

North to South, Monsoon Mania ravages India

CAPITAL DELHI

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

Delhi turned into a floating city after record-breaking downpour late on Wednesday, the highest single-day rainfall for July in 14 years, leading to prolonged traffic jams and 11 deaths in the Delhi-NCR areas. A woman and her three-yearold toddler who fell into an overflowing under-construction drain in east Delhi's

Ghazipur were among the victims. The weather station at Safdarjung recorded 108 millimetres of rainfall within a span of 24 hours. It caused major traffic congestion especially in Lutyen's Delhi.

The rain led to rainwater leaking from the roof of the lobby of the newly inaugurated Parliament building. Water-logging was seen around the premises of the new Parliament, particularly near the Makar Dwar of the Parliament. Several videos of the flooding went viral on social media.

Opposition leaders took swipe at the Narendra Modi Government over "water leakage" in a lobby of the new Parliament building and praised the "sturdy" old Parliament building for its better infrastructure during monsoon. In a statement Lok Sabha Secretariat said a minor water leak in the new Parliament building was due to displacement of an adhesive material used to fix glass domes over the lobby and corrective measures were taken immediately.

"During the heavy rain on Wednesday, the adhesive material used to fix the glass domes over the Lobby of the Building was slightly displaced, causing minor leakage of water in the Lobby," the Lok Sabha Secretariat said in a statement.



on Thursday

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN KOCHI

 $E_{\rm Monsoon's\ fury\ continued}^{\rm ven\ as\ the\ South-West}$ unabated in Wayanad district, the death toll in the massive landslides in Mundakkai settlement crossed 283 mark by 6 pm on Thursday. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who inspected the flood-affected region, told mediapersons that the landslides and deluge which operations, rescue workers are yet



district should be declared as a national disaster. The non-stop rain in the district has affected the pace of the rescue operations as disaster response team members were finding it hard to wade through the slush, water and boulders. Though 283 bodies have been retrieved during the last three days of search and rescue

wreaked havoc in Wayanad to make any breakthrough regarding the dismembered human bodies recovered from the rivers and the landslide-affected regions. There is no information about 240 persons from Mundakkai missing after Tuesday's landslides.

Engineers of the Indian Army have almost completed the laying of the Bailey bridge across the Chaliyar river to facilitate rescue operations.



Rescue operation underway after landslides triggered by rain, in Wayanad district. Kerala on Thursday

HIMACHAL / UTTARAKHAND

PNS SHIMLA/DEHRADUN

 $\begin{array}{c} B^{uilding} \ collapsing \ in \ Kullu \ in \\ Himachal \ Pradesh, \ roads \ being \\ washed away, pilgrims \ being \ airlifted \ - \\ these \ were \ the \ scenes \ in \ Uttarakhand \\ \end{array}$ and neighbouring Himalayan State of HP on Thursday morning as multiple cloudbursts led to rain wreaking havoc in these States.

At least 17 people were killed, 50 missing and hundreds are stranded in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh due to heavy rains and multiple cloudbursts and toll is likely to go up. More than 1,500 pilgrims stranded on the Kedarnath trek route, which is blocked at several places by boulders, have been bifted to acfe places shifted to safe places. Pilgrims are being rescued with the help of both helicopters and rescue teams consisting of the SDRF, NDRF, police and district administration.

According to officials, 425 pilgrims have been brought to safety by helicopter from Lincholi and Bhimbali while 1100 pilgrims have reached Sonprayag on foot from various places with the help of rescue teams. The pilgrims had got stranded beyond Bhimbali along Courties by Bhimbali along Gaurikund-Kedarnath trek route when 20-25 metres of the stretch were washed out by heavy rain on Wednesday night, Disaster Management Secretary Vinod Kumar Suman said. While multiple cloudbursts caused severe damage with five people confirmed dead and more than 50 others reported missing in Mandi, Kullu and Shimla.

Manmohan Samal may be elected to RS

Speculation after Mamata's resignation from Upper House PNS BHUBANESWAR

The BJP has dismissed the BJD's allegation of 'political conspiracy' to weaken the latter's position in Rajya Sabha following the sudden resignation of Mamata Mahanta from the Upper House and the BJD. BJP MLA Ashok Mohanty told the media that former



His former ministers and MPs have now lost faith in him. That's why Mohanta resigned. Speculation is also rife that Mamata is likely to join the

BIP. Political circles are also agog with speculations that it was a strategic move by the BJP to send party State president

polls. Samal suffered defeat in the Chandbali segment to BJD's Byomakesh Ray by a margin of 1,916 votes.

Following Mohanta's resignation, the BJD's strength in Rajya Sabha has come down to eight from nine. The BJP has one member in the upper House from Odisha, Ashwini Vaishnaw, who was elected earlier this year with support from the BJD. The BJP is likely to bag this vacant seat because of its strength in the Assembly if election is held now.

KIIT-DU AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS UN ECOSOC **SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE STATUS**

PTI

ministers and MPs of BJD have lost faith in Naveen Patnaik. There is no truth in this allegation. BJP hasn't done any conspiracy. Patnaik was in power in Odisha for 26 years.

Manmohan Samal to the Rajya Sabha so that he could be accommodated in the Union Cabinet, considering his contribution to the party's win in the Lok Sabha and Assembly

Man gets death penalty for stabbing wife 33 times

Court terms case rarest of rare BHUBANESWAR PNS

The Bhubaneswar Additional District Judge (ADJ) on Thursday awarded death penalty to a man, Sanjit Das, who brutally killed his wife and slit the throat of his daughter at Ghatikia under the Khandagiri police station of Bhubaneswar on June 9, 2022.

The court pronounced the judgment by terming the case as a 'rarest of rare' crime to set convict," said government an example for society. lawyer Salil Pradhan.

"It was a heinous crime. "After considering the hei-Convict Sanjit Das stabbed his nousness of a crime in all aspects, the court feels that life wife with a knife 33 times over a trivial matter. To destroy eviimprisonment is not enough punishment for the convict to dence, he even slit the throat repent. Statement of as many of his six-year-old daughter Pari. Generally, a husband is as 15 witnesses including the considered as the saviour of his daughter of the convict and the family members were conwife and daughter. However, the convict murdered his wife sidered for the sentence. Bein a barbaric manner. The sides, experts and forensic evi-Court considered the crime as dence were also considered for a 'rarest of rare' case and orthe pronouncement of the dered the death penalty to the sentence," he added.

In Kalahandi BDO with Rs 5L cash detained BHUBANESWAR PNS

 \mathbf{A} kshamita Karthik, Block Development Officer (BDO) of Golamunda in Kalahandi

district was detained by the Vigilance police on Thursday while she was carrying a cash of Rs 5 lakh.

She was intercepted at Jaring Chhak while returning from Bhawanipatna by a car after attending an official meeting. The Vigilance police took her to Bhawanipatna and began questioning her about the source of the huge cash.



BHUBANESWAR

 ${
m A}$ day after resigning from the Rajya Sabha and the primary membership of Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Mamata Mohanta, a prominent leader of the Kudumi community in Mayurbhanj district, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday.

Mohanta entered into the saffron party fold in the presence of BJP national general secretary Arun Singh, Odisha in-charge Bijaypal Singh Tomar, Odisha Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, Brahmapur MP Pradeep Panigrahi and



BJD yesterday after I felt other senior party leaders in that I am unable to work a special event organised at the party headquarters in towards the aim of my life which is serving people and New Delhi

After joining the BJP, working for their welfare. I Mohanta said, "I resigned decided to join the BJP from the Rajya Sabha and which is extensively working for the welfare of the people." "Whatever responsibilities I will be given, I will do it with honesty and dignity," Mohanta said.

Asked if there was any conspiracy behind her leaving the BJD, Mohanta said, "This is my personal decision and there is no conspiracy. The decision to quit BJD came after I felt that I was not getting an opportunity to serve the people and I was being neglected."

Commenting on Mohanta joining the BJP, Brahmapur MP Pradeep Panigrahi said, "While BJP is rising, BJD is on a downfall."

(*Earlier report on Page 2*)



KIIT Deemed to be University has been granted the distinguished Special Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC), recognizing the University's substantial contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The status was conferred during the UN ECOSOC management segment meeting held on July 23, 2024, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

This recognition underscores KIIT's unwavering commitment to the United Nations' Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Attaining Special Consultative Status marks a significant milestone, positioning KIIT among a select group of universities globally that have earned this esteemed distinction

Professional/Technica

university in India to

achieve UN ECOSOC

Special Consultative

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KIIT is the only

Status

Partnership with

WUNVOLUNTEERS

- KIIT has entered into partnership with UN Volunteers (UNV), opening a remarkable opportunity for its students to engage with various UN agencies to serve as 'National University UN Volunteers'.
- This initiative is a first of its kind by any private university in South Asia. KIIT is the only university in South Asia to get UNV status for engaging students for internation internship.

23 Olympians \mathbf{a} in 20 Years KISS has already been awarded with UN ECOSOC In India, both KIIT and Kalinga Institute of KIIT has produced 23 Olympians Special Consultative Status in 2015 and has been and **2 Paralympian** in 20 years representing India at 2018 Rio Olympics, 2020 Tokyo Olympics, & 2024 Paris Olympics. Social Sciences (KISS) in Odisha are proud ng with this status to get this prestigious till date. KIIT holds the unique distinction of sending the highest number (15) of athletes to the Paris Olympics 2024 \oslash among any universities in India.

Collaboration with American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL)

- The American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL), a global leader in fostering international understanding and diplomacy, has announced its historic collaboration with the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and KIIT
- With the steadfast support of the U.S. Department of State and a score of other partners, over 8,900 leaders in the U.S. and in 129 countries and territories around the world have travelled on its life-changing exchange programs.
- Collaboration with ACYPL provides a very prestigious opportunity for KIIT students to engage with political diplomats, who will visit KIIT & KISS from across world, and enter into internship programme.

Rankings: Times Higher Education

award.

Young University Rankings 2024

オオンスモメのタステムを

KIIT-DU has consistently secured impressive positions in various national and global university rankings. Its position in the recent rankings published by the prestigious Times Higher Education reflects its global excellence.

World Rank: 168 India Rank: 10

Impacts Rankings 2024 SDG#10-Reduced Inequalities World Rank: 6 India Rank: 1

KIIT is only 27 years old as an institute (1997 – 2024) and 21 years old as a university.

KIIT (Deemed to be University) has only one permanent campus in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It has no other campus / off campus anywhere else in the country and globe.



Rs 224 cr misappropriated in State's coop banks

BHUBANESWAR

M_{isappropriation of funds} to the tune of Rs 224.61 crore has been detected in various cooperative banks across Odisha. The irregularities came to the fore during the financial audit of the Odisha State Cooperative Bank (OSCB), 17 Central Cooperative Banks (CCBs), and 13 Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) in the

State. The information was shared by Cooperation Minister Pradeep Bal Samanta while answering a question by Congress member Tara Prasad Bahinipati in the State Assembly on Wednesday.

Samanta also said that the audit found the involvement of as many as 1,704 people in the misappropriation of the funds. He said Rs 16.63 crore has

been realised till date from the persons involved in the misappropriation of the funds.

The department has also issued directions for the recovery of another Rs 30.73 crore from 706 persons found responsible for the fraud.

Meanwhile, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Odisha, on Wednesday suspended the management committees of the Odisha State Cooperative

Bank and Odisha Cooperative Housing Corporation under the Odisha Cooperative Societies Act, 1962 over the misappropriation of funds.

The department in its orders said management committees are acting in a manner prejudicial and detrimental to the interest of the OSCB and its members as well as the members of its affiliated cooperative societies.

massive corruption."

further.

enue due to the beautification

project," Mohapatra alleged

khondalite stones are exca-

vated from the quarry only

when the temple requires any

repair work. But the BJD gov-

ernment excavated 70 per cent

of the quarry for the heritage

corridor project, he alleged.

As per Mohapatra, the

Sops to small, medium newspapers sought

BHUBANESWAR

 $T_{
m he\ Small\ Medium\ News-}$ Narayan Rath. paper Editors' Association organised its first annual cona fair advertisement policy ference, felicitation ceremony from the State Government, and seminar on the topic 'Role besides security and pension of Small Medium Newspapers for the working journalists in in Indian scenario' here on the State. A few eminent persons were felicitated. While Wednesday. scribe Dhirmohan Ray man-

The event was attended by Bhubaneswar Mayor Sulochana Das as special invitee while the distinguished guests on the occasion were Dr Bipin Bihari Mishra, Chairperson Mumbai Odia Samaj, senior journalists Suryamani Mishra, Sanat Mishra, Srikanta

2 held for duping K Tripathy and Shakti Sai Mishra, besides lyricist Dr Lalit passport applicants The association demanded

BHUBANESWAR

he Commissionerate police have arrested two persons here on the charge of duping people on the pretext of facilitating them passport services.

The arrested were identified as Santosh Kumar Swain (34) of Nayapalli and Tikuna Subudhi (28) of the Dumduma area.

The duo allegedly looted money from two passport applicants on the plea of helping

In State

Showers to

days

PNS

day

continue for 3

BHUBANESWAR

Several parts of the State

would continue to experience

heavy to very heavy rainfall

for the next three days under

the influence of the cyclonic

circulation over Jharkhand,

said the Regional Office of the

India Meteorological Depart-

ment (IMD) here on Thurs-

On Friday, heavy to very

heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm) is

very likely to occur at one or

two places over the districts of

Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack,

them in getting passports, following which the victims lodged complaints with the Nayapalli police.

capital 02

The duo used to stand outside the passport office at Nayapalli in the city and trapped gullible applicants.

"People, who were not aware of the technicalities and procedures, fell into their trap. The duo has been arrested; and if necessary, we will seek their remand to unearth a bigger racket," police said.

State to bring potatoes from UP Puri Parikrama project

BHUBANESWAR

In a major shift from its policy the State Government on Thursday decided to bring potatoes from Uttar Pradesh, thereby reducing dependency on West Bengal, ostensibly to check the Bengal Government for its

unilateral decisions to stop vehicles bound to Odisha. The decision was taken at a

high-level meeting chaired by Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra held in the presence of departmental Secretary Vir Vikram Jadav and



Sudhakar Panda.

Patra said the Bengal Government created problems in different times which blocked steady supply of potatoes to Odisha.





Association secretary

truckloads of potatoes from Uttar Pradesh, and the volume would increase later," Patra stated



He has also demanded a

high-level probe into the mat-

ter while urging the govern-

ment to punish those who have

looted the assets of

Mohapatra said, "I am dis-

appointed how the khondalite

stone quarry of the

Mahaprabhu Jagannath.

Shreemandir Parikrama Prakalpa has been levelled by Lord Jagannath's chief Badagrahi Jagannath Swain

Mohapatra. "Today also, we got some Mohapatra has alleged a scam of crores of rupees in the use of khondalite stones for the project, which was carried out by the then BJD government.



the Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP) reopened for tourists and visitors from August 1. Total 30 tourists visited the park on the first day to enjoy its flora and fauna, informed Kanika Forest Range ACF

Manas Kumar Das Due to incessant rains, the footfall was very low, stated Das

The ban on entry to the park had been imposed from May 1 to July 31 for the safety of tourists as the crocodile-human conflict generally occurs

a senior engineer of Tackuten,

ing season of these species and also to provide a congenial atmosphere for the estuarine crocodiles during their nesting.

aged the stage, association

president Soubhagya Charan

Nayak and general secretary

Madan Mohan Sahoo were

present. Many journalists as-

sociated with the small and

medium newspapers attended

from across the State.

This year, the enumerators spotted 114 nests of saltwater crocodiles at the water bodies of the BNP and the nearby rivers. Forest personnel implemented the ban on tourists' carrying liquor, polythene and plastic bags inside the park by deploying guides.

To increase the visitors' footfall, the authorities have taken several measures including introducing selfie points, a boat library, a mangrove nursery and a Kanika Cafe inside the park.



Heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Bhadrak, Baleswar Jajpur, Kendrapada, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Balangir, Nuapada, Khordha, Nayagarh, Jagatsinghpur, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Kalahandi, said the IMD issuing a Yellow warning.

On Sunday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Bargarh, Keonjhar, Sambalpur and Deogarh, said the weather office.

5T schools face severe staff crunch in Subarnapur Authorities

nonchalant SRIKUMAR MAHANTA SONEPUR

he previous BJD-led Government had launched the high school transformation programme under 5T initiative with several promises. However, many of the promises have remained on pen and paper.

As per sources, though huge amount of funds were sanctioned for the purpose, even basic infrastructure facilities continue to elude several high schools empanelled under the scheme.

Despite being covered under the 5T initiative, these schools face a severe shortage of teachers. Several non-teaching posts are also lying vacant. As per information, posts of headmasters, science teachers and Art, Hindi and Sanskrit teachers are lying vacant for over a year in some schools.

Besides, posts of clerk, peon yet to be filled.

and night watchman are also Many schools have just two

teachers, an Art teacher and a physical education teacher (PET). One of them is shouldering the responsibility of the headmaster apart from his usual duties. Severe staff crunch has affected academic activities though the District Education Department is yet to initiate any action in this regard.

Parents are concerned about the future of their wards in such schools. They have threatened to stage dharna and lock the school up if teachers are not posted soon.

On the other hand, locals Rabindra Nath Behera. alleged huge funds have been Behera, who was earlier a misappropriated for transfordirector of the NIC, was speakmation of high schools in the ing at the 106th webinar of district and demanded that the the Thinkers' Club as the chief matter be thoroughly inguest. Behera while addressquired. Neither the school auing the participants said that thorities nor the district edu-Prime Minister Modi has ascation officials were available sured to focus on the develfor a comment. opment of IT industry along

Thinkers' Club's 106th webinar 'Let govt be supportive to boost IT sector in Odisha'

CUTTACK with the technical universities. He also gave a firm commit-Leading veteran IT companies of the country are opening their branches at Bhubaneswar, expecting better business. The present government needs to give importance to the sector, said MP

Japan, Mana Gobinda Sethi ment that, he would exhaust from Wartford company, Lonall his 30 years' experience in don, participated in major disthe field and take co-operacussion and out of their expetion and advice of the present rience gave some valuable sug-Minister of IT, Ashwni gestions for establishing IT Vaishnaw and also the advice industries and discussed the of the specialists and experts hardships that are faced by the organisations. They also aswhich will result in faster desured to extend their helping velopment in the telecommunication and IT industry hand to the existing and start in the State. up units of Odisha.

Managing Director of an President of the club, life. Much is needed to grow the sector in the State.

Bibhudutta Engineer Mohanty, Gyan Ranjan, Sushanta Rout, Shantanu Jena from Chennai, Aadish Brahmadutta from Thailand, Priaynka Singhdeo from TCS, Subash Sahoo from Baharin, Madan Mohan Sethi from Vietnam took active part in the discussions and presented some valuable advices.

It was unanimously decided

Woman scribe's death Police take accused hubby on remand

Recover dairy, suicide note BHUBANESWAR PNS

In a development in the woman journalist Madhumita Parida's death case in Bhubaneswar, her accused husband was taken on remand by police to unearth more information about the incident.

As per reports, police questioned accused Sridhar Jena regarding the incident after taking him into remand for one day. The cops also took Jena to his rented house at Indira Colony in the city for further probe into the death case. Apart from interrogating

Jena in connection with the incident, the cops seized a diary and a 'suicide' note written by Madhumita.

Notably, Madhumita's body was found on railway tracks near Bapuji Nagar in the city on July 24.

Madhumita's family members alleged that she committed suicide as Jena had illicit relationships with other girls. Based on the allegation of the family members, Jena was arrested.

Police have sent Jena's mobile phone for tests to trace its call and chat history which would help in further investigation of the case.



Odisha based II company 'Tatwa" Ayas Kanta Mohanty, Surjya Prakash Mohanty from the Wipro Talent Skilling of Bangalore, Kalipada Tripathy,

Barada Prasanna Das presided over the meet. In his speech, Das said the IT sector is a pollution-less industry and it touches every aspect of human

to present a memorandum to the Chief Minister of Odisha and the Prime Minister through MP Rabindra Nath Behera

SOCIAL CANVAS People's monitoring of Budget is needed

SC and ST communities must know about SCSP and TSP provisions

he Union Budget 2024-2025 claims to be inclu sive and adhere to the principles of social justice while focusing on growth. The Prime Minister says India will be the third largest economy within the next five years. But the status of India as the most unequal society continues to have its position at the bottom of the world ranks in a number of human development indicators such as the world poverty, hunger and happiness index, quality of life, human rights standards, freedom of the press and especially the ownership of assets and income among social groups within the country shows huge inequality.

The State of Inequality in India Report by the Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister highlights the nature of inequality and its ramification over our society. The report has focused on both exclusion and



MANAS JENA

inclusion aspects while recommending a setup of solutions to bring improvement in inclusion in the areas of income distribution, employment, health, education and household amenities. The issue of inequality is more acute in India due to its ethnic, religious, class and caste-based differences that have continued with very insignificant change. It is said that the current income inequality is higher than the pre-Independence period. In spite

of many efforts to arrest extreme poverty, extreme poverty has merely declined at a low rate. The colonisation hangover and its enforced socioeconomic inequalities have been carried forward even after Independence. The inequality in income has many ramifications over our sociopolitical and socioeconomic life that continues to slow down our progress as a nation of the largest democracy. It perpetuates violence and social disturbances that affect economic growth, peace and happiness and, above all, a better quality of life. It was the aspiration of freedom

struggle to build an egalitarian society by distribution of wealth among the historically- dispossessed communities, but after 75 years of constitutional governance, the rich-poor gap has widened. This is the result of our economic policies being followed by subsequent governments. The priority of the government is reflected in its annual budget. The budget is an annual statement of income and expenditure of public finance and, ideally, the allocations must include the last man. But a serious observation of the budget outlet shows that the allocation for poor and marginalised sections such as Dalits, Adivases, women, children, PwDs and economically weaker sections does not follow the principles of equity. Even the Constitutional mandate and guidelines of NITI Aayog have not been followed in case of the allocation of outlets for Dalits and Adivasis. This so-called economic growth is not inclusive of socially-marginalised sections and does not create jobs for many, rather ensuring the monopoly of a few, over national resources.

