) told AFP. "In the last game (against Bangladesh) I thought maybe Jadeja could have played because you had a very thin batting line-up. "Jadeja on these (English) wickets with the ball holding up and not coming on to the bat will be a force to reckon with. He is also a good fielder and a lusty batsman. They should try him against Sri Lanka." Watch | Virat Kohli trains ahead of match against Sri Lanka Indian skipper Virat Kohli trains ahead of match against Sri Lanka. India have already qualified for the semi-finals but it is yet to be determined who the men in blue will face in the crucial knockout stage. Veteran big-hitter MS Dhoni and Kedar Jadhav have twice faced flak from pundits and on

social media for not accelerating the score in the final few overs. Their intent was questioned in India's only league loss to England, when they managed just 39 runs from the last five overs when 71 was needed for victory. Dinesh Karthik replaced Jadhav in the next game at Edgbaston, against Bangladesh. "Definitely the middle order has not done well. You need to be prepared because sometimes the three wickets fall early," said Azhar, a stylish middle-order batsman known for his wristy strokeplay. "Rishabh Pant coming back has given the team some stability. But still, a lot was expected from Kedar Jadhav but he has not delivered. "You need to have a re-look at the players who are going to play in the semi-finals." -Attack- Azhar said Dhoni should not be singled out for blame but urged the middle order to attack. Video Player is loading. CWC 2019 | Shaheen Afridi shines as Pakistan beat Bangladesh by 94 runs Shaheen Shah Afridi led the way for Pakistan at Lord's as Sarfaraz Ahmed's men beat Bangladesh by 94 runs in their final group phase game at their Cricket World Cup. "Sometimes you have to get on with the game," he said. "If you lose your wicket it's fine but you have to score runs. "You have to apply yourself, you can't play scoring shots all the time." Azhar hailed India's bowling line-up led by paceman Jasprit Bumrah. "The bowling has been exceptional. They have bowled according to the wickets," said Azhar. "Pitches haven't been exactly free-flowing for batting. The tracks are not quick as you expect them. The ball is not coming onto the bat." Azhar is hoping that fresh wickets are used for the knockout games and not pitches that have already been played on. He is confident that India can clinch a third World Cup triumph at Lord's on July 14. "Of course they can win the tournament, they have just lost one game. With another three games to go they can definitely lay hands on the trophy," the 56-year-old said.

Canada Open: Parupalli, Sourabh to play quarterfinals today

Agency
New Delhi July 6.

In Canada Open Badminton Super 100 tournament in Calgary, Parupalli Kashyap and Sourabh Verma will play their quarterfinals today. Kashyap will take on France's Lucas Claerbout while Sourabh will lock

horns with Li Shi Feng of China. The duo dished out gritty performances to progress to the men's singles quarterfinals yesterday. Sixth seed Kashyap defeated China's Ren Peng Bo while reigning national champion Sourabh beat another Chinese Sun Fei Xiang.