It has been reported that though the allocation has been increased, the government has not been following the provisions decided in 1975-TSP and 1979-SCP for STs and SCs to bring them at par with other social groups by bridging the development gaps. The Union Budget for the year 2024-25 has allocated only 3.43 per cent for SCs and 2.47 per cent for STs under targeted schemes within Central schemes and Centrally-sponsored schemes and denied their due share as per their population percentage. This has been a trend for the last

five years.

Even the allocation of the money under different schemes for the welfare of communities is being diverted to notional schemes for such activities which seldom benefit these groups and, on the other hand, under allocation for effective schemes which have direct bearing on the communities. Whatever allocation is being made, it must be effectively implemented in fulfilling the basic objectives of such as special approach, but the data presented by MSJE show that in the last five years there has been unspent and lapsed amount under the scheduled caste sub-plan.

There has been a proposal by concerned experts that to avoid such issues, there must be a legislative framework to make this process more objective-oriented by bringing a Central legislation for SCSP and TSP and such a process must be followed by the States as a model

The government must allocate more finance to such things which are directly linked to education, employment, land, housing and schemes for their protection from

social injustice. The enforcement of protective legislation such as PCR and POA Act must have adequate financial resources to strengthen the justice delivery system and facilitate the marginalised sections' access to justice. Social discrimination and atrocities are the main issues of these communities, and in spite of many attempts in the post-Independence period, these issues are still prevalent in social life by which social access and economic development have been moving in slow progress. The service providers in government from top to bottom must be inducted with ideas of social justice through training and orientation camps so that they can effectively implement the various schemes.

The educational and skill development schemes such as pre-matric and post-matric fellowship, top class higher education, free coaching, national overseas scholarship and PM research fellowship must have more money to meet the timely need of the students and more students must be encouraged through innovative schemes to counter the higher dropout rate among these social groups. There must be good educational infrastructure in rural and tribal areas and quality teaching standard. Along with education, there must be a national scheme for land and livelihood to ensure minimum land for housing and agriculture.

In the context of Odisha, it is important because a considerable portion of the population belongs to SC and ST communities and also poor. If the share of SCSP and TSP in the budget increases, the share of Central assistance will increase. Odisha gets grants under Central schemes and Centrally-sponsored schemes based on the SC and ST population of the State.

But above all, there must be a mobilisation among people, especially the marginalised sections, to know about the Budget because it is people's money being spent on their development. Therefore, they must have minimum information. The awareness among people will make them empowered to intervene in the implementation process at different levels to monitor the various schemes for them. (manasbbsr15@gmail.com)

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PPA clocks fastest 50-MMT cargo handling in a fiscal

L he Paradip Port's cargo throughput zoomed past 50-MMT (Million Metric Tonnes) mark in current fiscal. After an unforgettable last fiscal, the port has made an auspicious beginning to FY 24-25 and total cargo volume has reached 50.16 MMT within the first four months, which is the fastest-ever in the port's history.

In the current fiscal, the coveted mark was achieved eight days in advance compared to last year and the port



has clocked an incremental hibiting a growth of 6.72% growth of 5.16% in compariover the corresponding period son to the corresponding peof the previous fiscal. Iron ore riod of previous fiscal. Coal, which constitutes a

and pellets have reached 9 MMT, showing a growth of major chunk of cargo volume, 20.74% and container cargo has reached 23.11 MMT exhas grown by 85.07% over the

same period.

Paradip Port Authority (PPA) Chairman PL Haranadh has expressed his gratitude to Union Minister of MoPSW Sarbananda Sonowal for his leadership and guidance from time to time. Commenting on the record achievement, Haranadh said, "Team PPA, with utmost dedication and meticulous planning, has made the enhanced target look easy. The way, the team has contributing, I am confident that the PPA will surpass 150 MMTcargo throughput mark in the current fiscal."

Guidelines for Jagannath Temple panel issued PNS PURI

 $T_{he \ Odisha \ Government}$ has begun the process for formation of a new Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee with the term of the incumbent panel coming to an end in August.

The Law Department has issued guidelines for recommending names of persons for nomination as members of the panel under Section 6 (1) (j) of Shree Jagannath Temple Act, 1955. The managing committee, headed by Puri

Maharaja Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb as the permanent chairman, usually has 18 members and seven among them are selected from sevayats and mutts.

According to sources, the temple Chief Administrator has been asked to recommend names of 10 members of various Nijogs that have major stakes in the 'seva puja' of the sibling deities. The Nijogas will be asked to send the names of at least two of its members. There is also a provision for conduct of a lottery if the Ad-

ministrator is unable to select the names.

> The guidelines also mention a rotation system to enhance the chance of representation of the Nijogs. The Administrator has to ensure that two persons of the same Nijog are not recommended. "No person shall be recommended for two consecutive terms and no one would be recommended for more than two terms.'

The list of 10 members will be prepared taking into account their past conduct,

sincerity in conducting rituals and their relationship with other servitors within and outside the Nijog.

capital 03

The Chief Administrator shall request the Nijogas to send the names of at least two of its members.

The State Government will also recommend the names of two persons, who have brought laurels in social service, for their nomination to the managing committee.

The current managing committee was nominated on August 12, 2021.

HC orders detention of Chinese ship in Paradip

PNS PARADIP

he Orissa High Court has ordered arrest of Chinese vessel MJHEHAI 505, which recently arrived at the Paradip Port. The order was issued to prevent the vessel from leaving the port.

The action was taken after the ship's owner failed to pay Rs 99.81 lakh to the Scandi Trading Limited, prompting the company to approach the High Court.

Justice V Narasingh issued the arrest order following a hearing on Monday, with the next hearing scheduled for August. The ship is being detained under admiralty law.

The case revolves around a dispute between the petitioner, Scandi Trading Limited and the shipping authority over a transaction involving low sulfur marine gas oil'. The ship's owner was required to pay ?99,81,553 to the trading company but failed to do so. Consequently, the trading company filed a case under section

(4)(1)(i) of the Admiralty Act (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims)-2017. After reviewing the submitted documents and arguments, the High Court deemed the case admissible for trial, citing

prima facie evidence. The court noted that without an arrest order, the applicant would be disadvantaged, and the suit would become invalid. There was also concern that the ship, currently at Paradip Port, could depart soon. Therefore, the High Court mandated the immediate arrest of the vessel.

As per information received, the vessel was arrested Monday evening under the orders of the Kujang Daura Judge. The ship would remain detained at the port until further court orders.

It is also noteworthy that another foreign ship, MV Devi, has been detained for three months at Paradip Port, along with its crew, in connection with the seizure of ?220 million worth of cocaine.

Transfer D'nal Sub-Collector, Tehsildar' Vedanta revives Kalahandi's Saura art

Dhenkanal Sub-Collector Sapan Kumar Nanda allegedly misbehaved with BJP leader Er Debashisha Hota on Monday evening at his office chamber.

DHENKANAL

Er Hota, who has been demanding action against corrupt tehsil office staffers and had gheraoed the office, was assured of action by the Sub-Collector in seven days. But he did not do anything tangible. When Hota asked about his promise, the Sub-Collector allegedly got infuriated and misbehaved with Er Hota.

Er Hota said that during the BJD Government, Collector Manoranjan Mallick, Sub-

Rising rail mishaps: CPM demands Min's scalp been adequately addressed,

they said.

In

Party members hold demo RAJEEV RATHAN BRAHMAPUR

The Communist Party of

India (Marxist) staged a demonstration, displaying placards and chanting slogans demanding the resignation of Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Wednesday.

The protest comes in the wake of rising frequency of railway accidents, which have highlighted critical safety issues within the railway sector.

Recent tragic incidents, including a passenger train accident in Chakradharpur, the freight train accident in Sambalpur, the derailment of the Hirakhand Express, and the devastating Mumbai train collision, underscore the urgent need for systemic changes, the party members

said. e Mumbai train ac Th further exemplified the dire situation. The collision between two trains resulted in numerous casualties and injuries, drawing nationwide attention to the pressing issue of railway safety. The frequency and severity of such accidents indicate deeper systemic failures within railway management that have not



Collector Nanda and Tehsildar Litusmita Mishra had been transferred from Dhenkanal. After the Election Commission of India's interference, Collector Mallick was replaced by Amrit Rituraj. But the rest two were not transferred and the new BJP government did not implement their transfer orders. He demanded their immediate transfer from Dhenkanal.

Odisha,

Chakradharpur passenger

train accident, the Sambalpur

freight train incident, and the

Hirakhand Express derailment

are prominent examples of

ongoing safety issues. These

incidents highlight the vulner-

abilities within the railway in-

frastructure and increase the

urgency for reform, they said.

personnel, including train

drivers, guards, signal staff,

and station managers. The

shortage has led to increased

workload and pressure on ex-

isting staff, significantly rais-

ing the risk of accidents. Ad-

ditionally, the lack of adequate

training for new personnel,

coupled with the absence of

critical safety systems like the

Kavach system, has further

contributed to the problem,

they said, calling for the resig-

The situation is exacerbated by a shortage of key railway

opportunities LINJIGARH PNS he Vedanta Lanjigarh is dedicated to creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities.

the

Among its impactful initiatives is Project Adikala, a creative endeavour to revive and preserve the rich indigenous

artistic and cultural heritage of Kalahandi The project focuses on Saura, a unique traditional tribal art form known for its intricate and colourful narrative patterns of motifs, and depictions of natural elements, spirits, ancestors and daily life, as well as Dhokra, a meticulous

technique.Both art forms have roots dating back to the Indus Valley civilization. Launched in 2018, Vedanta

to the cultural legacy of the region, beyond the confines of their homes, while gaining financial independence. By creating artisan producer metal-crafting groups, the project has facilitated market linkages, reduced transaction costs, and enabled artists to manage sales at competitive prices. With over 300

national and national exhibilades

Project Adikala has encouraged Saura artists to adapt the art for a wide range of products and artifacts, including Tussar and canvas paintings, apparel designing such as dupattas, stoles, and jackets, and accessories for personal and office use like coffee mugs, fridge magnets, tea roasters and cups, scented candles, and tote bags. Additionally, the

project has introduced unique fusion of the Saura art with Mandala, Dhokra and mural painting. This has led to a 50% increase in the artists' average monthly income, positively impacting over 200 lives.

Commenting on this noteworthy initiative, Mr. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, CEO Alumina Business, Vedanta Ltd said, "Supporting the underserved communities through these cultural initiatives aligns with our ethos of addressing not just socio-economic needs of the nation but also preserve the integrity of the regions in which we operate."

Apathy in forming SODC Brahmapur forum warns to take to streets motherly treatment and ne-

Writes to CM. CS, Revenue & Home Secys highlighting

demands **RAJEEV RATHAN** BRAHMAPUR

The Brahmapur Regional Development Committee discussed organising a massive rally to push for the implementation of Southern Odisha Development Council(SODC) demand, on Tuesday. Notably, the BJP-led Mohan Government hinted at the formation of the Northern Odisha Development Council(NODC) and the SODC within the framework

of the Western Odisha Development Council (WODC). This was a commendable and welcome decision that generated hope for development among the local citizens.

women, driven by the artistic

passion, are now contributing

Numerous movements have taken place in the past regarding the issue. The Committee had previously demanded this from the BJD-led Government. However, the previous BJD Government showed neither interest nor initiative in this regard and failed to take any action. The newly formed Mohan Government, despite announcing steps towards this, has unexpectedly sidestepped the long-standing need and demand of the people of

Brahmapur and southern Odisha by only proposing a task force for the formation of the NODC. As a result, the most neglected, underdeveloped, and backward region, which ranks lowest on the Human Development Index, is subjected to cruel mockery and deceit.

The Government's regional discrimination and disparityfilled actions have caused deep resentment and dissatisfaction among the intellectuals and the general public of southern Odisha, akin to rubbing salt into their wounds. If timely caution is not exercised, such thoughtless discriminatory actions of the Government could potentially incite sepa-

ratist sentiments among the residents of this region, the committee members warned. Brahmapur, acknowledged as the central hub of southern Odisha, encompasses Ganjam district and extends to farflung areas such as Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Kandhamal, Boudha and

A significant portion of the population in these areas comprises Dalit, tribal communities and backward classes who lack adequate education and healthcare facilities, resulting in high maternal and child mortality rates. Despite decades of independence, the residents here face the shameful reality of consuming non-

glect. It appears that the identity and pride of the residents of Brahmapur and southern Odisha are at stake and in peril, the members said. Before it is too late, the new

Government must uphold the dignity of Odia identity and ensure the comprehensive development, progress, welfare, and security of the residents of Brahmapur and the southern region by immediately tabling and passing a bill for the formation of a self-governed SODC in the current Assembly session. The committee has written to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, Revenue Secretary and Home Secretary highlighting the demands.



nation of Railway Minister Vaishnaw. The party's demands were voiced during the protest at Kamapalli Square, where prominent party members and activists gathered to highlight these critical issues. Key figures in the protest included Judhisthira Behera, Pratap Choudhury, Shiba Prasad Mahapatra and Gokul Tripathy, among others.

Kalahandi. Most families residing in these areas are closely connected and live below the poverty line. The entire region lags behind in education, health, potable water, employment, infrastructure, industry, technology, geographical positioning, environment, politics, irrigation, basic amenities, tourism, and transportation.

nutritious food and succumbing to unknown diseases. Additionally, the average income and purchasing power in the region are much lower than the national average.

These are not just contemporary facts and figures. Since the formation of the independent Utkal province, the region has been a victim of step-

World fauna checklist crucial guide to earth's biodiversity

India first country to compile its fauna inventory

global fauna check list compiles an exten Asive inventory of every documented animal species inhabiting the earth, spanning from microscopic organisms to largest mammals. This comprehensive record plays an important role in comprehending and safeguarding the diverse spectrum of animal life on our planet. In the light of pressing issues like habitat loss, climate change, and human impact, the maintenance of a fine and up- to- date checklist is increasingly crucial. It not only showcases the abundance of our natural world but also bolsters conservation initiatives and scientific exploration

The task of categorising and documenting the earth's fauna has ancient origins, dating back to early naturalists such as Aristotle. However, the modern system of taxonomy, which organises organisms



VANITA BISWAL

based on shared characteristics, owes its structure largely to Carl Linnaeus in the 18th century. Linnaeus' work, particularly his "Systema Naturae," established the foundation for naming species using binomial nomenclature, a method that remains fundamental in biological classification today. Over the centuries, the ef-

fort to compile a global fauna inventory has undergone significant transformation. The era of exploration in the 18th and 19th centuries, spearheaded by pioneers like Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel

Wallace, greatly expanded our understanding of species diversity. Their meticulous observations and collections from diverse corners of the globe significantly advanced our knowledge of biogeography and species distribution patterns

Compiling a comprehensive world fauna checklist is a multifaceted and ongoing endeavour that incorporates various methodologies such as species classification which follows a hierarchical system, ranging

from broad domains to specific species. Modern taxonomy utilises genetic and morphological analyses extensively to accurately categorize and distinguish between species. Technological advancements have transformed biodiversity cataloging. DNA barcoding enables species identification based on genetic sequences, while remote sensing technologies and geographic information systems (GIS) offer valuable insights into species distributions and their habitats. Field research remains

indispensable. Scientists and

researchers conduct observations, collect specimens, and gather data across diverse ecosystems. This hands-on approach is essential for uncovering new species and deepening our understanding of existing ones.

The compilation and upkeep of a global fauna checklist play a pivotal role for several reasons such as precise species inventories are essential for effective conservation efforts. They facilitate the identification of endangered species and enable targeted conservation actions. Initiatives like the IUCN Red List, which tracks threatened species globally, rely on such checklists. These lists serve as invaluable resources for scientific research and education. They provide foundational data for studying species diversity, evolutionary connections, and ecological dynamics. Governments and international organisations utilise these checklists to shape policy decisions and biodiversity management strategies. They are instrumental in enforcing environmental regulations and international agreements aimed at preserving global biodiversity.

India has achieved a remarkable milestone in biodiversity documentation by becoming the first country globally to compile a comprehensive checklist of its entire fauna. This exhaustive list encompasses 1,04,561 species, showcasing the immense diversity found across India's varied ecosystems, from tropical forests and grasslands to deserts and marine environments. The fauna checklist comprises 121 lists encompassing all known taxa across 36 phyla. It also emphasizes endemic, threatened, and scheduled species.

The checklist encompasses a wide array of taxonomic groups, including insects, birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and marine species. India's diverse habitats, spanning from the Himalayas to coastal regions, are comprehensively represented in this checklist. It meticulously documents species that are endemic to specific regions, highlighting their unique ecological significance.

The comprehensive catalogue serves as a cornerstone for conservation planning and biodiversity management across India. By pinpointing endangered species and those with restricted distributions, it guides targeted efforts to conserve and restore their populations. Furthermore, the checklist is invaluable for researchers investigating India's diverse fauna. It facilitates comparative studies and enables tracking of changes in species distributions and population sizes over time. India's milestone sets a precedent for other nations, showcasing the feasibility and significance of creating comprehensive fauna inventories essential for global biodiversity conservation efforts.

The data from India's checklist can significantly enhance global databases, offering insights into biodiversity patterns and trends worldwide. This fosters international collaboration and facilitates the

sharing of critical biodiversity science data

Despite notable progress, several regions and taxonomic groups remain insufficiently researched. For example, tropical rain forests, home to a substantial portion of Earth's biodiversity, continue to harbour many undiscovered species. Disparities in classification systems and naming conventions can introduce inconsistencies and gaps in data collection and analysis.

Looking ahead, several trends and innovations will influence the evolution and effectiveness of global fauna checklists such as emerging technologies like environmental DNA (e DNA) sampling and AI-powered species identification. They are revolutionizing our capacity to detect and document species. Citizen science initiatives, leveraging volunteer participation in data collection and monitoring, are broadening the scale and impact of biodiversity research. Ongoing initiatives aim to standardize taxonomic methodologies and address knowledge gaps, particularly in less explored regions and species groups. To conclude, world fauna

checklists play an essential role in our efforts to comprehend and safeguard Earth's biodiversity. They serve as a portal to the extraordinary diversity of life on our planet, forming the bedrock for conservation endeavours, scientific exploration, and informed policy making. India's recent achievement in cataloguing its entire fauna sets a precedent and offers valuable insights for global biodiversity documentation. As we confront ongoing environmental challenges, the necessity for accurate and comprehensive species inventories has never been more critical. Through active support and engagement in biodiversity initiatives, we can contribute to maintaining robust and inclusive lists that honor the world's diverse natural heritage. (Biswal is Guest Faculty

in Zoology, Vikram Dev University, Jeypore)



nation 04

EC takes first step to hold polls in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

 $\mathbf{I}_{\mathrm{Assembly}}^{\mathrm{n}}$ a fresh indication that and Kashmir are imminent, the Election Commission (EC) has asked the Union Territory administration to transfer out officers posted in their home districts, an exercise it holds ahead of conducting elections. The commission has been following a consistent policy that officers directly connected with the conduct of elections in a poll-bound State or Union Territory are not posted in their home districts or places where they have served for a considerably long period.

has issued similar directions to the Chief secretaries of Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand. It said the terms of the

existing legislative Assemblies of Haryana, Jharkhand and Maharashtra were up to November 3, 2024; January 5, 2025; and November 26, 2024, respectively, and elections in these States were due in 2024.

"Further, the election to the legislative Assembly of the

Lt Gen

NEW DELHI

Sadhana: First

woman to



provisions of Article 370 of

abrogated and the erstwhile

State divided into two Union

Territories in 2019. The

to

the

over a month.

allocated

occupied Kashmir.

September 30.

Constitution were

Union Territory of Jammu will be the first since and Kashmir is also due in the near future," it noted on Wednesday.

It is usual for the poll panel to issue instructions related to transfers of officers ahead of Sabha and Assembly Lok polls. Recently, it had ordered the updation of electoral rolls in Jammu and Kashmir and

the three States. In June, it decided to accept applications seeking allotment of 'common symbols' from registered unrecognised parties in the Union Territory. Whenever Assembly elections are held in Jammu and Kashmir, they



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

ok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Lon Thursday asked members to be alert during House proceedings or else, he said, they will lose the opportunity to ask supplementary questions during the Question Hour. Birla said this after Shiromani Akali Dal MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal was unable to respond to the Speaker's call on time.

During the Question Hour, a question posed by Badal related to Punjab was listed in the agenda for discussion. When Birla took Harsimrat Badal's name for a few times, she failed to respond in time as she was apparently busy talking to a fellow member.

electoral exercise in Jammu and Kashmir is usually spread At this, the Speaker decided to move on to the next Following a delimitation exercise, the number of question. Soon after, the Shiromani Akali Dal MP responded and urged the Assembly seats has gone up from 83 to 90, excluding those Speaker to allow her to raise Pakistan-Last December, the Supreme Court directed the poll panel to hold Assembly elections in Iammu and Kashmir by

proceedings, you will not get the chance to raise issues," Birla said. The Speaker also told members that if they want to ask any supplementary question of any listed question, they should submit their names to his office by 10.30 am of that particular day. "I will try to accommodate your request if it relates to your respective State. But that does not mean that you will certainly get the

chance to ask supplementary," he said. Birla, however, later allowed Badal to raise the relevant issue and ask the supplementary question.

The first hour of the Lok Sabha proceedings, called the Question Hour, is reserved for MPs to ask any question of public importance. The member whose question is listed in the agenda is allowed to ask two supplementary questions.

India, Vietnam firm up action plan to expand strategic ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

India and Vietnam on Thursday firmed up a new action plan to expand their strategic ties, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that both sides will work towards a free and rules-based Indo-Pacific and that New Delhi supports development

and not "expansionism". After his wide-ranging talks here with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Modi said, the agreed USD 300 million credit line for Vietnam, will strengthen the Southeast Asian nation's maritime security. Chinh arrived in Delhi on Tuesday night on a three-day visit that is aimed at further expanding the comprehensive strategic ties between the two countries.

"We have adopted a new plan of action to further strengthen our comprehensive strategic cooperation," Modi said in his media Statement in presence of Chinh.

Modi said both sides will continue cooperation for a free, open, rules-based and prosperous Indo-Pacific.



Vietnam is India's important partner in our Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision, he said.

"We support development, not expansionism (Hum vistarbad nahi, vikasvad ka samarthan karte hei)," Modi said.The comments came amid growing global concerns over China's expansionist behaviour in the Indo-Pacific. Modi said various dimensions of India-Vietnam relations have both expanded and deepened in the last one decade. In the last 10 years, we have transformed our

relations into Comprehensive Partnership, he said.

Strategic We held extensive talks on all

aspects of mutual cooperation and initiated steps towards the framework of future cooperation," he said, adding the two countries have adopted a new plan of action to further strengthen comprehensive strategic cooperation.

Modi said both sides have decided that cooperation will be strengthened on counter-terrorism and cyber security.

New Bill promises to revolutionise disaster management

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024, introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday, aims to strengthen the efficient working of the national and State disaster management authorities besides bringing more clarity and convergence among stakeholders working in the field of

The Bill also aims to provide statutory status to certain pre-Level Committee.

the efficient working of the National Disaster Management Authority and State disaster management authorities, according to the

reasons of the Bill. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, who introduced the Bill, asserted that there is no interference in rights of the States and disaster management is the first responsibility of the States The Bill also provides to bring more clarity and convergence committees working in the field of disaster management and to provide statutory status to certain pre-Act organisations like the



National Crisis Management enacted to provide for the Committee and the High effective management of Level Committee. disasters and for matters The Bill also aims to empower connected therewith

National Disaster incidental thereto. Management Authority and The main purpose of the act State disaster management was to put in place necessary authorities to prepare the institutional mechanisms for disaster plan at national and drawing up and monitoring State level instead of the the implementation of disaster management plans, Executive Committee and the State ensuring measures by various Executive Committee. wings of Government for It will provide for creation of prevention of and mitigating disaster database at national the effects of disasters and for

and departments of the Government of India and mandated that every ministry or department would carry out the nodal responsibilities in respect of disaster management.

Due to the constant endeavour of the central Government for mainstreaming the disaster management in the development plans, aligning with the recommendations of 15th Finance the Commission, learnings from past disasters, and experience gained during the implementation of the Act,

the Disaster Management Act, 2005 has been reviewed in consultation with all stakeholders including the State Governments, the Statement of objects and reasons of the Bill said.

or

Some Opposition members, however, questioned the constitutionality of the measure. Opposing the Bill at the introduction stage, none of the entries in List 1 or List 2 of the Constitution dealing with central and State subjects deal with the issue of disaster management. He suggested that the Government should amend the concurrent list to have a proper entry to cover the issue of disaster management. Tewari said the law's

be taken up by the ministries legislative power should be properly defined. He said any law based on "derived legislative power" may not test stand tĥe of constitutionality. He also noted that the rule making power of the Centre provided in the Bill encroaches the

powers of the States. Saugata Ray (TMC) said the multiplicity of authorities will create confusion. The Bill was later introduced by a voice vote.

Minister of State or Home Rai asserted that there is no interference in the rights of the States and disaster management is the first responsibility of the States. According to the Statement and objects and reasons of the Bill, the main purpose of the 2005 Act which the Bill seeks to amend was to put in place institutional necessary mechanisms for drawing up and monitoring the implementation of disaster management plans. For achieving its purpose, certain committee were set up at the national level, State level and district level. Seeking to mainstream disaster management in the development plans and learnings from past disasters, the Disaster Management Act, 2005 has been reviewed in consultation with all stakeholders, including State Governments.

Twelve more airports ready to implement DigiYatra facility



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

welve more airports are ready to implement DigiYatra facility that will provide passengers seamless and contactless movement at various checkpoints through facial recognition system, Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday. Naidu said 12 more airports are ready to implement DigiYatra, while 11 airports preparing to have the ity. Currently, the facility. DigiYatra facility is available at 15 airports of the country. Responding supplementaries during the Question Hour, the Minister emphasised that the passenger data shared through DigiYatra App is not stored in any centralised system, saying the

Government is committed to protecting data privacy.

While the DigiYatra app is slowly gaining traction, there have been concerns expressed in various quarters about

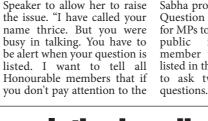
privacy of passenger data. The app facilitates the passengers to enroll their verifiable credentials using Aadhaar card number and to keep their personal information on their smartphones to ensure data privacy," the Minister said. Based on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT), DigiYatra provides for contactless, seamless movement of at various passengers checkpoints at airports in India. DigiYatra app has been downloaded by more than 43 lakh users, Naidu said, adding the scaling up of the facility will be done in a phased manner.



Act organisations like the National Crisis Management Committee and the High Besides, it aims to strengthen

become DGMS PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Statement of objects and Lt General Sadhna Saxena Nair on Thursday took charge as the Director General Medical Services (Army) becoming the first woman offi-



be appointed to post.

She graduated from the Forces Medical Armed College, Pune, with a distinguished academic and record was commissioned into the Army Medical Corps in December 1985, according to a Statement issued by the defence ministry.

She assumed the office of the Director General Medical Services (Army) on Thursday, it said. "Prior to this, she was the first woman to hold the post of DG Hospital Services (Armed Forces) on promotion to the rank of Air Marshal," it said.

Lt General Nair has become the first woman to be appointed as the Director General Medical Services (Army), the ministry said. She holds a post-graduate degree in family medicine, diplomas in maternal and child health and healthcare management, and has undergone a two-year training programme in medical informatics at AIIMS, New Delhi, the Statement said. She was trained in chemical biological, radiological and

nuclear warfare with the Israeli Defence Forces and in military medical ethics with the Swiss Armed Forces in Spiez, it added. Lt Gen Nair is also the first

woman Principal Medical Officer of Western Air Command, and Training Command, Indian Air Force (IAF). She was nominated as an expert member of Dr Kasturirangan Committee for drafting part of the medical education component of the National Education Policy, the Statement said. For her meritorious service,

she has been awarded the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Air Command and Chief of the Air Staff Commendations as well as Vishisht Seva Medal by the President, it said.

provision for constitution of "Urban Disaster Management Authority" for State capital and large cities having Municipal Corporation and in the roles of authorities and to make provision for constitution of "State Disaster Response Force" by the State

the

National

Government. The original act, the Disaster In addition, the act

coordinated and prompt response to any disaster or threatening disaster situation. For achieving the said purpose, certain authorities committees were and established at the national level, State level and district level.

Management Act, 2005, was enumerated the measures to

Rajnath urges personnel to enhance skills

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday here called upon the personnel of the Armed Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) Civilian Services to continue enhancing their skills in today's fastchanging times for efficient policy making and implementation and execution of reforms being undertaken in the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Addressong the 83rd AFHQ Civilian Services Day, he

described the civil services as the steel frame of governance and commended the dedication and hard work of the AFHQ personnel in taking forward the ongoing

works, including efforts to attain Aatmanirbharta, and contributing to the welfare of soldiers.

"You are an important link between the Armed Forces and the rest of the civilian Government. There is a need to further strengthen your capabilities for enhanced efficiency," he said.

Rajnath added that the three Services form a large part of the functioning in MoD and the AFHQ cadre ensures that the possibility of 'groupthink', which results in poor decision-making, is negated in policy formulation.



"Unprecedented reforms have been undertaken in MoD in the last five years, and there been tremendous has progress in several areas. Our achievements have been recognised globally. This has happened due to team work. The Armed Forces and Civil Services should work together Command from Headquarters and Service Headquarters and Service Headquarters to the Ministry for better output. By including AFHQ Civil Services officers in key roles in MoD, the quality of decision making will

decision making improve," he added. making will The defence Minister urged the Department of Defence to explore the possibilities of better career progression for the personnel of AFHQ Civilian Services.

the exhorted Rajnath

personnel to pay attention to the core values of honesty, discipline and uniformity. He was of the view that everyone deserves respect, irrespective of their position or rank, emphasising that ego must be shed and the personnel must work as a team. He called for learning from one another, which makes even hard work easy to

accomplish. The AFHQ Day is celebrated on August one every year to recognise the role of the

personnel who work shoulder-to-shoulder with the personnel Service personnel, primarily in the three Integrated Service Headquarters; HQ, Intergated Defence Staff and 24 Inter-Services Organisations of MoD. The aim is to foster spirit-de-corps of the civilian employees of AFHQ Cadres, who play the role of a bridge between Service Headquarters and MoD, both during peace and war.

The foundation of AFHQ cadres was laid on August 01, 1942 by organising the then decentralised civilian posts/cadre operation as distinct entities under various Service Headquarters and Secretariat of Ministry of and Finance Defence (Defence) under the control of Chief Administrative Officer.



Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera assumes charge as Assam **Rifles DG**

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

> Lt General Vikas Lakhera on Thursday assumed charge as the new director general of the Assam Rifles, which is known as the "Sentinels" of the northeastern region. He succeeds Lt General P C Nair who retired after four decades of service. Lt Gen Lakhera has varied professional experience in serving in the northeastern region. He was commissioned into the 4 Sikh Light Infantry in 1990.He is a post graduate from Defence Service Staff College, Wellington. He is an alumnus of the Higher Defence Management Course from College of Defence Management, Secunderabad and completed the prestigious National Defence Course from the Royal College of Defence Studies, London.

Influenza spreads, 132 fatalities in five months, reports NCDC

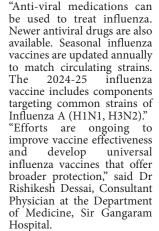
ARCHANA JYOTI 📕 NEW DELHI

In the first five months of this year, India has seen a significant surge in influenza cases and deaths, with a total of 6,351 cases and 132 fatalities reported. Punjab topped the mortal-ities list with 41 deaths followed by Gujarat with 27 and Haryana with 26. Case numbers are highest in Delhi (1,563), Gujarat (1,049), and Rajasthan (1,008), according to data from the National Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry. Last year, in Tamil Nadu alone, 3,544 influenza cases marked the highest num-

ber in 14 years. Health experts said that while temperate regions see seasonal flu primarily in winter, tropical areas like India experience two phases of influenza-summer and a longer winter phase. Since, the current year has already seen 80% of last year's total cases in just five months, it suggests that a potentially

severe flu season is ahead. The incubation period, or the time from infection to illness, is about two days but ranges from one to four days.

However, experts have attributed rise in numbers to higher investigations post-Covid-19 pandemic. Also,



"Also, the vaccine shot should

be taken before the onset of

influenza spread. Taking the

vaccine during the influenza

season will not help," said the

Dr. Kartikeya Kohli, Senior

Consultant of Internal Medicine at MASSH Super

Speciality Hospital in Delhi, emphasised that influenza is a

serious respiratory illness if

doctors.

this indicates that regions with immunocompromised populations, those with comorbidities, and the elderly are at higher risk of afflicting with influenza.

Dr Deepak Kumar Das, Chief Medical Officer at the Delhi Government-run Hindu Rao Hospital, emphasised that low individuals with immunity or underlying health condition as well as those suffering from comorbidities are at a higher risk of contracting influenza. "Prevention steps are similar

to those for Covid-19. People should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and wash their hands regularly. They should also avoid going to crowded places and must wear masks as a prevention measure," said Dr Das.

ignored. The symptoms of influenza include high fever, chills, muscle aches, fatigue, sore throat, cough, and a runny or stuffy nose. Vaccination remains the best preventive measure against influenza, helping to reduce the severity and incidence of the flu," Dr Kohli explained.

nation 05

Karnataka CM holds discussions with Cabinet colleagues after Guv's notice on MUDA scam

PTI 📕 BENGALURU

rarnataka Chief Minister Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday held discussions with his Cabinet colleagues in the wake of the Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot reportedly issuing him a "show-cause notice", seen as a precursor to sanctioning his prosecution in the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam'.

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The Governor has reportedly asked the Chief Minister to explain why prosecution sanction must not be accorded in connection with the alleged irregularities in the distribution of sites to land losers by MUDA, including to his wife Parvathi During a breakfast meeting,

Siddaramaiah is said to have discussed with the Ministers regarding a political and legal strategy and the Congress high command's directions on the issue. A Cabinet meeting is slated to be held



later today Siddaramaiah along with Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday met Congress President M Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, party General Secretaries K C Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala in New Delhi and held discussions. The Governor's move comes

the pioneer

after a delegation of BJP legislators met the Governor on July 25 and submitted to him memorandum demanding transfer of the MUDA case to CBI for a probe and resignation of the Chief Minister. and Minister, and e-activist T J advocate-activist T J Abraham seeking sanction to prosecute Siddaramaiah.

In the MUDA 'scam', it is

alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which hed biefer preparts which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA.

MUDA. The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where MUDA developed a residential layout. Under the controversial

Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming from them for forming residential layouts.

BJP leaders have claimed that the MUDA "scam" is of the magnitude of Rs 4000 crore to Rs 5,000 crore.

The Congress government on July 14 constituted a single member inquiry commission under former High Court Judge Justice P N Desai to probe the MUDA 'scam'.

BRS seeks apology from Telangana CM over comments on women MLAs

PTI HYDERABAD

Members of the BRS held a protest in the Telangana Assembly on Thursday demanding an apology from Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy over his alleged insulting remarks against women members of the opposition party.

opposition party. Hitting back at the opposition party, Revanth Reddy said he always respected women and sisters. As soon as the House

commenced business, the BRS MLAs wearing black badges rose and started raising slogans.

The members entered the well of the House and indulged in sloganeering during a discussion on a bill for setting up skill universities in the state.

Despite repeated requests by Speaker G Prasad Kumar and the treasury benches to return to their seats, the BRS legislators continued their agitation.

AIMIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi asked the Speaker to either give the BRS



members a chance to speak or Later, they were evicted by the suspend them so that the House would be in order. You have to face them or

have the courage to suspend them. If you don't have the courage, you give them the mike," he said

After BRS MLA Harish Rao made a favourable statement on the skill university and the Supreme Court's verdict on empowering states to make sub-classifications of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the party walked out and staged a dharna in front of the CM's chambers in the Assembly.

I show (objectionable) video (of Seethakka), you will hit them with footwear," Revanth

Reddy told the Speaker. Asserting that he always respected women, Reddy alleged that the BRS reached an understanding with Delhi after its MLC Kavitha was arrested.

Later, talking to PTI Videos K T Rama Rao, termed Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's comments as "highly disgraceful, highly disrespectful and highly reprehensible", and accused Reddy of not acting like a Chief Minister but a "Cheap" Minister in Telangana.

He made some (comments) which are unbecoming of a Chief Minister, Rama Rao asserted. "Those kinds of comments

provocation. I was speaking

Later, the CM found fault with the BRS for not participating in the debate on against women members who are senior legislators and former ministers. They did the skill university. not say anything, there was no

marshals, who carried BRS Working President K T Rama

Rao and others out of the

The opposition party also called for statewide protests on Thursday against the CM's

Assembly.

comments.

He also castigated the opposition party, alleging that it is circulating objectionable pictures and posts on social media on Minister Dansari Anasuya Seethakka

PTI SHILLONG

said on Thursday.

on Appropriation. He suddenly suddenly jumps and intervenes and starts calling them names," Rama Rao said. New cave fish discovered in Meghalaya

Clashes erupt in Manipur after security forces fire tear gas shells to disperse crowd



other areas.

forces

Ethnic violence in the state

which started in May 2023

has so far claimed 226 lives and left over 59,000 people

Locals also joined the fray,

hurling stones at the security

displaced, officials said.

Clashes erupted between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) residing in a relief camp and security forces in Manipur's Imphal East district on Thursday after tear gas was used to disperse a protest rally, police said.

Approximately 100 IDPs from Akampat relief camp in the district attempted to stage a protest but were stopped by security forces, leading to an altercation, they added.

security The relief camp residents, holding pl demanding their were rehabilitation and a resolution to the ethnic violence in the state so they could return to

Phalguni, Shambhavi rivers in spate, houses inundated in coastal Karnataka

PTI MANGALURU/UDUP (KARNATAKA)

Two major rivers in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts are in spate following torrential rains in the past two days, officials said on Thursday.

The Phalguni river in Dakshina Kannada and Dakshina Kannada and Shambhavi in Udupi district were overflowing in the wake of heavy rains, they said. As a result of the heavy to

very heavy rainfall, a 56-year-old woman died after her house partially collapsed in Nellikaru village in Udupi district, the officials said. According to Prashanth Jain, secretary of Nellikaru Village

panchayat, the woman was alone in her house when a wall collapsed.

Her three children were The protesters managed to engaged in covering the leaking roof of the house with continue their rally for about 1 km but were stopped at Singjamei in Imphal West a tarpaulin sheet, but a district after additional sudden gush of water broke down the wall. She was, reinforcements, including CRPF personnel, however, rescued from the rubble and taken to but was declared brought dead by the hospital authorities in the wee hours of remain Thursday.



The water level in the In addition, the Mangaluru Phalguni river recorded a Electric Supply Company has sudden rise early on August 1 also deployed additional Phalguni river recorded a sudden rise early on August 1 and saw at least eight houses in Kadapa and Kariya villages flooded.

The river water entered about eight houses of Ammunje village near Polali. All the families are being rescued with the help of the taluk administration and fire brigade personnel as per the directions of Tehsildar Archana Bh

people to clear the area of fallen electric poles and cables. In Udupi district, it has been raining continuously for the past 72 hours. Karkala taluk on In Wednesday (June 31) there

was heavy rain and many rivers including the Shambavi were overflowing. During the 24 hours ending on `hursdav

Sanur in Karkala, 278.5 mm in Madamakki in Kundapur, 269 mm in Shirtadi.

The Shambhavi River, flowing from Sanur in Karkala to Nitte, Bola, and Mundkur villages, has faced unprecedented floods in recent years. Many houses, shops and home-industries have been flooded.

The houses of Mundkur gram panchayat members Ashok Shetty, Suresh Shetty and Bhask ettv were

Surma-Meghna drainage) in the South Garo Hills district Agroup of scientists has identified a new species of Meghalaya, India," Wiley-Blackwell said in its of loach in Meghalaya's South Garo Hills district, near publication.

The species is distinguished by its prominent eyes and 13-26 vertically elongated to circular black blotches on a grayish-black mid-lateral stripe, over a dull white or pale-beige body, it added.

Asia. Schistura species, The sonarengaensis, was discovered in Sonarenga, Nakama, and Chiabol caves in the district, they added. Funded by the ICAR

National Bureau of Fish Resources in Genetic led by Dr Khlur Mukhim, principal of Lady Keane College, a team from Guwahati University, among others. The research paper was officially published on Wednesday by Wiley-Blackwell, an international Journal of Fish Biology of the Fisheries Society of the British [s]es

Bangladesh border, officials

Loach is a freshwater bottomdwelling fish and found

across rivers in South East

Despite lacking the typical adaptations for subterranean life, such as complete loss of eyes or pigmentation, this species shows reduced pigmentation compared to surface-dwelling relatives. Genetic molecular analysis species has confirmed its distinction from other known species in the region, officials said.

Mukhim noted that while these cave-dwelling fish are somewhat pale, they are not blind like other cave species found in Jaintia and Khasi Hills. The new species retains prominent eyes and is distinct from other Schistura species in the Barak-Surma. northeast except for Schistura syngkai, Mukhim added

Reports of assaults and injuries have surfaced but the numbers unconfirmed

Archana Bhat said there were

landslides in Wayanad.

Institute

into a food processing and

production unit with more

than 70 people, including

developed by the institute to

to

National

heaps of garbage floating on the water that had hindered rescue operations.

of Karkala taluk in the foothills of the Western Ghats rain, while it was 289.5 mm in

destroyed. More than a thousand coconut trees have received a total of 319.5 mm been uprooted, according to Panchavat officials.

Central institute prepares food products

nemacheilid loach, Schistura and adjacent river drainages sonarengaensis sp. Nov., is of described from three cavedwelling populations (Barak-

Two Chinese men arrested for illegally entering India

PTI MAHARAJGANJ (UP)

¬wo Chinese nationals L were arrested at the Indo-Nepal border area here for allegedly trying to cross over into India illegally, police on Thursday said

A Tibetan refugee, who was helping them in the task, has also been arrested, they said. The trio was held at the Sonouli transit point between the two countries by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

"Yang Meng Meng (37) and Gu Baoquang (35), both from People's Republic of China, were roaming in Sonauli Indo-Nepal Border area last night when they were stopped by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) for a routine checking," said Maharajganj Additional Superintendent of Police Atish Kumar Singh.

"They were arrested by the immigration department in the Sonauli area after they found the Chinese passport but no Indian visa papers and



valid documents," he

no

added Tibetan refugee Lobsang Jamyang (44), who had taken the responsibility of facilitating the two Chinese citizens to enter India illegally from Nepal, has also been held, the officer said. "The Tibetan refugee had also

made fake Indian Aadhaar cards of both the Chinese citizens and taken the



valid He said when documents were asked from the two arrested Chinese citizens, no visa was recovered from them, while the Tibetan refugee was found to have an Indian Aadhaar card and PAN card which had an Indian address. "The motive behind their

move could not be established

yet. Interrogation is being done," the officer added. The police have registered a case against both the Chinese citizens under various sections of the law, including under relevant law at the local

research Section 14 of the Foreigners volunteering Act, while action is being working in one shift to prepare 1000 packets of each taken against the Tibetan person by registering a case food item. They are using an exclusive

Sonauli police station.

provide extra shelf life to food items like Upma, which the director said has a high

'One is upma; we increased working without break for the protein content of it by 10 per cent. And we use retort the last two days to prepare food items with longer shelf processing and retort pouches that will keep the life for the survivors of food fresh for at least one A team of scientists from the month. Then we have poha Council of Scientific and mixed with ground nuts in Industrial Research (CSIR) dried form, which also has a shelf life of one month. We for National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) here has converted their incubation also have millet puffs for kids, Anandharamakrishnan, cell for technology transfer director of CSIR-NIIST, told

PTI He said the prime aim was to pack and send food items that are readily consumable and have a longer shelf life. Anandharamakrishnan said their unit is equipped to produce more if further requirements come, and they

protein value.

C

batch by evening. 'We are planning to hand over the consignment to the Thiruvananthapuram district collector by this evening," the director said.

NIIST never had a fullaim to complete the first fledged production capability

Thursday

at

their

be kept fresh for two to three months. A minimum of one month is our guarantee," V V Venugopal, head of the Department Agroprocessing Technology, told PTI. and

He said the Poha mix does not have any moisture content, so it could be kept for longer days and readily consumed. These food packets will be sent to the landslide-affected area district the administration, where they will be distributed among the survivors.

The devastating landslides in Wayanad district have killed 173 people and left about 200 injured, and authorities are struggling to trace the missing and continue the rescue efforts in challenging terrain without heavy machinery to uncover debris and buried victims.

the existing infrastructure and converted it into a round-the-clock production line. "The retort process is a high-temperature, high-pressure process. With this process, any food item could

incubation cell, but they used

Telangana Assembly passes Bill to set up skill university in State

scholars

technology

help,

PTI HYDERABAD

The Telangana Assembly on Thursday passed a Bill for setting up a Young India Skill University-Telangana in the state. Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu moved the Young India Skill University Bill and the House took up a discussion on it.

Speaking on the Bill, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said, taking inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, who started an English standards," Sridhar Babu said.

journal "Young India," during the struggle for Independence the Telangana government named the varsity as "Young India Skill University

Reddy said the varsity will be run on a PPP model.

"We had several rounds of discussions with universities, industry and students on the proposed varsity. This university will focus on preparing the students to meet the international



The varsity would focus on skilling students in some of the sectors such as BFSI, pharma and life sciences, Artificial Intelligence, retail and ecommerce, in association with industry, he said.

He further said a permanent campus for the skill university will be built in over 50 acres at Mucharla near here.

During the debate, BRS members

Revanth Reddy made some remarks on women members of the opposition party Wednesda

Later, BRŚ legislator Harish Rao said his party is supporting the Bill

BJP floor leader A Maheshwar Reddy said his party is supporting the state government's move for the university

The AIMIM party suggested that protested before the Speaker the Bill be referred to a select alleging that Chief Minister committee for a wider

consumed. through

technology

BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY | AUGUST 2, 2024

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Squabbling overshadows tragedy

The Wayanad landslide tragedy serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of ignoring environmental warnings

In India, we've developed a bad habit of politicising everything, from festivities to tragedies, using every opportunity for one-upmanship against opponents. Indeed, the tragic landslide in Wayanad, Kerala, that claimed life of more than 170 people is being used as a slingshot to score brownie points. It has triggered a heated political exchange between State and Central Government leaders. The tragedy, which resulted in significant loss of life and property, has brought to the forefront the critical issue of disaster preparedness and environmental stewardship. Following the landslide, Home Minister Amit Shah stated that the State had received an early warning but failed to take necessary preventive measures. He criticised the State Government for the negligence, suggesting that more lives could have been saved with timely action. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan quickly refuted Shah's claims, asserting that the State Government had acted on all available warnings and had under-



taken necessary measures to mitigate the impact. Vijayan emphasised that the unprecedented intensity of the landslide was beyond what the early warnings had predicted and that the state's disaster response teams had worked tirelessly to manage the situation. This spat achieved nothing; neither relief for the people injured nor a plan of action to stop such incidents in the future. But yes, both the Central and State Governments gave themselves a clean chit, and that was the end of it.

This incident highlights challenges in disaster management and the need for coordinated efforts between State and Central Governments. The

Wayanad tragedy has also opened a broader discussion on environmental conservation and the risks of taking nature for granted. The Kerala Government must take the blame for unrestricted development in the Western Ghats, one of the most fragile ecosystems in the country. Despite frequent disasters, the Kerala Government continues unsustainable activities in the name of development. The thick tree cover is gone due to changed land use. This has turned many perennial streams and rivers into seasonal ones and increased the risk of flooding in the monsoon season. The Wayanad landslide is a stark reminder of the consequences of ignoring environmental signals. Human activities such as deforestation and unplanned construction have exacerbated the vulnerability of regions like Wayanad to natural disasters. The Wayanad landslide underscores the importance of accountability and proactive measures in disaster management. More importantly, it highlights the critical need to respect and care for our environment. Forests, for instance, play a crucial role in stabilising soil and regulating water cycles. Deforestation disrupts ecosystems, making landslides more likely. The Wayanad tragedy is a call to action for governments, communities, and individuals to prioritise environmental conservation for our collective survival.



The evolution of learning



Learning is a complex phenomenon with multiple layers. It needs judgement, sensitivity, foresight and a strong will to absorb new ideas

he real world can be tricky to negotiate. This is because a lot of early childhood learning needs substantive modification when it comes to real life. Illustratively, a child is taught many principles which are simply impracticable as he grows up. Typically, a child will be told never to do something without informing their parents, whereas in real life this is neither feasible nor practicable.

The truth is, that childhood learning is about basics; one learns to modify or calibrate it as one goes along. It has to do with a child's mind and establishing certain principles that life experiences may define or modify. Consider the case of teaching a child about parallel lines. The child is taught that parallel lines are lines that never meet. That's good enough for his purposes. As one matures and gains a few years, the child transitioning into adulthood learns that parallel lines do meet, but they meet at 'infinity'. Similar examples can be cited elsewhere. However, more to the point is a simple proposition, namely that learning has to do with the capacity and capability of the learner. The same principle can undergo several modifications or even alterations. As one emerges into adulthood, one learns many other intricacies about life, and several of them can only be re-learned only through experience. Here is the need to sharpen a person's capacity for continuous learning and absorption. Typically, the adult, as he goes through life, meets different types of people, and there is a clear need to coexist with several others. One's judgment becomes a crucible for deciding what the truth is and where one has to steer clear or walk through it. This is what adult learning is about, and it is a lifelong necessity that is felt at each

elders An illustration of this could make the point clear. In Sanskrit, there is a saying "Satyam brooyat, priyam brooyat, na brooyat satyama priyam". "Broadly translated, it means, speak the truth, but speak it pleasantly. If a truth is bitter, it need not be spoken". Whether this is desirable or not is a moot point. What is more, is that other sayings can be found to be very different than the one quoted above. For example, there is another Sanskrit statement "Satyameva jayate" "A free translation into English would be that "truth alone triumphs". The two statements are clearly in two different contexts and mean

two different things. There is an element of contradiction between the two. It is here that adult learning acquires a special veneer of its own. What that special something is a matter of experience and exposure. Some people who repeatedly emphasised in their childhood that they must always tell the truth get so much in



AS ONE EMERGES

INTO ADULTHOOD, **ONE LEARNS** MANY OTHER INTRICACIES ABOUT LIFE, AND SEVERAL OF THEM CAN ONLY **BE RE-LEARNED**

THROUGH **EXPERIENCE**

ill intention, but their style itself became 'offensive'. Such offensive behaviour can have a heavy price. After all, tact is something that is not an optional extra, it is essential to life.Being tactful does not end up lying or being untruthful. It only trains a person to be sensitive to another person's feelings and sentiments.

It also raises the importance of recognizing that all inputs contribute to better and improved behaviour. Creating a situation in which everyone gains and a better environment is established is essential. If bluntness causes hurt rather than improvement, it could lead to deterioration of quality of life, which cannot be the objective of any action.

The obvious conclusion is that learning is a complex phenomenon with multiple layers. It needs judgement sensitivity, and foresight. In the absence of any of the above relationships, they can become compromised. After all, if the relationship itself is lost, one might ask: what is

requires a collective experience. Learning therefore is a lifelong exercise requiring continuous involvement and the capability to evolve. External inputs to learning are of course critical, but internalization of the same is the core. Unfortunately, whereas much attention has been paid to teaching, an equal amount of attention is due to the ways of the learn-ing process. There are indeed definite limits to the capacity to learn and meth-

ods of learning. This is something that needs to be more widely recognized than before, especially since it does not seem to be integrated into the larger theories of learning. Indeed, one needs to pay attention to also when and how a revision of the learning process

becomes seminal. To sum up, it is important to recognize the continuous nature of learning and one's central role in keeping that learning alive. A teacher can only help the process but cannot substitute a learner's learning.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

stage.Sometimes strange situations can occur, especially if one learns through through the habit of only telling the aphorisms/proverbs/ folk sayings, and even the wisdom of This is not because of their

the input abouts This issue is fundamental to the act of living. This is so because man is a gregarious animal, and the act of living

Age and capability: Rethinking

retirement and leadership



ASHA IYER KUMAR

recent interview on CNN,

Why is it that in the corporate world, age is a barrier to employment, while in public service, older individuals often hold the highest offices?

n May 2020, close on the heels of the covid out-L break, my husband lost his job. It was an unexpected knock to take barely a month after he was awarded the best employee. The company that he was serving for the past many years attributed the pink slip to the pandemic, and following it, it was near impossible for him to find another job. In most cases, it seemed as if he was deemed over-age. In the traditional sense, it must be true that 58 years is the time to hang one's boots, but taking superannuation was far from his mind. His mental and physical abilities had not dimmed a wee bit and he had many more years of active work life left in him. But it was hard to convince a work culture that was transitioning to a younger demographic about his worthiness. He was soon forced to stop looking for a job and start something of his own. Three years on, it is a decision we don't regret taking. But there is one thing that I have not been able to decipher. If a company considers a person to be too old to seek employment at that age, what makes older doyens eligible to age to retire for employees? their chronological age. In a



seek fresh terms as heads of gap between the highest and state? This question is more relevant now after John Biden lowest denominators at a was forced to step aside folworkplace has widened siglowing doubts over his diminnificantly. ishing cognitive abilities on There are concerns about an various platforms. Biden's agile, IT-driven young generdropping out in no way sugation unable to work alonggests that his opponent (who side an older brigade that folis younger by only three years) is more eligible to be lows old clunky ways. On this side things, it is still a huge the boss at the White House challenge for those used to

if age is a major criterion for archaic practices of functionholding responsible positions. ing to adopt digital modes overnight. But experience is Yet, in public service, it is par something we still cannot discount. On the other hand, for the course for older men and women to push it till economic and social policies we also need a lot of young allow or they are naturally blood to keep our workplaces vibrant. People age differentindisposed. Why is 80 a wholesome number to be at ly. Their biological age may not be commensurate with the helm of a state and 60 an

Anthony Fauci, former chief medical advisor to the President of the United States looked and sounded many times more agile and vigorous at 81 than Biden does. My mother at 77 is much less healthy than a few other relations in their 90s. So to determine people's capabilities based on the number of summers they have seen is a faulty method. Our cognitive age and ability to handle the pressures of a job is something only we can gauge.

It is for us to decide if we are fit to handle the responsibilities - be it to serve the nation, run a company or a household. John Biden must have eventually realised that cracks are showing up in his public image and faculties and that stepping aside is the most gracious thing to do, both for his self-esteem and for the sake of his country. Although it had to come after much persuasion, he made the call Congratulations to him for being rational and accepting 'it is what it is'.

(The author is a Dubaibased author and columnist; views are personal)

ALL OUIET IN BANGLADESH

Madam — After the recent mind-boggling violence in Bangladesh, things seem to be stabilising for now. Hopefully, peace will not be compromised again, as Dhaka is an important neighbor for New Delhi. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's support for those who fought for the liberation of Bangladesh, led by her late father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is well known and reasonable. In the past, Hasina's firm and decisive action against the offenders of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War earned her praise, but her indecision and leniency towards extremism were criticized by moderates and liberals.

Her recent decision to reserve fifty-six percent of jobs for the descendants of the liberation movement was undoubtedly aimed at certain sections of the country's vote bank. Although the Bangladesh Supreme Court struck down the order and reduced the reservation to five percent, Hasina must be feeling the setback. Some short-sighted remarks by Hasina during the students' protests further fueled emotions. It's time for the longestserving Prime Minister of Bangladesh to get her act together and display the statesmanship expected of her.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

THE LEGACY OF JRD TATA

Madam—The 29th of July 2024 marked 120 years since the birth of JRD Tata, fondly called Jeh by those close to him. Words cannot do justice to his modesty, philanthropy, achievements, awe-inspiring firsts, patriotism, and staunch belief in the three guiding tenets of Zoroastrianism: good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, without professing either belief or disbelief in God.Jeh was India's first commercial pilot lice nse holder and the first to fly a commercial plane from Karachi to Madras.

He was also the first Indian businessman who refused to bribe politicians and the first to establish Asia's first cancer care hospital, the Tata Memorial Centre in

Remembering APJ Abdul Kalam



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

hroughout his life Abdul Kalam professed the scientific, academic as well as spiritual development of the students. He made

Bombay. Furthermore, he was a pioneer in advocating for workers' rights, introducing an eight-hour working day, free medical facilities, and more. As stated at the outset, it is impossible to fully cap-ture the essence of JRD Tata, whose life itself was his message.

Tata passed away in Geneva, Switzerland, from a kidney infection on 29 November 1993, at the age of 89. A few days before his death, he remarked, "Comme c'est doux de mourir" ("How gentle it is to die"). Upon his death, the Indian Parliament was adjourned in his memory, an honor rarely given to those who are not members of parliament.

He was buried at the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. Pages from JRD Tata's life ought to be made compulsory reading in our parliament and legislative assemblies. It might lead to some introspection and, perhaps, inspire some of our elected representatives to mend their ways. Politics in India being what it is, I know this is just daydreaming on my part.

Avinash Godboley Dewas

numerous speeches and wrote many books addressing the youth; which are listened and read even today by students even across the world. Choosing his birth day as the 'World's Student's Day' was an appropriate decision honoring his works as a scientist and the millions of youths that he inspired and still

inspires through his works, achievements, speeches, lectures and books. Students deserve better education standards

and we hope it is time to inculcate the best education to students so that they may not wish to go to other countries for education purposes. He believed that students are the future of a nation and they can bring considerable change if well nurtured and educated. He professed education as the only weapon to fight back the demons of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition etc.

Anandambal Subbu | Mumbai

LACKADAISICAL APPROACH OF MCD

Madam — This refers to the editorial, Enough is enough (July 29) vide which the bitter truth was elaborated that the inaction of municipal authorities and the lack of accountability have resulted in yet another tragedy. The tragic death of three students at the illegal Rao IAS Coaching Centre in Old Rajendra Nagar area of Delhi is a shameful tale of gross and unpardonable negligence at the administrative level. This illegal business is flourishing with the connivance of MCD officials. The basement meant for commercial storage was illegally converted into a coaching centre. There was no emergency exit and no technical scientific arrangements for drainage. The issuance of NOC for building usage and security lapses reflected lackadaisical approach of the MCD officials. Harshest punitive measures must be taken against he people responsible.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

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FIRSTCOLUMN INDIA NAVIGATES DIPLOMATIC TIGHTROPE

Despite the US unease, India charts its own course; QUAD Tokyo conference is a case in point



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

n a balancing act of sorts, the Government of India is trying to address US and European concerns regarding PM Modi's meeting with President Putin last month, when many of the leaders were in a huddle in Washington for the NATO summit. President Putin went an extra step to welcome PM Modi in Moscow, signalling a strong message to the US, regarding the long-standing partnership with India. Senior officials in the US expressed deep concern with the optics involved in PM Modi's Moscow visit while reiterating that nothing significant was achieved.

Russia bilateral is a tightrope, that India has managed to carefully tread on, despite its growing engagement with the US in the past decades. Therefore, this week's QUAD foreign minister's conference in Tokyo where External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met his US counterpart Anthony Blinken was significant. The joint statement in unequivocal terms condemned Russia's action in Ukraine, perhaps for the first time joining in such a multilateral official communication. The joint statement read "We express our deepest concern over the war raging in Ukraine including its terrible and tragic humanitarian consequences. We reiterate the need for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in line with international law, consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

PM Modi had also in his bilateral meetings with President Putin and public messages subsequently, mentioned the need for finding lasting solutions to the Ukraine crisis away from the battleground while condemning the attack by Russia killing nearly 41 persons including at a children's hospital

PM Modi said "Whether it is war, conflict or a terrorist attack, any person who believes in humanity, is pained when there is loss of lives. But even in that, when innocent children are killed, the heart bleeds and that pain is very terrifying.". Ukraine President Zelensky has condemned PM Modi's visit to Russia. Government officials now indicate that the PM is likely to travel to Ukraine in August to balance the geopolitical dynamics and reset India and Europe's relationship.Meanwhile, the QUAD for-



eign ministers meeting continued to focus on the Gaza crisis, and its spillover in the Red Sea zone, impacting lives and raising freight costs

Union budget prioritises employment and skilling _____



analys \$ 07

To empower youth, the Government has announced three transformative schemes aimed at promoting skilling across various sectors



ne of the top nine priorities of the Union Budget is employment and skilling. In line with this, three schemes have been announced to promote skilling. The first scheme involves increasing the maximum loan amount for high-end skilling courses under the revamped Model Skill Loan Scheme from Rs 1.5 lakhs to Rs 7.5 lakhs, with an interest rate of 1.5% per annum. This scheme is expected to empower the youth by providing easy access to advanced-level skill courses, potentially removing significant financial barriers for many deserving students and can-didates to gain futuristic and in-demand industry skills, thus creating a futureready and empowered workforce.Recognising the significant role played by non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and micro-finance institutions in the skill loan market, the Ministry of Skill Development and Employment (MSDE) has made pivotal modifications to the scheme. This includes the inclusion of NBFCs, Micro Finance Institutions, and Small Finance Banks to extend loans backed by a guarantee against default up to 75% of the loan disbursed through the instrument of collateral-free loans of up to Rs 7.5 lakh to facilitate 25,000 aspirants every year.Without a vibrant skill loan market, many youths leave aspiring candidates without the necessary financial support to pursue their skill training. To ensure uninterrupted credit flow in the skilling sector and to provide low-income youths with access to affordable finance for specialized skill courses, the MSDE initially launched the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Skill Development in July 2015, resulting in below expectations.

courses out of the scheme. Secondly, private banks still need THIS FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND skills is higher. SCHEME, AIMING TO

to be more willing to finance government-sponsored schemes. As of March 31, 2024, loans amounting to Rs 115.75 crore had been extended to just 10,077 borrow-ers over the past decade.However, the government's unwavering commitment to addressing this issue is evident in the new model skill loan scheme, which aims to meet the challenges of a highly skilled workforce emerging from paced technological changes. Relevant skills are in demand, and the cost of acquiring specialised

Only 5% of the so-called skilled workforce is formally trained, creating a significant skilling gap that needs to be urgently addressed. While 26.5 crore chil-COVER ONE CRORE dren enrol in school each year, by the time they reach higher edu-cation, their numbers have dwin-YOUTH IN dled to 4.3 crores. To align with 5 YEARS, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 mandate, an addi-HAS THE tional five crore children who POTENTIAL pass school need to be included in higher education and to make TO BE skill training accessible to every A GAME individual, especially the large number of students from rural CHANGER IN India. The Model Skill Loan Scheme is TACKLING YOUTH not just a solution but a necessary **UNEMPLOYMENT** and urgent step in bridging this gap. The skill economy is increasingly market-led, integrating new-age learning into the skill development ecosystem. The youth from urban and semiurban areas recognise the opportunities for skilling and livelihood improvement. An initiative like the Model Skill Loan Scheme opens doors to many skill courses in sectors such as healthcare,

beauty-wellness, IT, AI-data science, cloud applications, digital marketing, hospitality, animation, gaming, graphic designing, and drone technology.

These courses, driven by changing industry dynamics, offer substantial placement opportunities and the potential for global mobility, providing a promising future for the youth and opening doors to international career prospects.

The second scheme aimed at skilling 20 lakh youth over five years. The scheme, with a total outlay of Rs 60,000 crore, aims at fulfilling this objective by upgrading 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the hub and spoke arrangements with outcome orientation. It's an ambitious scheme that aims to make youth more employable by imparting industry-specific skills. The course content and design will be upgraded to reflect the skill needs of the industry. For instance, emerging IT sector needs could include cyber security or data analytics skills.The third scheme introduced in the Budget for Skilling Youth is a comprehensive scheme that provides the youth with internship opportunities in 500 top companies This first-of-its-kind scheme, aiming to cover one crore youth in 5 years, has the potential to be a game changer in tackling youth unemployment. This internship scheme's innovative approach and potential impact make it a beacon of hope for young people's future employment, promising a significant reduction in youth unemployment rates. Moreover, landing an internship is difficult, leading to a vicious

cycle of frustration and disappointment. Students with professional degrees like MBA, engineering, etc., may still find landing jobs or internships easier after graduation. However, the scenario could be more precise for unemployable humanities graduates with no ready-made market-appropriate skill set.

Thus, such a scheme providing young graduates across disci-plines with internship opportunities at leading companies can be a game-changer if implemented properly and effectively. Perhaps, in the future, the government could consider widening the scope of this scheme by making it mandatory for companies above a specific size (the government could come up with a set of specifications to decide this) to take in a fixed number of interns every year and fund the training program through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds. These funds are a company's initiative to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on environmental and social well-being.Most importantly, the internship opportunities provided under this new scheme could significantly boost the employability quotient of youth. With concrete experience, they will be more likely to land a job. However, implementation, effectiveness, and accountability are crucial to fostering employable skill sets.

The foreign ministers jointly communicated "We urge all parties to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, as applicable. We welcome UNSC Resolution S/RES/2735 (2024) and strongly urge all parties concerned to work immediately and steadily toward the release of all hostages and an immediate ceasefire. We call on all parties to take every feasible step to protect the lives of civilians including aid workers, and facilitate the rapid transportation of humanitarian relief. We also encourage other countries, including those in the Indo-Pacific, to increase their efforts to address the dire humanitarian need on the ground. We underscore that the future recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip should be supported by the international community. We remain committed to a sovereign, viable and independent Palestinian state taking into account Israel's legitimate security concerns as part of a two-state solution that enables both Israelis and Palestinians to live in a just, lasting, and secure peace."

India would be the host for the QUAD leaders summit scheduled this year, however, the crucial US presidential elections in November would be a key determinant of the time. President Biden who has mostly shaped the Quad narrative in the past, would like to leave a lasting impression on this group of four.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

The low fund utilisation under the scheme over the past decade was due to the low ticket size of loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh, even as course costs and fees rose due to inflation, leaving many high-cost

(The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a

Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation(NSDC), Network Member of India International Skill Centres; Views expressed are personal)

Transforming bone fracture treatment with the magnesium implants invention

This innovative solution promises to alleviate the long-term suffering of bone-fractured patients caused by traditional metal implants

A n age-old adage "necessity is the mother of invention"still holds now. This aforementioned adage is duly proven by the fact that Nitin Pratap Varma Senior Scientist and highly esteemed research scholar from Dhanbad-based IIT-ISM and currently working as Senior Scientist for Shahjahanpur(UP) based company G Surgiwear Limited, felt the necessity of resorbable implant that could be fully absorbed in the bodies of accident victims as part of treating their fractured bones. Understanding this need of the hour, Varma held meetings with members--scientists of his research team. Many brainstorming ses



GYAN BHADRA

sions with experiments ensued. Eventually, the team led by Varma zeroed in on the final product and invented the "magnesium implant" for the first time in the world. Shedding light on factual aspects of his invention, Varma says: "For many years, I have been observing the predicaments and troubles being suffered by bone-fractured patients due to of plates made up of inserted implants compris- resorbable metals in place of

up of stainless steel and titanium metals Since those plates and screws remained embedded in the body, patients had to undergo painful sufferings for a long period. To remove those metallic plates from the body, the patients have to undergo surgery which is

physically tormenting as patients have to bear the brunt of risk aspects of surgery. And to add insult to injury, patients bear the huge expenses of surgery.Keeping

in mind the troubles faced by patients, Varma convened a series of meetings with his fellow scientists and team



After having a long discussion, we reached to the scientific conclusion that implant of resorbable metals gets fully absorbed in the body within 3-5 years of insertion.

It is no hyperbole on my part ing plates and screws made stainless steel--made plates if I say it vanishes into the physical inconvenience the utility and quality of bodies, it will be put in the

body. Thus through continued research and experiments, we invented and zeroed in on magnesium implant due to its pathbreaking resorbable quality in the human body. Patients do not feel any

afterwards., Varma explains matter-of-factly. Analysing his bone treatment-related achievement in an in-depth manner, Varma explains that there are three kinds of metals that are resorbable and biologically safe: magne-

sium, zinc and iron. Undoubtedly, these metals have their pluses and minuses.Varma and his colleagues have been experimenting with resorbable metals to gain knowledge of their utilties and qualities.

For this very purpose, the team of scientists also visited the Jamshedpur-based National Institute of Metallurgy institution to seek intricate technical knowledge of metals. Expressing optimism over

public domain, Varma

avers that the invented product has reached the final stage; since the product has already been implanted in animals for testing its effica-Also, to be well-versed with different clinical parame-

ters related to experimental procedures, the animals have been kept under observation for six months.

magnesium implants, Varma

Results from animal testing are very encouraging.After successfully experimenting with this product in animals, Varma has plans to test this product in human bodies. For this, he has decided to seek permission from the Drug Controller General of India. Having successfully tested this product in human

explains. Eventually, it is no exaggeration to say that the invention of the magnesium implant is slated to bring revolutionary changes in the treatment of bone fractures and other bone diseases. This is more so because as per a research report, scores of scientists are engaged in experimental procedures of implants in laboratories the world over. And in this context, thousands of research papers have been inked and published. But to this date, those scientists have yet to make in-roads to reach the level of realistic utility of implants. (The writer is a freelancer; views expressed are personal)



Iran's supreme leader prays over coffin of Hamas leader Haniyeh

AP BEIRUT

Tran's supreme leader and rep L resentatives of Palestinian mili tias he backs prayed Thursday over the coffins of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard who were killed in a shocking assassination blamed on Israel that risked escalating into an all-out regional war.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei prayed over Haniyeh's coffin at Tehran University while Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian stood next to him. State television later showed the coffins placed in a truck and moved on the street toward Azadi Square in Tehran and people throwing flowers at them.

After the funeral services in Tehran, Haniyeh's remains are to be transferred to Oatar for burial Friday. Haniyeh came to Tehran to attend the inauguration of Pezeshkian. Associated Press photos showed the Hamas



Iranians attend the funeral ceremony of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard, some of them holding up posters with his photo and reading in Arabic "Congratulations Haniyeh!" at Engelab-e-Eslami (Islamic Revolution) Sq. in Tehran, Iran. Thursday AP/PTI

leader seated alongside leaders lier with Khamenei from the Palestinian Islamic Hours later, he was killed in an Jihad militant group and airstrike that hit a residence Hezbollah, and Iranian media Haniveh uses in Tehran. Iranian showed him and Pezeshkian authorities said the attack is hugging. Haniveh had met ear- under investigation but haven't provided details

İsrael had pledged to kill Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders over the group's Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza. The strike came just hours after Israel targeted a top commander in Iran's ally Hezbollah in the Lebanese capital Beirut

Iran supports Hamas, as well as Hezbollah and other Palestinian militant groups fighting Israel in Gaza.U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said "all parties" in the Middle East must avoid escalatory actions that could plunge the region into further conflict.

Speaking in the Mongolian capital of Ulaaanbataar on Thursday, Blinken appealed for countries to make the right choices in the days ahead" and said a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza was the only way to begin to break the current cycle of violence and suffering.

Israel confirms death of Hamas military chief in July strike

Jerusalem (AP): The Israeli military said Thursday that it has confirmed that the head of Hamas' military wing, Mohammed Deif, was killed in an airstrike in Gaza in July.

Israel targeted Deif in a July 13 strike that hit a compound on the outskirts of the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, but the military said for weeks it was working to determine if he died in the blast. Hamas has denied he was killed. More than 90 other people, including displaced civilians in nearby tents, were killed in the strike, Gaza health officials said at the time. In a statement Thursday, the

Israeli military said that "following an intelligence assessment, it can be confirmed that Mohammed Deif was eliminated in the strike There was no immediate com-

ment from Hamas

US reaches plea deal with alleged 9/11 mastermind

PTI WASHINGTON

The US has announced that it has entered into a pretrial deal with the alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, a Kuwaiti-Pakistani engineer, and two other co-accused in the 2001 terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

The agreement – reached after 27 months of negotiations takes the death sentence off the table for Mohammed, Walid Bin 'Attash, and Mustafa al Hawsawi, prosecutors said in a letter sent to the families of 9/11 victims and survivors shortly before the Department of Defense announced the news in a press release Wednesday. Mohammed and his co-defendants, who have spent almost two decades in the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay Cuba, will enter guilty pleas at a plea hearing that could come as early as next week, according to the letter obtained by

CNN.The settlement agree-ments with the Pentagon bring partial closure to a case that has dragged on for years and become mired in legal delays over whether the evidence extracted through torture during their interrogations was admissible in court.

On September 11, 2001, two hijacked passenger planes hit the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. A third plane struck the Pentagon in Washington. A fourth plane, heading to Washington, crashed in Pennsylvania after passengers fought back with the hijackers. Many family members of the nearly 3,000 people who died in the September 11, 2001, attacks want the 9/11 defendants put to death.

Since a trial became increasingly unlikely, plea bargains were widely viewed as the only way to resolve the case, the US media reported. The Convening Authority for Military

Commissions, Susan Escallier, has entered into pretrial agreements with Khalid Shaikh Mohammad. Walid Muhammad Salih Mubarak Bin 'Attash, and Mustafa Ahmed Adam al Hawsawi, three of the co-accused in the 9/11 case, the US Department of Defence said in a press release.

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'The specific terms and conditions of the pretrial agreements are not available to the public at this time," it said.

The three accused, along with Ali Abdul Aziz Ali and Ramzi Bin al Shibh, were initially charged jointly and arraigned on June 5, 2008, and then were again charged jointly and arraigned a second time on May 5, 2012, in connection with their alleged roles in the September 11, 2001, attacks against the United States, the release said. The letter says that the families now have 45 days to submit questions to be answered by the alleged co-conspirators by the end of the year.

Blinken aims to ease US election | UK stabbings suspect named in court concerns on 6-nation Asia tour PTI LONDON is shameful that some have the country on a boat. Arrests

PTI SINGAPORE

With large parts of the world in turmoil and deep uncertainty over the future direction of America's global role, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken sought this week to project an aura of calm normalcy as he traveled through Asia on his first overseas mission since President Joe Biden jolted the 2024 presidential race with his withdrawal. Whether he succeeded or not

remains an open question. On a trip to Laos, Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and Mongolia that was punctuated by several potential escalatory develop-ments in the Middle East, an uptick in Russian attacks in Ukraine and overshadowed by persistent fears about China's increasingly aggressive actions, he could not escape questions and comments about domestic U.S. politics

Having embarked on the sixvisit with us. In Singapore, Blinken was asked nation tour just days after Biden's decision, Blinken no by a senior diplomat about the

doubt would have preferred to "noise coming out of the presavoid the issue entirely but idential campaign" and replied came prepared with several with a joke.

'Really? I hadn't heard any of it," stock answers to questions about U.S. leadership from conhe said to laughter from the cerned partners and allies. Chief among them: "I don't do audience of students and academics from Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy before politics" and variations on "American engagement abroad taking a stab at a serious answer endures across administra-tions."In the Philippines, "We have these periodic things called elections and I think it's Blinken and Defense Secretary normal that before every elec-Lloyd Austin remained politetion — given the importance of ly silent when President this moment in history that our Ferdinand Marcos Jr. welcomed country has around the world them with a nod toward the that of course people ask campaign that now pits former

questions," Blinken said. They wonder what's going to happen in any given election, what direction does the country take, and maybe there are lesser or higher degrees of that on any given election, but it always happens before every election, and I understand that," he said. But, he argued that no matter

tion has become back in the who occupies the White House States, but I'm glad that you've found the time to come and "there are a number of constants that don't fundamental ly change irrespective of who wins a particular election."

 $T^{\rm he \ teenage \ male \ suspect}_{\rm the \ fatal \ stabbing \ of \ three}$ young girls in north-west England was Thursday named by authorities after restrictions were lifted in court, as Prime Minister Keir Starmer held talks with police chiefs over violent protests the incident triggered outside Downing Street here.

Axel Muganwa Rudakubana, a Wales-born 17-year-old from the nearby village of Banks in Lancashire who was arrested soon after the attack on Monday in Southport, appeared at Liverpool City Magistrates Court charged with three counts of murder, 10 counts of attempted murder and possession of a knife.

Judge Andrew Menary lifted the legal restriction on naming the accused after hearing submissions that he is just days away from his 18th birthday on August 7 and remanded him in youth custody until the next hearing on October 25.

In its update on Wednesday evening's violent clashes in the



aftermath of the stabbings, the Metropolitan Police said that 111 people had been arrested for offences including violent disorder, assaults on police officers, possession of knives and offensive weapons and breach of protest conditions. A number of officers were injured as one was punched in the chest, one elbowed in the

head, one kicked in the back, one kicked in the wrist and another kicked multiple times.

"Last night our officers faced unacceptable scenes of disorder and violence, as others across the country have done in recent days. They acted with great courage and the highest levels of professionalism in the face of hateful behaviour," said Met Police Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist.

"All our thoughts should be with the victims and families of those impacted by the most dreadful attack in Southport. It

sought to exploit this tragedy as justification for their own violence and criminality. There is absolutely no place for this on our streets. We will ensure that anyone involved in any violent disorder and criminal behaviour will be stopped, arrested and will face justice," he said.

Flares were thrown towards the gates of Downing Street and some among the crowd threw cans and glass bottles. Protesters later tried to kick down a fence as they were confronted by police equipped with riot gear. Chants of "Rule Britannia", "save our kids" and "stop the boats" could be heard as the crowd was penned in by the police trying to contain the disorder on Wednesday night. The London events followed violent protests in Southport and also in Hartlepool, northeast England, and Aldershot, south-east England, believed to involve far-right groups whipped up by social media misinformation claiming the male suspect behind the stabbing was a Muslim asylum seeker who arrived illegally in were also made in the violent disorder in Hartlepool and Aldershot.

Earlier, Merseyside Police Chief Constable Serena Kennedy said the charges against the teenage suspect mark a "significant milestone" in the "live investigation" as the force continues to work with partners from Lancashire Police and Counter Terrorism Policing North West

(CTPNW). Three children – six-year-old Bebe King, seven-year-old Elsie Dot Stancombe and nine-yearold Alice Dasilva Aguiar died as a result of the attack at

The Hart Space community centre. A "Taylor Swift Yoga and Dance Workshop" aimed at primary school children was taking place at the time of the attack in the seaside town north of the city of Liverpool.

Eight other children suffered stab wounds in the attack, five of whom remain in critical condition in hospital. Two adults, including one of the organisers of the event, also suffered critical injuries. PTI AK

Over 60 leaders endorse Kamala Harris for US President

Ramaswamy accuses Harris of leaning into 'identity politics'

ient on a national

jumps to 30 in China landslide

Death toll

New York (PTI): More than 60 South Asian American state and local elected officials from across the US have endorsed Kamala Harris for the presidency, saying that as the daughter of an Indian immigrant mother, she will create a "fairer and more inclusive" immi gration system. They also said that the US Vice President's victory in the November 5 presidential election would send a powerful signal to all Asian Americans, communities of colour, and women.

The officials joined the Indian American Impact in endorsing Harris, who is the 2024 Democratic candidate for President of the United States. "As South Asian elected officials, we proudly support Kamala Harris in her historic bid to become the first South Asian American woman President of the United States, the officials said in a statement issued by The Indian American Impact Fund, which is dedicated to promoting and elevating voices of Indian and South Asian Americans in the political and civic life of the United States

"As the daughter of an Indian immigrant mother, Harris will also "create a fairer and more inclusive immigration system, the statement said, referring to Harris's Chennai-born mother Shyamala Gopalan, a scientist who had moved to the US in the 1950s to pursue higher education.

"As an exceptional coalition builder, Harris possesses an extraordinary ability to unite our nation at a time when the stakes have never been higher," it said. The statement added that Harris's victory in the November 5 election would send a powerful signal to all Asian Americans, communities of colour, and women. "By helping so many reimagine what is possible, a President Kamala Harris would affirm that the American Dream isn't just an aspiration, but an achievable reality."

Pormer Republican presidential Candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has accused Vice President Kamala Harris of leaning into 'identity politics' and claimed that she only considered herself Indian-American when "convenient?

President Donald Trump

Democratic nominee Vice

"We are very happy to see (you) once again," Marcos said

on Tuesday in Manila. "I am a

bit surprised considering how

interesting your political situa-

President Kamala Harris.

presumptive

against

Ramaswamy, who supports the Republican Party's nominee Donald Trump now, said that Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, leaned on her Indian American heritage while running for office in California, where there is a significant Asian American population, but has since shifted her focus away from that identity on the national

stage 38-year-old Indian-The American biotech entrepreneur drew a comparison between Fox News Harris' heritage and his own to "I think it's a hard fact... it's a fact share his views on the subject. whether you like it or not, that "On a very personal level, my parents were immigrants to this many Indian-Americans in the US are indeed somewhat offendcountry, legal immigrants from ed by the way Kamala has sudsouthern India- the very same denly cast aside the Indian-American side of identity," part of India that (Harris') mother also immigrated from," he told



Real Madrid goalkeeper Andriy Lunin dives as Milan forward Samuel Chukwueze passes the ball during the second half of a friendly soccer match Wednesday, in Chicago

> Ramaswamy said. She leaned into it when she ran for Office in California- big Asian-American and Indian-American population, he said.

"So she wore that when it was convenient. She's wearing a different identity now when it is polit-

stage," he alleged.He said he does not think Americans should be relying on these ethnic identities at all. "We're actually American. And the problem is, when you're Kamala Harris and you actually lean into your identity politics, then you open the door to that type of criticism," he said.

"But if you ask me, that should n't be how this election is decided one way or another. It should be decided on our own identity as Americans and what our vision is for the future of our country. And the number one thing missing in Kamala Harris' candidacy is that she lacks that vision for the country," he added.Harris, 59, is Indian American and African American. Her mother emigrated from India, and her father emigrated from Jamaica. Former President Trump also mocked Vice President Harris's heritage during a combative live interview Wednesday at the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) convention, saying "she happened to turn Black" in recent

vears.

Beijing (AP): At least 30 people have died and 35 others are missing in a city in southeastern China after days of heavy rains tied to a tropical storm, state media said Thursday.

The death toll rose sharply from a previously reported four deaths in villages in Zixing, a city in Hunan province. In addition, a mudslide from the same rains killed 15 people on Sunday in another part of the province. Earlier this week, state broad-caster CCTV showed helicopters being used to get relief supplies into severely flooded areas in Zixing.

By midday Thursday, roadways, electricity and communications had been largely restored in the city's eight most affected townships, state media said.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang, visiting flood-hit villages in Zixing, urged all-out efforts to find the missing as search and rescue work continued.



Poland marks 80 years

since Warsaw uprising,

honours heroes

Warsaw (Poland) (AP): The Polish and German presidents bowed their heads to the cadence of a military drum as they paid tribute Thursday to Poles slaughtered by Nazi Germany during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 on the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the ill-fated revolt.

As Poland marked the hallowed day, news broke that the oldest surviving insurgent of the uprising, 106-year-old Barbara Sowa, died in the morning. With very few survivors left to take part in the ceremonies, it was a poignant reminder of the passing away of the generation shaped by the sacrifice of World War II. Later, the city will stop and sirens will wail to pay tribute to the insurgents. Taylor Swift, who is giving the first of three concerts Thursday evening in Warsaw, warned her fans on social media not to panic when they hear the sirens. Many are traveling from far away for the performance. Polish President Andrzej Duda and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier stood together, heads bowed, to remember those days of August in 1944. They paid tribute to the Wola Massacre, the mass-murder of civilians of Warsaw's Wola district carried out by the Germans from August 5 to August 12, 1944. "They were

led out of their homes, tene-

ment houses, their homes were

set on fire, and they themselves

were shot in the streets, and

their bodies were burned Several tons of ashes were collected from the streets and squares of Wola, in order to place them in a common grave," Duda said. The German president's bowed

head and other symbolic gestures signaled remorse for the crimes of his nation. That Steinmeier "lays a wreath, bows his head, kneels before the commemorative cross," calls for respect, said Duda, speaking for the nation under brutal occupation from 1939-1945, which suffered the extermination of millions of its citizens, Christian and Jewish, and the near-total destruction of its capital city. Many Poles feel the gestures of remorse are not enough, and the previous nationalist government in power from 2015-23 — allied with Duda — demanded USD 1.3 trillion from Germany in war reparations.

Germany says it will not pay and the matter was settled with compensation paid to East Bloc nations in the years after the war and with territory given up to Poland.

The government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, which took power last December, has toned down the demands but says it would still like Berlin to consider possibilities for compensation.Warsaw's revolt began August 1, 1944, by the clandestine Home Army, which acted on orders from Poland's government-in-exile in London.

Trump questions Harris' racial identity: Is she black or indian?

Washington (PTI): Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has launched a racially insensitive attack against Kamala Harris by questioning whether she is "Indian or Black", drawing a sharp reaction from his Democratic rival who termed his remarks "the same old show" of "divisiveness" and "disrespect".

Trump, 78, falsely claimed Vice President Harris had only emphasised her Asian-American heritage until recently when, he claimed, "she became a black person".

"I've known her a long time, indirectly, not directly very much, and she was always of Indian heritage, and she was only promoting Indian heritage. I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black, and

now she wants to be known as Black," Trump said at the National Association of Black Journalists convention in Chicago on Wednesday, as the race for the November 5 presidential election gained momentum with opinion polls showing that Harris has narrowed the gap with her Republican rival. "So I don't know - Is she Indian? Or is she black?"

Harris' mother is originally from India, and her father is from Jamaica.

As an undergraduate, Harris attended Howard University, a historically black school in Washington, and belongs to Alpha Kappa Alpha, the coun-try's oldest Black sorority. She was also the president of the Black Law Students Association while studying at the University of California's law school in San Francisco, and a member of the Congressional Black Caucus during her time in the Senate. When one of the journalists who was interviewing Trump on stage tried to tell him that Harris had always identified as Black and had attended a historically Black university, the former president continued: "I respect either one, but she obviously doesn't. Because she was Indian all the way, and then all of a sudden, she made a turn, and she went - she became a Black person. And I think somebody should look into that too? Trump's comments prompted immediate criticism.

Speaking at an event in Houston

Wednesday for the Sigma

Gamma Rho Sorority, a histor-

ically Black sorority, Harris told

the crowd that "this afternoon,

Donald Trump spoke at the

and it was the same old show." 'The divisiveness and the disrespect, and let me just say, the American people deserve better."Harris, 59, did not directly address the content of Trump's words but said that Americans "deserve a leader who tells the truth, a leader who does not respond with hostility and anger when confronted with the facts, we deserve a leader who understands that our differences do not divide us, they are an essential source of our strength."Harris campaign communications director Michael Tyler earlier said the "hostility Trump showed on stage today is the same hostility he has shown throughout his life, throughout his term in office, and throughout his campaign for president."

annual meeting of the National "Trump lobbed personal attacks and insults at Black journalists Association of Black Journalists, the same way he did throughout his presidency — while he failed Black families and left the entire country digging out of the ditch he left us in," Tyler said. "Donald Trump has already proven he cannot unite America, so he attempts to divide us." At the White House, press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre responded to Trump's jab at Harris, calling the former president's comments 'insulting." "As a person of colour, as a Black

woman, who is in this position that is standing before you at this podium, behind this lectern – what he just said, what you just read out to me is repulsive, it's insulting," Jean-Pierre said. 'No one has any right to tell someone who they are, how they identify.



Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Xi for smart system to boost border defence PTI BEIJING restoration of normalcy in its **Chhatra Shibir banned** relations with China as long as Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for greater use of the state of the borders remains

PTI DHAKA

Bangladesh on Thursday banned the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir under anti-terrorism law following nationwide unrest over the quota system for government jobs, accusing the fundamentalist party of instigat ing protests that left at least 150 people dead.

A notification issued by the Public Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday confirmed the ban on the Islamist party, a key ally of former prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The ban on Jamaat, Chhatra Shibir and other associated groups came through an executive order under Section 18(1) of the Anti-Terrorism Act. "They (Jamaat-Shibir and BNP) just used the students as their shield," Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Thursday when Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro called on her at her official residence Ganabhaban here.

A Home Ministry spokesman said that the government on August 1 banned all political activities of Bangladesh Jamaate-Islami and its various wings. The Bangladesh government on Tuesday decided to ban the

deadly nationwide students' protests over quotas in government jobs, accusing it of exploiting the movement that left at least 150 people dead. The development comes after a meeting of the ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance passed a resolution earlier this week that Jamaat must be

banned from politics. The decision to ban Jamaat comes over 50 years after its initial prohibition in 1972 for "misusing religion for political pur-poses". The Jamaat opposed Bangladesh's 1971 independence from Pakistan and sided with the Pakistani troops during the Liberation War. The party, founded in 1941 in

undivided India, was first banned in 1972, the year Bangladesh framed its Constitution, which disbanded the functioning of any association or union or political party based on religion. But the subsequent military gov-

ernment led by General Ziaur Rahman revoked the ban by issuing a martial law proclamation, which allowed Jamaat to refloat and years later became a crucial partner of the then prime minister Khaleda Zia's 2001-2006 four-party alliance government. Two senior Jamaat leaders

Jamaat-e-Islami following the were inducted into her cabinet. Top leaders of the ruling Awami League, who have been in power for the past 15 years, have sup-

ported the ban on the Jamaat because of its role in the Liberation War The Jamaat remained active despite losing its registration and being barred from elections

> due to court rulings. The party was allegedly involved in the recent violence surrounding the protests of the quota reform movement, which the government has cited as a reason for the ban, the report added. Violence gripped Bangladesh for almost the entire of July when the protests that had started in universities and colleges earlier this month, quickly turned into a widespread agitation against Prime Minister Hasina and her

government's policies. The government called in the Army to quell protests against job quotas after the unrest left at least 150 dead and several thousand people, including policemen, wounded and major government installations damaged Law Minister Anisul Huq said on Tuesday the ban is being imposed because of the recent violence associated with the quota reform movement and will be enacted through an executive order

technology and the deployment of a "smart system" for border defence to meet "new opportunities and challenges", amidst Beijing's unresolved land and maritime territorial disputes with its neighbours. The instructions were made during a group study session on Tuesday attended by the Communist Party's 24-member Politburo, its top policymaking body.

Xi highlighted the need to "strengthen technological empowerment" in border defence, "enhance the development of new methods and conditions for border, maritime, and air defence, and build a comprehensive and smart management and control system," Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Thursday.

This aligns with Xi's repeated calls to improve the use of advanced technology in the armed forces to meet modernisation goals by 2027 and achieve the goal of building a world-class military by 2050. Tuesday's meeting lacked details about what the "smart" systems would entail, the Post report said.

However, an article published last year in the PLA Daily, the official newspaper of the People's Liberation Army, said

the authorities have warned of

moderate to high flooding in

According to the Provincial

Authority (PDMA) spokesper-

son Mazhar Hussain, the 44-

year record for maximum

rainfall in a day during mon-

soon was broken on Thursday

with maximum rainfall -337

millimetres - recorded at the

The Pakistan Meteorological

Department (PMD) said,

Strong monsoon currents

from the Arabian Sea and Bay

of Bengal are expected to

Lahore airport area.

Management

Ihelum river at Mangla.

Disaster



technological advancements for border defence included modernised reconnaissance, surveillance, and early warning networks for efficient monitor ing, as well as unmanned weapons incorporating AI.

Xi called for efforts to build a "strong, stable, and modern" border defence, as well as air and sea defence, to safeguard the country's national security and interests. "As the world undergoes a cen-

tury of accelerating changes, the influencing factors have become increasingly complex. The construction of border, maritime, and air defence faces new opportunities and challenges," Xi said.

China is facing tensions on multiple fronts, including the military standoff with India in eastern Ladakh since May 2020 after Chinese troops aggressively moved closer to the LAC. Since then the two sides have

so far held 21 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks to resolve the standoff. The two sides so far agreed to disengage from four points, namely the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Jianan Daban (Gogra) in eastern

Ladakh. India is pressing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to disengage from the Depsang and Demchok areas, maintaining that there cannot be the

abnormal.

world 09

On Wednesday, India and China held a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) in New Delhi

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two sides reviewed the current situation along the LAC with a view to finding an early resolution of the outstanding issues. In the South China Sea, China has ongoing territorial dis-putes with the Philippines, and in the East China Sea, it is at odds with Japan over the con-tested Diaoyu Islands, known in Japan as the Senkaku Islands. Xi called for strengthened "overall coordination" to secure the borders, according to state news agency Xinhua.

Xi said on Tuesday that managing China's border defence involved multiple military and civilian departments. He called for "combined" efforts by the military, police, civilians and

local governments. He praised the achievements of recent reforms in border defence management systems, force structure and national defence policies, adding that "a series of significant actions have been carried out to effectively safeguard our territorial sovereignty and maritime rights," the Post report said.

British journalist deported from Pak after seeking meeting with Imran Khan in jail

PTI ISLAMABAD

British-73-year-old American author and journalist, who sought an interview with Pakistan's jailed former premier Imran Khan, has been deported after his tourist visa was revoked, a media report said on Thursday.

Charles Glass, an author, journalist, broadcaster, and publisher who specialises in the Middle East, was told by law enforcement agencies on Wednesday that his visa had been cancelled and he had five hours to leave the country, the

Dawn newspaper reported. Glass has served pro-minent media organisations such as Newsweek, ABC TV, and The Tele-graph, among others, and currently works as a freelance journalist. He had been trying to secure a meeting with Khan. Sources told the paper that

Glass, who was recently spotted outside Adiala jail in Rawalpindi alongside Khan's sister Aleema, was at the residence of Islamabad-based senior journalist Zahid Hussain when they were visited by a large police contingent. Around noon on Wednesday, a team led by an assistant superintendent of police (ASP)

arrived, initially saying they wanted to meet the foreign iournalist. They then informed Glass that his visa had been cancelled, After arguing for nearly an hour, the ASP reportedly told the journalist he had to leave the country by 5 pm.

"Mr Glass wondered how he would secure a flight and said his luggage is still at [his lodg-ings]. The ASP offered to accompany him to the hotel to collect his luggage and informed him that there was a

Lahore (PTI): Monsoon rains flight to Abu Dhabi available at on Thursday broke the 44-year 4 pm, which he should take to record for maximum rainfall leave the country. The ASP said in a day for Lahore, flooding he had a clear order to deport streets, homes, and even pubthe journalist," the paper quotlic hospitals in the capital city ed sources as saying. of Pakistan's Punjab province, which also killed three per-Sources said that Glass was inisons, officials said. More rains tially taken to his lodgings to are forecast for a few days and

collect his luggage, and then deported to the Middle East. Shahzad Akbar, a former aide of ex-PM Imran Khan, also mentioned the incident on social media. ' 'There are reports of the deportation of British journalist Charles Glass who was visiting Pakistan to see @ImranKhanPTI at Adiala prison," he wrote on X, former-Twitter. Sources said that Glass had been trying to secure an interview with Khan, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, and it was possible that his tourist visa was cancelled because of this.

Rainfall breaks 44-year record in Lahore

bring torrential rains to upper parts of the country from August 1 to 6, with intermit tent breaks? "Rain flooded streets, homes,

and even public hospitals, dis-rupting electricity supply across Lahore. Around 300 feeders have tripped in the city. Three people were killed in rain-related incidents in the city," officials said.

Flight operations in Lahore too were suspended for several hours due to heavy rains. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed the officials concerned to remain in the field 24/7 to drain out rainwater-inundated areas.

The PDMA said water levels in rivers, dams and streams are rising due to the monsoon rains. "Moderate to high-level flooding in the river Jhelum at Mangla from August 1 to 4 can be witnessed," it said.

China sanctions US lawmaker for 'interference' in domestic affairs

AP BANGKOK

Thina has sanctioned a United States lawmaker for "frequently interfering" in China's domestic affairs, in its latest effort to express displeasure with US politicians who have criticised China's policy and practice.

The sanction against Rep Jim McGovern, a Democratic congressman from Massachusetts. is symbolic, since the congressman has no assets in China or business dealings there. The sanction includes freezing his assets and properties in China, prohibiting any organization or individual in China from conducting transactions or working with him, and denying him and his family a visa to enter the country, according to a statement from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the social media platform X, McGovern called the sanctions "absurd" and said he would wear his "as a badge of honour.

"If (Chinese) leaders don't like it when people speak out against their horrific human rights record, maybe they should improve their horrific human rights record," McGovern wrote on X. "They can start by ending their oppression of Tibetans, ending their genocide in Xinjiang, and ending their crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong." McGovern is the ranking member of the House Committee on Rules, and he co-chairs the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. He also is a member of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which focuses on China's human rights record.

Beijing has previously sanctioned a number of US lawmakers, former Trump administration officials, and companies. It sanctioned Rep. Michael McCaul, also chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and former Rep. Michael Gallagher over their support for Taiwan, a self-governed democracy that China claims as its own. In 2020 it sanctioned Rep Chris Smith and several US senators, including Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. McGovern and McCaul, along with two senators, last year introduced bicameral legislation calling for stronger US support for Tibet, a region in China where human rights groups have criticized authorities for the treatment of ethnic Tibetans. Congress approved the bill in June, and President Joe Biden signed it into law in July.

UK family docs vote to limit

Russia launches

biggest drone barrage in seven months

Kyiv (AP): Ukrainian forces shot down all 89 Shahed drones launched by Russia in a nighttime attack on the country Ukraine's air force said Wednesday, in what was one of the largest drone barrages this year. No damage or injuries were immediately reported in the bombardment, which mostly targeted the region of Kyiv, the capital. Russia used the same number of Shahed drones in a Jan. 1 attack, an air force statement said. Both Ukraine and Russia have relied extensively on explosive drones during the war and have scrambled to come up with more countermeasures. The Russian drones are being shot down by Ukraine's Soviet-era aircraft, according to Anatolii Khrapchynskyi, an aviation expert in Kyiv. "The air force is using electronic jamming against the drones' GPS which forces the drones to fly at a higher altitude, which then makes it easier for Ukrainian aircraft to strike them down, he told The Associated Press



In this photo released by the Telegram channel of the head of Nizhny Tagil Vladislav Pinyaev on Thursday, August 1, 2024 Russian Emergency Ministry workers are seen near a multi-storey building partially collapsed presumably due to gas explosion in Nizhny Tagil, 1400km (870mi) east from Moscow, Sverdlovsk region, Russia. Three people have reportedly been rescued from under the rubble, information about the victims is being clarified AP/PT

international rights group Human Rights Watch said.

Police fire tear gas as protests break out in Nigeria

Abuja (Nigeria): Thousands of mostly young people poured onto the streets across Nigeria on Thursday as they protested against the country's worst costof-living crisis in a generation. Security forces fired tear gas to disperse protesters in several places.

În Abuja, where a court granted an order late Wednesday to restrict the protest to a stadium, Nigerian police officers were seen firing tear gas to disperse a crowd of protesters that gathered a few kilometers (miles) from the Presidential Villa. The police also fired tear gas at protesters in Bauchi and Borno

states in the conflict-battered

northeast. It was not immedi-ately clear if security forces made any arrests.

Nigeria's public officials, frequently accused of corruption, are among the best paid in Africa, a stark contrast in a country that, despite being one of the continent's top oil producers, also has some of the world's poorest and hungriest people.

Many businesses across the country were also shut on Thursday amid fears the Roads were blocked in parts of the country by either placardcarrying protesters or armed protests could be a replay of the security forces, who were deployed overnight after days of deadly 2020 demonstrations against police brutality in the mobilization for protests against the government of Nigerian West African nation — or a wave of violence similar to last President Bola Tinubu. Some month's protests in Kenya,

where a tax hike led to chaos in the capital, Nairobi. Though originally planned for 10 days, Omoyele Sowore, a former presidential aspirant and one of the pretect organizary said they groups also staged protests in support of the Nigerian leader. Rights groups and activists had raised concerns about a possible clampdown on the protests. Comments in recent days sugthe protest organizers, said they won't back down until their gest "a troubling readiness to stifle dissent, heightening fears of a violent crackdown," the demands are met.

The protesters said they are also aggrieved over the country's deadly security crises in the conflict-battered north, which Tinubu had promised to end when he was campaigning for president. Fourteen months into office, the country's security and economic crises have persisted, and even worsened in some instances, official statistics AP show.

Singapore Airlines resumes standard inflight services

PTI SINGAPORE

Singapore Airlines (SIA) on Thursday resumed its stan-dard in-flight service proce-dures following adjustments made in the wake of the inflight turbulence incident in May turbulence incident in May that hit flight SQ321 badly, leaving one passenger dead and several others injured. The airline had stopped serving meals when the seatbelt

sign was turned on as part of a more cautious approach after the incident during the London-Singapore flight on May 21.

"SIÁ flights will end its safety time-out and revert to standard in-flight service procedures from Aug 1, 2024, 0001hrs, Singapore time," said an SIA spokesperson in a statement on Thursday. SIA's pilots will continue to decide to either sus-

S Korea offers humanitarian aid to flood-affected North

country recover from heavy rains and floods that submerged thousands of homes and huge swaths of farmland. and huge swaths of farmiand. It's unclear whether North Korea would accept South Korea's proposal for help. Animosity between the war-divided rivals is at its highest in years over the North's grow-ing nuclear ambitions and the South's expansion of com-South's expansion of combined military exercises with the United States and Japan to counter the North's threats. South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said the South was willing to swiftly provide supplies to address the

pend or continue with the inflight service when the seat belt sign is switched on, depending on their assessment of weather and operational conditions, the spokesperson added. Hot beverages, including soup,

will not be served when the seat belt sign is on. Shortly after the SQ321 inci-

dent, SIA tightened its in-flight turbulence response procedures as a precautionary measure. The safety time-out implemented was to allow the airline time to "thoroughly review" its turbulence management protocols, SIA said in its statement.

We have verified that SIA's turbulence management protocols are in line with the industry's best practices and safety protocols," said SIA. "To reinforce these procedures among our staff, all our pilots and cabin

crew have undergone additional refresher courses over the last four weeks? The courses covered topics

such as recognising and handling risks associated with turbulence, assisting passengers during such instances and how to maintain safety throughout the flight. The airline has also introduced periodic reminders to its passengers via its in-flight entertainment system screens to reinforce the importance of keeping seat belts fastened while seated. "Customers should always follow the instructions of our pilots and cabin crew, and keep their seat belts fastened while seated at all times," the Channel News Asia quoted the spokesperson as saying. Safety of passengers and staff remains SIA's top pri-

ority, said the airline.

services to patients in row

OVER funding London (AP): Family doctors in England have voted to limit the number of patients they see and refuse extra work to protest a "broken" funding model, their union said on Thursday. The British Medical Association said 98.3 per cent of the 8,500 general practitioners who voted backed the work-to-rule action, which

falls just short of a strike. The open-ended action is due to start immediately.

The state-funded National Health Service said doctors' offices would remain open and the impact would vary from place to place. The union described the collective action as "an act of des-peration." It said a new contract between doctors and the government, which will see services given a 1.9 per cent funding increase for 2024-25.

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD. (Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001) Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813 (Phone No. 01881-275289) E-mail: se-hq-ggsstp-ropar@pspcl.in

E-Tender (Short Term) Enq. No. 539/P-2/EMPW-12715 Dated 05.07.2024 Dy. Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Purchase Cell-2) GGSSTP, Rupnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2024_POWER_124154_1 for Repair/Overhauling including replacement of spares 02 no. Transmission Assemblies of Sr. No. 384A94 and Sr. no. 2523B13 of BEML make Bulldozer Model 8D-155 as per tende specifications.

For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 29.07.2024 onwards. Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published

https://eproc.punjab.gov.in RTP-70/24

76155/12/3213/2023/36278 Dated CHD :- 8/1/2024



AP SEOUL $S \, {\rm outh} \, \, {\rm Korea} \, {\rm on} \, \, {\rm Thursday} \, {\rm offered} \, {\rm to} \, {\rm send} \, {\rm aid} \, {\rm supplies} \, {\rm to} \, \, {\rm North} \, \, {\rm Korea} \, {\rm to} \, \, {\rm help} \, \, {\rm the} \,$

"humanitarian difficulties"

facing North Korean residents following the recent storms. The ministry in a statement urged North Korea's Red Cross to promptly respond to its calls for discussions to determine the types and amounts of South Korean supplies and how to deliver them

North Korea didn't immediately respond to the South's offer.

North Korean state media said Wednesday that recent heavy rains left 4,100 houses, 7,410 acres of agricultural fields and numerous other public buildings, structures, roads and railways flooded in the northwestern city of Sinuiju and the neighboring

town of Uiju. The North has not reported details about casualties.



money 10

Sensex rises for 5th day Nifty scales historic 25K mount on US Fed rate cut hopes

PTI MUMBAI

Denchmark Sensex Badvanced 126 points to close at an all-time high while broader Nifty scaled the historic 25,000 mount for the first time in a volatile trade on Thursday following gains in banking and oil shares as the US Federal Reserve hinted at a rate cut by September.

Extending its winning run to the fifth day in a row amid weak global trends, the 30share Sensex climbed 126.21 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at a new lifetime high of 81,867.55. The index opened higher and rallied 388.15 points, or 0.47 per cent, to hit an all-time intra-day high of 82,129.49 in the morning session

The NSE Nifty rose 59.75 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 25,010.90. Intraday, it scaled the record 25,000 level for the first time, rising 127.15 points, or 0.50 per cent, to 25,078.30. From the Sensex stocks, Power Grid, NTPC, HDFC Bank, Nestle India, Adani Ports and



Special Economic Zone, Maruti Suzuki India and Reliance Industries were the major gainers. In contrast, Mahindra and Mahindra, Tata Steel, Bajaj

Finserv, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Motors were the laggards.

"The benchmarks started positive taking cues from the global market following the Fed Chair's indication that a rate cut might be considered at the September meeting due to easing inflationary pressures. cent, power by 0.86 per cent, energy by 0.80 per cent, oil &

gas by 0.59 per cent and metal by 0.35 per cent. Realty, capital goods. industrials, auto, telecommunication, consumer discretionary were among the laggards. "Indian Today's equity indices rose for the fifth consecutive session. Indian 81,867.55 markets opened higher on the back of positive cues from US markets where FOMC Chair Jerome Powell said a cut as early as September was a possibility," Devarsh Vakil, Deputy Head Retail Research of HDFC Securities, said. Maruti Suzuki India shares settled 1 per cent higher after "However, the broader market the homegrown automobile major reported a 47 per cent jump in net profit to Rs 3,650 closed on a negative bias due to escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East leading to crore for the June quarter. During the day, the stock hit a rising crude oil prices," Vinod Nair. Head of Research at 52-week high on the bourse. Geojit Financial Services, said. Shares of Omaxe declined 5 The BSE smallcap gauge fell 0.70 per cent and MidCap by per cent -- its lower circuit limit -- in the second straight day following Sebi restrictions 0.80 per cent in the broader on the realty firm, its Chairman, the MD, and three market. During the day, BSE MidCap hit its all-time high level. Among the indices, others from the securities utilities zoomed by 2.04 per market for two years for misrepresenting the company's financials

Strategic reforms needed to enhance India's appeal to global investors, attract FDI: GTRI

PTI 🗖 NEW DELHI

and

Strategic reforms are needed to enhance India's appeal to global investors as despite having huge potential, FDI data shows that the country has not fully capitalised on its opportunities, think tank GTRI said on Thursday.

Suggesting a four-step plan, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that measures which can help India position itself as a leading choice for foreign investors include reducing cost disadvantages for companies relocating to India, improving the Ease of Doing Business throughout the business lifecycle, and establishing a framework for evaluating investment proposals.

India attracted USD 44.4 billion in FDI (foreign direct investment) in FY2024, which is only 1.1 per cent of its GDP. The country lagged significantly behind countries like China (USD 189.1 billion), Brazil (USD 86.1 billion), Australia (USD 61.6 billion), and Canada (USD



costs due to large-scale local

production and efficient supply chains, while Vietnam

offers competitive costs with

low or zero tariffs on imports," GTRI Founder Ajay

He said that the financial

costs in India are the highest,

with lending rates around 9-

10 per cent, while China

enjoys lower interest rates at

4-5 per cent, and Vietnam's

rates are moderate at 7-8 per

"India needs to address these

costs and strive to be the most

option,"

Srivastava said.

cost-effective

Srivastava added

cent.

Sebi fines JM Financial Asset Management,

Billion) as noted in the World Development Report 2023, it said.

It suggested that India must offer a more competitive cost structure to attract businesses shifting from China or considering alternative production locations.

For this, India needs to address the four cost-related components - labour, rate material, energy and financial costs.

"In India, raw material costs are higher for non-traditional productions due to import dependence and high tariffs. China benefits from lower

former CEO, others for flouting rules

To further improve the ease of doing business, the GTRI suggested the identification of priority sectors, particularly those where India's manufacturing and export capabilities are currently weak, such as Electronics, computers, telecom, precision equipment, and factory machinery.

Secondly, invite top global anchor firms as manufacturers. These firms can drive technological innovation and improve productivity across sectors.

Additionally, there is a need to ensure quick factory-toship movement. Improving logistics through dedicated freight corridors and strategically locating industrial zones near ports will streamline port and customs processes, facilitating faster shipments," it added. Recommending to create a framework for evaluating investment proposals, it said investments involving technology transfer must be assessed for their potential to enhance local technological capabilities, especially in high-tech areas where India aims to close gaps

Domestic travel operators to see 15-17% revenue growth this fiscal: Crisil Ratings

PTI NEW DELHI

 $R_{\text{increasing}}^{\text{ising}}$ domestic tourism and overseas will expand the revenue of India's tour and travel operators by 15-17 per cent this fiscal, Crisil Ratings said on Thursday.

Factors like improving infrastructure, rising disposable incomes, a behavioural shift in travel patterns, and the government's increasing focus on boosting domestic tourism will further support the sector's revenue growth.

The assessment was based on an analysis of the country's four major travel operators, who account for about 60 per cent of the sector's revenue.

"The credit profiles of travel operators, too, are expected to remain healthy supported by strong balance sheets and steady operating margins of 6.5-7 per cent, in line with last fiscal, resulting in sizeable cash flows and continuing low reliance on debt," Crisil Ratings stated. In the domestic tourism market, growth is being fuelled by 'micro holidays' (e.G., quick getaways or staycations over long weekends), growing spiritual tourism, and better infrastructure (improved lastmile connectivity) facilitating travel to newer destinations.

An increase in inbound travel (foreign arrivals) to pre-pan and high demand from the corporate MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) segments are also supporting domestic travel, the



rating agency said. For overseas leisure travel, growth is being led by higher disposable incomes, visa-free facilities from 37 countries, simplified visa processes, including visaon-arrival and e-visa facilities, among others, and easing visa-related challenges related to long-haul destinations.

In addition, attractive travel packages and increased focus of Indian airlines on stinations ir

Ratings Ltd observed that the trend of 'revenge travel' seen after the pandemic has evolved into 'regularised travel' in recent years with a significant shift towards shorter and frequent vacations, for both domestic and overseas trips.

growing middle-class 'Moreover, rising urbanisation, aspirations, affordable packages, steadily increasing income levels, and the government's focus on boosting Indian tourism will maintain momentum tour and travel sector. This will, in turn, ensure healthy double-digit revenue growth for travel operators this fiscal as well," Upadhyay stated.

PTI NEW DELHI

Capital markets watchdog Sebi has imposed penalty totalling Rs 2 crore on seven entities, including JM Financial Asset Management Ltd, its trustee and its former CEO Bhanu Katoch, for flouting regulatory norms. The fine needs to be paid within 45 days, the Securities

and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its order. Individually, a fine of Rs 25 lakh was levied on JM

Financial Asset Management, Rs 10 lakh on JM Financial Trustee Company, Rs 1.1 crore on Bhanu Katoch, Rs 17 lakh on his mother Swarn Lata Katoch and Rs 8 lakh on his wife Sharika Kher.

Additionally, the regulator slapped a fine of Rs 22 lakh on Deepen Doshi, who was head of institutional sales at JM Financial Asset Management during the violation, and Rs 9 lakh on his mother Aruna Doshi.

In its order, Sebi noted that these five persons invested in Head of Institutional Sales, certain JM Financial Mutual respectively, during the holding Fund defaulted Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL) securities before the valuation change, using



the

interests

and

unitholders, have misused

order passed on Wednesday.

of

IM

unpublished information. securities of DHFL. "However, Noticee Nos. 1 and 4 by putting their interests

Additionally, were informing violating regulations and the AMC's on employee

Through this act, these five persons made a notional gain Management Financial Trustee Company of over Rs 1 crore collectively. were responsible for promptly The Noticee Nos. 1 (Bhanu Katoch) and 4 held (Deepen and accurately informing all Doshi) important positions as Chief Executive Officer and unit holders about the schemes' general affairs, including the reasons for the NAV increase, but failed to do so in a timely nination riod irtiie of their positions, they were privy to non-public material information regarding the impending sale of defaulted

responsibility of disclosing to the investors at large by merely averring that the sale of defaulted securities had a positive impact on the net asset value (NAV). "No doubt Noticee Nos. 6 (JM

Financial Asset Management) and 7 (JM Financial Trustee Company) had disclosed relevant information in the annual report for FY 2020-21 regarding the sale of defaulted securities, but the fact remains that the said annual report was issued on April 10, 2021, i.E. Almost nine months after the sale of

added. The order came after Sebi received a news article in July 2020, reporting an unusual 19.9 per cent increase in the Net Asset Value (NAV) of JM Low Duration Fund and other debt funds. This jump was mainly due to the sale of defaulted securities from DHFL, which had matured in 2019.

defaulted securities," Sebi

A Sebi circular dated June 23, 2020, allowed transactions in such matured downgraded Since these securities had a 'Nil' valuation, their sale value was entirely considered a gain, causing the NAV to rise.

This was considered unfair trading. their over made their positions and taken unit undue benefits out of the same," Sebi said in its 86-page Sebi

investments before holders, policy investments

Further, the regulator said that JM Financial Asset

central Asia are spurring international trips, driving outbound travel to a record high this calendar year, it said. Poonam Upadhyay, Director at CRISIL

Sebi said that JM Financial Asset Management and JM Financial Trustee Company their cannot abdicate



Nasscom bats for Infosys, says ₹32k cr GST notice shows lack of understanding of industry model

Infosys for services availed by

the company from its overseas

branches for five years starting

Infosys has called the notice a

'pre-show cause' notice and

said that it believes the GST is

not applicable to these expens-

The Bengaluru-headquartered

IT firm on Wednesday said

Karnataka State GST authori-

ties have issued a pre-show

cause notice for payment of

GST of Rs 32,403 crore for the

period July 2017 to March

2022 towards the expenses

incurred by overseas branch

offices of Infosys Limited and

added that the company has

responded to the pre-show

cause notice.

in 2017.

PTI NEW DELHI

Apex IT association Nasscom on Thursday came out in support of Infosys -- which is facing a Rs 32,403 crore GST notice, saying that the move reflected a lack of understanding of the industry's operating model.

Flagging the issue of the applicability of GST through the reverse charge mechanism (RCM), Nasscom rued that multiple companies are facing avoidable litigation, uncertainty, and concerns from investors and customers.

"Recent media reports of a GST demand of over Rs 320 billion (Rs 32,403 crore) reflects a lack of understanding of the industry's operating model," Nasscom said in a statement, without naming Infosys. The leading industry body asserted that it is crucial that compliance obligations are not subject to multiple interpretations

Accelerating services exports is key to India's ambition of 'Viksit Bharat' and for attracting global tech investment to India, it added.

Domestic food market expected to grow at 47% till 2027: Official

PTI 🗖 CHENNAI

The domestic food market I was expected to grow by over 47 per cent between 2022 and 2027 and expected to touch USD 1,274 billion, a top industry official said.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Foodpro Expo 2024 Chairman B Thiagarajan said the food processing sector "This requires a supportive policy environment and ease of was growing at an average annual growth rate of 5.35 per cent between 2015-16 to 2022-23. doing business. The govern-"In 2022-23, the sector accountment circulars issued based on recommendations of the GST ed for 7.66 per cent of the GVA (Gross Value Added) in manu-Council must be honoured in enforcement mechanisms so facturing at 2011-12 prices," that notices do not create Thiagarajan, also the Managing Director of air-conditioners and uncertainty and negatively commercial refrigerators maker impact perceptions on India's ease of doing business," it said. Blue Star Ltd said in a press GST authorities have slapped a release on Thursday. Rs 32,403 crore notice on

"In terms of employment, the sector employs almost 2 million workers in nearly 41,500 registered units. With a market size of USD 866 billion in 2022, the food industry will play a vital

role in the economy growth. CII Tamil Nadu Chairman Srivats Ram said currently India is the largest producer of milk, pulses, banana, mango, pomegranate, papaya, lemon, non-food crops like cotton and jute.

During 2023-24, India produced 304.4 million tonnes of cereals, 296 million tonnes of pulses, 351.9 million tonnes of horticulture, 230.6 million tonne of milk and 138.4 billion eggs, Ram also the Managing Director of steel wheels manufacturer Wheels India Ltd said.



PTI NEW DELHI

Tndia's manufacturing sector growth eased slightly in July, on softer increases in new orders and output, while cost pressures and demand strength led to the steepest increase in selling prices since October 2013, a monthly survey said on Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) moderated slightly from 58.3 in June to 58.1 in July. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

headline "India's manufacturing PMI showed a marginal slowdown in the pace of expansion in July, but with most components remaining at robust levels, the small drop is no cause for concern," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Économist at HSBC, said.

Despite slowing since June, Indian manufacturers reported a substantial increase in new work intakes. There were also reports of strengthening demand from clients based in Asia, Europe, North America and the Indian Middle East, manufacturers experienced a robust increase in international sales during July.

The overall rate of expansion was marked and the secondstrongest in over 13 years, the survey said.

On the price front, buoyant demand also exerted pressure on prices. Input costs rose at one of the quickest rates in nearly two years, which contributed to the steepest increase in selling prices since October 2013.

manufacturers Indian reported having paid more for coal, leather, packaging, paper, rubber and steel, as per the survey.

The continuous increase in the output price index, driven by input and labour cost pressure, may signal further inflationary pressure in the economy," Bhandari noted. The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent in the June meeting as sticky food inflation continues to keep retail inflation high. The next monetary policy announcement is scheduled

for August 8. Going ahead, the survey further noted that the overall level of positive sentiment towards the year-ahead outlook for production was broadly unchanged since June. Growth is expected to be supported by marketing efforts and new client enquiries, it said.

Chandrayaan-3 success encouraged startups to tap space sector: Nambi

PTI 📕 CHENNAI

The historic success of ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 mission to the Moon has captured the attention of several startups to tap the Indian space sector, said former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan.

Tamil Nadu Minister for Industries TRB Rajaa said the achievements of space scientists and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) should be celebrated. Rajaa and former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan took part in the launch of space accelerator technology "Vaanam" (Tamil word meaning sky) backed by its co-founders Sameer Bharat Hariharan Ram and Vedamurthy, on Wednesday. The space tech aims to nurture startups in the space sector by offering its expertise including seed fundings among others. "We are evaluating about 6 startups this year (to offer its expertise)", Ram said. According to him, the Indian space economy pegged at USD 13 billion is expected to touch USD 44 billion in 10 years. Ram said Nambi Narayanan and actor Madhavan, who played the role of Narayanan himself, in multilingual the film 'Rocketry', have been inducted into the Board of Vaanam Tech accelerator. Space Narayanan in a 'Fireside Chat' organised at the event observed that though there are about 189 startups in space the world)" he said.



technology, 'majority' of them were engaged in what ISRO did 50 years ago.

"Why do you want to do something that ISRO did 50 years ago? You need to do what ISRO needs today and in that you will be able to compete globally, particularly with other countries." he said. Narayanan expressed his long-term desire to set up an Asia Aeronautics Space Agency (AASA) comprising Asian countries, in line with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States. 'You may induct countries like Maldives, Mayanmar if they are interested (to set up the Asian Space Agency)" he said. Welcoming Narayanan's view, Rajaa remarked that the achievements of ISRO and space scientists should be celebrated and showcased to the world.

"We need to celebrate these victories, instead of showcasing it as just one event. Achievements of ISRO and space scientists like Narayanan should be told (to

Chennai holds third position in the presence of startups engaged in the space sector while the majority of such startups were based out of Bengaluru, he added Narayanan said academic institutions should forge a space partnership with agencies like ISRO to foster education on space technology to students. He said it was the Princeton university that forged a partnership with NASA to tap the space sector allowing students to explore the opportunities in space tech. We need to tell kids, schools

about space technology. It should be taken into the curriculum," he said and opined that a space exploration facility be set up to encourage kids.

"Maybe, the space exploration facility can accommodate about 100 students who will get an opportunity to see and feel how it will be in space and how other planets look from Earth. It may be like a simulation. This will encourage them ", Narayanan said.

the pioneer

ART & CULTURE vivacity 11

A New Path

GEETA CHANDRAN'S ARTISTIC LEGACY

Padma Shri awardee **GEETA CHANDRAN**, honored with the NRITYA CHOODAMANI, celebrates 50 years of transformative work in Bharatanatyam, underscoring her lasting impact on classical dance and cultural dialogue, says SAKSHI PRIYA

ongratulations on being conferred the NRITYA CHOODAMANI title. Reflecting on your 50-year journey in Bharatanatyam, how do you perceive this honour in the context of your career and contributions to classical dance?

Every award is a reminder that the work must continue. But, frankly, after a while, the awards truly cease to matter. One's perspective changes. What is truly exciting is that the body and the mind are so aligned that one can dance only for oneself. That is the most exciting frontier. Everything else feels superficial.

You have received numerous prestigious awards over your career, including the Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. How does the NRITYA CHOODAMANI title compare to these other honours in terms of its significance to you?

The Krishna Gana Sabha is an extremely prestigious dance forum in Chennai. An honour from that Sabha is very significant. In fact, for a Bharatanatyam dancer who has crafted my dance journey completely outside Chennai considered the mecca of Bharatanatyam, this is a nod from that citadel. So, I value it.

Your journey in Bharatanatyam began 50 years ago with your arangetram. Can you share some of the most pivotal moments and challenges you faced during these five decades?

Dance is probably the most fragile of artistic pursuits. That is because its instrument is the body and to keep that tuned constantly in pitch condition is an extremely arduous and daily task. Taming the body constantly for fifty years has been challenge Number 1. The next challenge has been to add layers to the knowledge gained from some of the most wonderful Gurus of those decades. And finally, the search for one's own artistic voice and to keep it sane without compromises has been a wonderful path of self-realization.



issues that have engaged my focus: exploring linkages between body and mind; forging relationships between solo dancing, group dancing and choreography; actualising the connects between the artist and society; and using dance as a medium for expressing abstract notions of Joy, Beauty, Values, Aspirations, Mythology and Spirituality.

NATYA VRIKSHA's vision statement seeks to probe the continuing relevance of classical tradition in a world of changing values. It showcases the aesthetics of Bharatanatyam and its history, how the tenets of the dance can be employed as a means of communicating issues of contemporary concern, even while exploring linkages between history and continuity, between external body and internal mind-space, between yesterday and tomorrow, between artist and audience.....between roots and wings.

championed to ensure the art form's relevance and vibrancy in today's world?

At NATYA VRIKSHA, I aim to make youth aware of the immense potential of Bharatanatyam to become a live voyage of learning; make them comprehend the complex ; interlinkages between the classical dance tradition and its strict grammar with other disciplines: Philosophy, Ritual, Religion, Myths, Ancient texts, Poetry, Literature, Art (Painting and Sculpture), Cultural Studies, Yoga, Handicrafts & Handlooms and Beauty & Aesthetics.

Towards this end, I have evolved a holistic method of transmitting classical dance; an approach that encompasses training students both in dance (theory and practice) and dance aesthetics. They are also made aware of the related fields of music, aharya (costuming & make-up), stage design and sound & light technologies. The aim is to use Bharatanatyam as a tool to wider knowledge, spiritual and physical empowerment

Balancing multiple roles as a dancer, choreographer, Carnatic vocalist and media personality is no small feat. How do you integrate these diverse aspects of your artistic identity into a cohesive whole?

There is no master plan; just efficient management of time to do all these things that I truly enjoy and that imbue my being with meaning.

Curating dance at the Serendipity Arts Festival must be a unique experience. How has this role influenced your perspective on contemporary and traditional art forms and how do you see them converging?

Serendipity has made me focus on young audiences and their expectations of performance. And what joy it is to see that GenZZZ can equally engage and enjoy the pristine classical and the contemporary and also the experimental. Curating that dizzy mix has brought me in touch with artists from across the spectrum all over India. South Asia and

enjoying it feels very special. I sing anyway, always. There's always music going on in my head. I've got singing offers before but I thought the first one should be something from me directly to the audience So I decided to release it on my own YouTube channel.

How do you balance your acting career with your newfound interest in singing and



of the ocean on a rock. I practice meditation on one foot everyday to increase focus. On

the day we decided to shoot it was very sunny and breezy and hot. So that was tough. But somehow the strength just came to push through and I didn't feel like it was a challenge.

How did you approach the task of capturing the essence and energy of the Shiv Tandav Stotram in both your live and recorded performances.

With honesty always, as I do everything in life. I don't know any other way.

Given the positive reception of your live chanting performance, do you plan to incorporate more live chanting or musical elements into your public appearances?

I haven't actually planned anything. We thought we would do a launch but I'm shooting for two big projects and the role in one of them I think is the toughest I've played. So even on days off in preparation. We just put the song out on YouTube and Instagram , no ads, no publicity. But in today's time I think the audience is the best PR.

What message or feeling do you hope to convey to your audience through your rendition of the Shiv Tandav Stotram and how do you feel it aligns with your overall artistic expression?

As the Founder-President of NATYA VRIKSHA, you have nurtured many young artists. How has your philosophy of holistic dance education evolved over the years and what core values do you emphasise in your teachings?

Dance as movement is only a fraction of my vision of dance. At Natya Vriksha, I have experimented with Bharatanatyam as a 'force multiplier' for the widest range of classical dance

You are celebrated for your dynamic performances that promote societal dialogue and inclusivity. Could you elaborate on how you choose themes and choreograph pieces that transcend linguistic and cultural barriers?

My engagement with contemporary issues led me to create a unique

articulated my conviction that dance can be a vehicle to build social bridges and erase social stigma, amplify gender issues and raise awareness on making sustainable environmental choices. I am currently absorbed with creating a new work that looks at new dimensions of women and conflict.

format which I call performance-

dialogue through which I raise

contemporary issues through my

classical performances. Previous

works like HER VOICE and

IMAGINING PEACE raised issues

of the meaninglessness of violence.

KAIKEYI spoke about stigma and

villainization. MYTHOLOGIES

RETOLD addressed the issue of

female foeticide. ANEKANTA

Constitution's vision of an inclusive

society. And GANDHI: WARP AND

WEFT was a reminder of Gandhian

values and choices. SIMHIKA:

DAUGHTER OF THE FOREST

highlighted the need for justice and

rights for forest tribals. JAYATU

BHARATAM celebrated 75 years of

India's independence.

All these choreographies

the

Indian

highlighted

Preserving and promoting Bharatanatyam is a significant part of your legacy. What specific initiatives or projects have you beyond.

What legacy do you hope to leave behind in the world of Bharatanatyam and classical dance, both through your performances and your work with students and the broader community?

I don't yearn for any legacy. The only legacy is constant sweat. If you can do that every single day of your life, you can become a dancer. Everyone else remains an amateur.

do you have plans to explore more musical projects in the future?

reveals her intent to inspire

others through her music.

dah, your recent singing debut with Athe Shiv Tandav Stotram has

captivated many. What inspired you to

choose the Shiv Tandav Stotram for your

As an actor I meet so many people who say

they saw me do something and got inspired

to do it themselves. So I thought this would

be nice to inspire people. Also we made this

version a version that has a lot of beats so you

Can you describe the emotions you felt

while chanting the Shiv Tandav Stotram

live in a temple and how that experience

I had shared a version during the lockdown

which I sang live in my home and then in a

temple last year. Whenever I went for any

public appearances people would ask me to

chant it. So I thought it would be nice to do a

studio recorded version. Chanting the Shiv

tandav makes me feel focused, strong ,

energetic and the empowered feeling that all

The video of your live chanting at an event

went viral and received widespread acclaim

and is trending on instagram since the release. How did that response impact you

and did it motivate you to pursue more

I did this especially for the audience so them

evil will be destroyed.

singing opportunities?

influenced your recorded performance?

feel energised when you listen to it .

singing debut?

I like doing multiple things I enjoy. But I don't know how to plan for the future. I enjoy living in the present and working on becoming a better actor, dancer , singer everyday. I believe opportunities will come if they are meant to.

What was the most challenging part of performing the Shiv Tandav Stotram and how did you overcome those challenges? For the video I wanted to stand in the middle

I am one of those very fortunate actors, I get the opportunity to play different roles because the audience accepts me in them. Just after the Kerala story where I played an innocent college girl I played an evil bar dancer in Sunflower season 2 and then I did Bastar where I was a soldier fighting for my country. My upcoming projects also have me being different people. On social media I am myself which is so different from all these characters . The audience doesn't allow me to get typecast. I'm very very lucky.

ALOGUE B ETWEEN RTISTIC Δ DI Т W O

Experience the artistic vision and creative journey of Amitava and Mohan Samant. Their exhibitions remind us that art goes beyond just being a collection of works, it becomes a dialogue between the past, present and future, writes TEAM VIVA

The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art engagement with materials, ranging provided a fascinating look into the museum presented over 150 works pieces by Mohan Samant, tumultuous showcasing how each artist has contributed shaping to contemporary Indian art.

Amitava's "If We Knew the Point" was an introspective exploration of his internal landscape, brought to patterns life through a variety of mediums hinting at and techniques. The exhibition title underlying itself hinted at a philosophical c h a o s journey, with the "point" referring to the elusive meaning or direction approach struck a Amitava's versatility and his deep to create compositions that were

L in New Delhi has hosted two from graphite, ink and watercolor remarkable exhibitions that explore to acrylics and burnt marks. His the creative journeys of Amitava artworks resisted straightforward and Mohan Samant. These narratives, inviting viewers to exhibitions, titled "If We Knew the interpret the complex themes and Point" and "Magic in the Square," emotions embedded within each piece.

world of Indian modern art Central to Amitava's work was the through the eyes of two artists color black, used not merely as a whose works are both unique and tone but as a gateway to deeper deeply interconnected. The introspection. Black served as a canvas for exploring socio-political by Amitava and a diverse range of themes and reflected the realities of contemporary society. In works like the "Heads" series, dense, totemic figures emerged from

> this blackness, their intricate A mitava's

in life that Amitava seeks through balance between control and his art. The collection revealed spontaneity, as he layered materials



textures and layers, emphasising that art is more about experiencing than simply understanding. On the other hand, Mohan Samant's

blend of Eastern and Western influences, creating a unique visual Photo: Pankah Kumar language that defied categorisation.

Samant's works often drew from a wide array of cultural motifs, incorporating elements from Indian mythology, Egyptian hieroglyphs and Western modernist techniques.

Samant's fascination with mythological and ancient themes was evident in his work, where the past and present converged to create symbols and narratives. His art was not just a visual experience but a sensory one, incorporating mixed media materials like wire, plastic toys and sand to add

texture and depth. These elements created a tactile dimension to his pieces, inviting viewers to explore them as living artifacts that challenged the conventional boundaries of painting and

sculpture. The juxtaposition of Amitava and Mohan's exhibitions offered a unique dialogue between two generations of artists. While Amitava's work delved into introspection and emotional

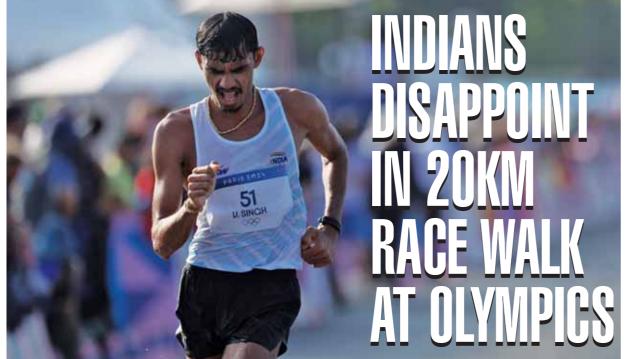
complexity, Samant's art celebrated cultural synthesis and exploration. Together, these exhibitions provided a holistic view of the diverse trajectories of Indian art, highlighting the personal and cultural narratives that have shaped its evolution.

As viewers navigated these exhibitions, they were encouraged to reflect on their interpretations and connections, making the experience both profound and intimate. In this shared space, art became a journey - a continuous exploration of meaning and the human experience. Through their lenses, the museum offered a window into the transformative power of art and its ability to bridge cultural and personal divides.

At the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, these two exhibitions reminded us that art is more than just a collection of works; it is a conversation between the past, present and future, a tribute to the enduring power of creativity and the human spirit.







PTI PARIS

AP PARIS

lead to 19-17.

ational record holder Priyanka Goswami finished a poor 41st in the women's 20km competition while Vikash Singh and Paramjeet Singh ended at lowly 30th and 37th positions respectively in the men's event as Indian race walkers produced а disappointing performance at the Paris Olympics here on Thursday.

Priyanka, an Asian silver medallist, clocked 1 hour, 39 minutes and 55 seconds, more than a whopping 10 minutes outside her season's best of 1:29:48, to bring up the rear. Only two race walkers finished behind her. more than 85 per cent

The U.S. Men's 3x3 basketball team fell to 0-2 in pool play in the Paris Olympics with a 19-17 loss to

Poland Wednesday night. Jimmer Fredette cut the lead

to 1 with about 90 seconds left

before Michal Sokolowski

made a free throw a few

seconds later to extend the

The U.S. Had a chance to tie it

late, but Fredette's 2-point attempt came up short.

Fredette, who was brought in

to boost the team after the U.S. Failed to qualify for

Tokyo, appeared to sustain an

injury with about three minutes left. He looked to be

in pain as he was tended to by

a trainer but soon returned to

the game. He did not speak to reporters

after the game and a team

spokesman said he was

receiving treatment but did

The 28-year-old Priyanka, who has a personal best of 1:28:45, has been based in Australia since early this year after the Mission Olympic Cell approved her high-altitude training last December.

Reigning Asian Games champion Yang Jiayu of China won gold with a time of 1:25.54 while world champion Maria Perez (1:26:19) of Spain and Commonwealth gold and Commonwealth gold medallist Jemima Montag (1:26:25) of Australia took the silver and bronze respectively. The competitions were held under warm and humid conditions. When the women's event ended, the temperature rose to nearly 25 degree Celsius while humidity was

throughout. Athletics competition of the Paris Olympics began on Thursday. In the men's corresponding event, which started 30 minutes late due to rain, Vikash clocked 1 hour, 22 minutes and 36 seconds while Paramjeet crossed the finish line in 1:23:48sec in the race won by Brian Daniel Pintado (1:18:55) of Ecuador.

Caio Bonfim (1:19:09) of Brazil and reigning world champion Alvaro Martin (1:19:11) of Spain took the silver and bronze medals respectively while Tokyo gold medallist Olympics Massimo Stano (1:19:12) of Italy was fourth. record holder National Akshdeep Singh pulled out

after the 6km mark and he was seen in discomfort, holding his abdomen while bending down forward.

A team coach told PTI that Akshdeep was having fever for the last two days due to Urinary Track Infection (UTI). "He was having fever from 30th onwards because of UTI. However, he recovered from fever yesterday," the coach said

India was among the countries which had three full quota of athletes in the men's event but all of them could not match their personal best.

The best performance by an Indian in the Olympics was the 10th-place finish by KT Irfan in the 2012 London Games with a timing of 1:20:21.

Nikhat's Olympic campaign ends with shocking loss to China's Yu



PTI 📕 PARIS

In one of the biggest upsets of the Olympic Games boxing competition, two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (50kg) bowed out after a 0-5 loss to Asian Games goldmedallist Wu Yu, completely outmaneuvered by the Chinese in a stunningly lopsided bout here on Thursday.

Nikhat was unseeded for the Games as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which is holding the boxing competition, doesn't recognise the International Boxing Association (IBA), which conducts the world

conducts the world championship. One of Indias strongest medal contenders, Nikhat was put under pressure by the top-seeded reigning flyweight (52kg) world champion in the opening round itself.

Yu was quick off the blocks and

Nikhat tried to though counter-attack, she wasn't able to connect. The reason being, Yu's brilliant footwork, which allowed her to consistently switch her stance to avoid the blows. Trailing 1-4, Nikhat found a bit more success in the second round as she landed a few straights but Yu managed to connect some telling hooks on the Indian's face. Nikhat ended the round with a few body shots.

Not much changed in the third round as Nikhat desperately tried to connect but continued to fail due to Yu's nimble movements.

Despite this loss, Nikhat remains one of the most consistent Indian boxers, having won back-to-back gold medals at the world championships and the 2022 Commonwealth Games besides a bronze in the Asian Games last year.



Biggest, most diverse fleet in Olympic sailing gets ready to hit water

So far in Marseille, the chal-

lenge has been the opposite:

very low winds under a scorch-

ing sun, which can also be

The boats are relatively inex-

pensive to buy and transport, designed to fit the top of a car.

So, they're the star of World Sailing's development program,

which aims to support athletes from nations without long his-

tories in Olympic sailing, from El Salvador to Fiji to

"It's cool to see it's not always the same five nations," said Nethra Kumanan, 26, of India, who

qualified for the Games in the

ILCA 6 at the so-called last-

chance regatta under the pro-gram. "We hope we can give

And a fight it is, because the

event features almost twice as

many boats as the other sailing

er also was an Olympic sailor

"It feels like it's not over till the very end," echoed Maud Jayet,

28, of Switzerland, who learned

sailing on Alpine lakes and competed in the Tokyo Games.

Like her and most sailors in this category, Marit Bouwmeester, 36, of the Netherlands, enjoys

shouldering all the responsibil-

ity alone for racing strategy,

Olympics, snagging silver in London, gold in Rio and bronze in Tokyo. In Marseille, howev-

er, she's trying something new - competing as the mother of a 2-year-old daughter.

'It's a challenge to do mother-

hood and top sports,"

Bouwmeester said, especially to find the time to train hard and

unlike in two-person boats. Her tactics have been paying off - she's medaled in the last three

but in the two-person boats.

categories - more than 80. 'It's the hardest to win, it's very equal," said Tom Saunders, 32, of New Zealand, whose broth-

draining.

Mozambique.

them a fight."

AP ■ MARSEILLE (FRANCE)

The biggest and most diverse fleet of the 2024 Olympics' sailing events, the one-person dinghy, is scheduled to hit the water Thursday in sweltering Marseille.

The small, white-sailed boats formerly known as lasers, now called ILCA 6 for women and ILCA 7 for men - go slower, sail deeper into the water and have a less spectacular design than many other vessels in the Olympic marina.

But, to the sailors who race them, they are the purest form of the sport.

"It's very pure and it's very close - you've got to work for every inch," said Matt Wearn, 28, of Australia. "You're not looking to win by a mile, you're looking to win by a meter."

Wearn is seeking to defend the gold he won in the event in the Tokyo Games - and so is Anne-Marie Rindom of Denmark, 33, who in addition to gold from Tokyo has a bronze from Rio de Janeiro and first competed in the London Games in 2012.

"It's all about the sailor in the boat," said Rindom, whose parents first took her sailing when she was two weeks old. She competed in her first regatta at age nine.

In this class, boats are provided to Olympians only about a week before the Games, levelling the playing field.

That makes consistently nailing the smallest tactical detail - an inch of advantage at the starting line, catching a sudden wave to surf ahead, balancing for the additional weight of branding stickers on the sail the key to medal.

"All these little accuracies make a huge difference," said Micky Beckett, 29, of Britain. "Being on top of your mental game is absolutely everything.

That's also because the boats are then, recover, but there's also a so versatile and "basically mental advantage. "If I have a unsinkahle' had day I can go that they can - and do - sail in any weather, for hourlong regattas. Not that physical strength is negligible. In big swells, with spray coming straight at the athletes' bodies, races can be "quite battering, like being thrown into a washing machine and spat out the other side," Wearn he doesn't want one.

US men fall to 0-2 in 3x3 basketball pool play at Olympics with 19-17 loss to Poland

a basket by Canyon Barry with about six minutes left before Poland used a 6-1 run to make it 15-9 with four minutes to

Poland was up by 5 with about 2 1/2 minutes to go when Barry made three free throws to cut the lead to 17-15. Barry shoots free throws underhanded like his father, NBA Hall of Famer Rick Barry.

A basket by Adrian Bogucki pushed Poland's lead to 3 and Dylan Travis made a shot for the U.S. Before Fredette's last bucket got team within 18-17. Bogucki had seven points and five rebounds for Poland, Barry said. "That's what it throws by Lucas Dussoulier



which lost to France on comes down to. We had a lot with about two minutes left. just they five points, with the last three from Evaldas Dziaugys to tie it with less than a minute to play. Lithuania had the ball with 12 seconds left, but Gintautas Matulis turned it over to set up Vergiat's game-winner. Jules Rambaut had nine points with five rebounds for France, which beat Poland on Tuesday

Lithuania got seven points each from Aurelijus Pukelis and Dziaugys. LATVIA

NETHERLANDS 12: Karlis Lasmanis scored eight points to lead defending champion Latvia over the Netherlands. Nauris Miezis added five points and six rebounds in the win after Latvia opened the tournament by beating Lithuania.

Worthy de Jong made a basket followed by a free throw to get the Netherlands within 1 point with about four minutes to go.

Latvia then scored the next Majstorovic made consecutive pointers by Lasmanis and one from Miezis to extend the lead to 19-9. Arvin Slagter scored the first points for the Netherlands in more than two minutes on a 2-pointer after that and De Jong made a basket with less than a minute to go to cut the

lead to 19-12. But Lasmanis made a 2pointer to end it on the next ossession.

The Netherlands, which beat China in its opener, was led by De Jong's seven points. CHINA 21, SERBIA 15: Zhang Ning scored 11 points and added four rebounds to

help China beat Serbia. A basket by Mihailo Vasic put Serbia up 9-7 with about six

minutes remaining. China took over after that, going on a 10-1 run to take a 17-10 lead. China made three 2-pointers in that stretch to pull away.

Marko Érankovic and Dejan nters for Sei a to cut the

an injury. The U.S. Team remains confident despite the tough start to the Paris Games. we're "I don't think concerned," Kareem Maddox said. "We just know we have some adjustments to make."

The U.S. Was down by 1 after

Barry and Travis led the U.S. With six points each. Fredette, who is the only player with NBA experience in the 3x3 competition, added three. The U.S. Struggled from longrange, making just 2 of 15 attempts. "We're just not making shots,"

didn't fall tonight." FRANCE 21, LITHUANIA 19: Timothé Vergiat scored eight points and his basket with three seconds remaining lifted France to a win over Lithuania and a 2-0 start in pool play.

France led by 5 after two free

lead to 19-15 with about two minutes to go.

Zhao Jiaren closed it out by making two free throws with 2:05 remaining.

Majstorovic had seven points and Brankovic added five for Serbia, the Tokyo Olympics bronze medal winner.

a mother. Pavlos Kontides, 34 and the first athlete from Cyprus to win a medal - for the then-laser in 2012 - is coming back for his fifth Olympics, with a toddler in tow who changed his perspective about the relative importance of medals. Not that

"Pathirana has suffered a mild sprain on his

right shoulder while diving to take a catch during the Third T20 match vs. India," the

statement added. Pathirana did not bowl in the thirds T20I at Pallekele on Tuesday.

The hosts have brought in Mohammed

Shiraz and Eshan Malinga as replacements

Meanwhile, Kusal Janith, Pramod Madushan

and Jeffrey Vandersay have been added to

for the injured players.

the squad as standbys.

HER SPORTS

India eager to settle Rahul vs Pant debate in ODIs against SL

PTI COLOMBO

The Gautam Gambhir-led Indian team management has an opportunity to decide who among KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant will be India's long-term first-choice wicketkeeper-batter in ODIs when the side takes on Sri Lanka in a three-match series beginning here on Friday.

There will be clamour around the first sighting of veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli as well, after the recent T20 World Cup triumph.

But the think-tank will look to shut out that outside noise, focusing on sorting out the combination in a season that has some marquee one-day events including the Champions Trophy.

In that context, the Rahul vs Pant conundrum is certain to get priority treatment in this series

Rahul is the incumbent wicketkeeperbatter and has been assigned to that role by the previous set-up under Rahul Dravid since last year's Asia Cup, a tournament in which he made his comeback from a long injury-forced layoff.

Since then, Rahul has done full justice to his duty both in front and behind the wicket.

Since the continental showpiece last year, Rahul has made 834 runs from 21 matches at a fine average of 69.50 with two hundreds. Besides, Rahul also captained India in the ODI series against South Africa earlier this year

As a stumper too, the 32-year-old has been pretty good. But will Gambhir follow the same route

since Pant is back in the reckoning? Pant's return to India fold through a clutch

of T20Is after that horrific accident in 2022



has been heartwarming but he has not set the field ablaze with his outings. There have been encouraging sparks

during the last month or so. But is that enough to convince the powers that be to pick him ahead of Rahul?

If Gambhir and skipper Rohit decide to keep both Rahul and Pant in the 11, then they will have to think as to how to accommodate Shreyas Iyer, another formidable player in the 50-over version. In his last ODI outing, Iyer made a 52 against South Africa at Johannesburg, and his record in 2023 is also impressive - 846 runs from 20 matches at an average of 53 with three hundreds.

So, it could be a three-way tie between Rahul, Pant and Iyer for two batting slots because if India go ahead with all three of them, then they will have to play with five bowlers

India might not want to walk that rigid path particularly with Hardik Pandya missing this series because of personal reasons

Hence, India might just want to give a run to either Shivam Dube or Riyan Parag at No. 6.

However, the management entrusting Parag with bowling duties in the just-concluded T20Is could be a precursor to the larger role he might get in the ODI series

That Parag can shift between off-spin and leg-spin effectively too brightens his chance, something he was not able to showcase much in the IPL, courtesy the Impact Player rule.

But the Assam player has a fairly noticeable body of work in the domestic 50-over competition - the Deodhar

Trophy. He took 11 wickets last season to be placed sixth behind Vidwath Kaverappa (13). Shams Mulani (12), Mayank Yadav (12) Shahbaz Ahmed (12) and R Sai Kishore (11) at a good economy of 4.8.

In contrast, Dube, who appeared in an ODI five years ago, played only one match in the series against Sri Lanka and was not summoned to bowl.

Amid all this, Gambhir will also keep an eye on the outings of Rohit and Kohli, whom he said will have a major part to play going forward.

This will also be the first ODI for the duo after that deflating defeat against Australia in last year's World Cup final at Ahmedabad, and they will be eager to mark the return to 50-over format with a

special outing. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka, a mixture of young and experienced names, will want to avoid a batting collapse that led them to their doom in the T20I series despite enjoying periods of dominance.

However, they will not have the services of pacers Matheesha Pathirana and Dilshan Madhushanka, who have been ruled out of the series with injuries.

Injured SL pacers Pathirana, Madushanka ruled out of ODIs against India

PTI COLOMBO

Cri Lanka suffered a massive blow ahead Sof the three-match ODI series against India as pacers Matheesha Pathirana and Dilshan Madushanka were ruled out with respective injuries. The first one-dayer will be played at the RPSC Stadium here on Friday.

"Madushanka suffered a Grade 2 hamstring injury on his left leg during the team's field-

My favourite bowler is Bumrah: Dhoni

ing practice" the Sri Lanka Cricket

announced in a statement on Thursday.

PTI HYDERABAD

egendary Mahendra Singh Loboni picked Jasprit Bumrah as his favourite bowler, but the multiple World Cup-winning former Indian skipper refrained from selecting between Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma as batsman of his choice.

Bumrah played a vital role in India's recent T20 World Cup triumph in the Americas, picking up 15 wickets from eight matches at an economy rate of 4.17, best among the regular bowlers in the ICC

showpiece. The effort earned Bumrah the player of the tournament award.

"It's easy to pick my favourite bowler because Bumrah is there. It's difficult to pick a batsman because we have many good batsmen. But that doesn't mean bowlers aren't good," said Dhoni during a promotional event here.



Bumrah has been given a rest post the World Cup, and he is not playing the ongoing away white ball series against Sri Lanka.

Dhoni said it is tough to pick one batsman as his favourite because several batters churn out excellent knocks.

"It's difficult to pick one among batters as whomever I see batting, he looks the best. But when I see someone else

he also looks great. "But as long as Team India is winning, I don't want to pick a batter (as my favourite). I hope they will keep scoring runs for the team," Dhoni

owners on a varietv subjects, which would then be taken before the IPL Governing Council led by Arun Dhumal for further deliberation.

said. The 43-year-old Dhoni did not reveal his IPL future when a fan posed a question about his plans for the 2025 edition.

"There is a lot of time for it. We have to see what decision they take on player retention etc. Right now, the ball is not in our court.

"So, once the rules and regulations get formarlised, I will take a call, but needs to be in the best interest of the team," he added.

At present, the IPL teams are a divided house over a host of issues ranging from the mega auction rules to the 'Impact Player' rule.

The BCCI secretary Jay Shah said he had a "constructive dialogue" with the IPL team

AFFIDAVIT By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate Talcher, I, Biranchi Pattanaik, 46 years , S/o Dhruba Charan Pattanaik resident of vill/po- Santhapada, Ps-Talcher, Dist-Angul declare that myself Biranchi Pattanaik , S/o Dhruba charan Pattanaik and Biranchi Narayan Behera, S/o Dhruba Charan Behera of the above address is same and one person.