OPINION 6

GENDER RIGHTS AND

ALERT FOR FURTHER UNREST

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RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH

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NEERAJ A STAR WITHOUT **PRETENSION** 12 SPORTS

SISODIA WALKS TO FREEDOM Government alert on India Bangladesh front

RAJESH KUMAR | NEW DELHI

 $F^{
m ormer\ Delhi\ Deputy\ Chief}_{
m Minister\ Manish\ Sisodia}$ on Friday night was released from jail after 530 days as the Supreme Court granted him bail earlier in the day in the excise policy scam case saying he is entitled to a "speedy trial" and that returning him to a trial court would be like making him "play snakes and ladders".

A bench of Justice BR Gavai and Justice KV Viswanathan also said keeping the AAP leader in jail for an "unlimited time", without a trial, is in violation of his fundamental rights.

Listing the conditions for his bail, the top court directed Sisodia to furnish a bail bond of ₹10 lakh with two sureties, surrender his passport and not make any attempt to either influence witnesses or tamper with evidence. Besides, he will have to report to the investigating officer every Monday and Thursday between 10 and 11 am.

"We find that, on account of a long period of incarceration running to around 17 months and the trial having not commenced, the appellant (Sisodia) has been deprived of his right to speedy trial," the bench said. The apex court had reserved its order in the case on August 6.

Minutes after the bail order, celebrations broke out at the AAP office as well as



AAP leader Manish Sisodia waves to supporters after being released from Tihar jail following his bail granted by the Supreme Court in the corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, in New Delhi, on

bonds and surety bonds submitted by the advocates

residence of Sisodia. Hours decision as "victory of truth" later, Special Judge Kaveri and added that it hoped that Baweja accepted the bail other jailed leaders of the party "will also get justice." The AAP further said the representing Sisodia. order is a "tight slap" on the The AAP hailed the SC dictatorship of the BJP-led

Centre but rued that the relief came after a year's delay. Sisodia, who was wearing a maroon shirt, greeted the party workers and leaders,

who showered rose petals on

him as he walked out of the iail around 6.50 pm.

Addressing the supporters and media after his release, Sisodia expressed his deep gratitude towards Dr BR Ambedkar, saying, "Ever since this order came in the morning, every inch of my skin has been feeling indebted to Babasaheb. I

don't understand how I will

pay off this debt to Babasaheb." "We have brought this legal battle to its logical end through the Constitution. I thank you all for being with me." Sisodia said and added that he had many of admirers but their numbers have increased in the last 17 months. "Not only me but every Delhi resident, and children of the country were with me emotionally in jail. I thank the SC from the bottom of my heart for using the

power of Constitution to give

a hard slap to the dictatorship in the country," he said. The AAP leader said it was an emotional moment for everyone and hoped that the power of Constitution and democracy will pave the way for release of Kejriwal. He raised the slogan,

"Bhrasthachaar ka ek hi kaal, Kejriwal, Kejriwal".

Holding aloft flags and cheering loudly, crowds of AAP supporters waited to welcome Sisodia as stepped out of jail. Senior AAP leaders Sanjay Singh, Atishi, and Saurabh Bharadwaj were present outside Tihar to receive Sisodia.

founding Sisodia is a member of the AAP and a close confidant of party chief Kejriwal. The bail to Sisodia is a shot in the arm for the beleaguered party, which is gearing up to contest the Haryana Assembly polls and the Delhi elections in the next few months. His release comes as a big win for the AAP. This is because of the three big AAP leaders who were arrested in the liquor policy case, just Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal remains behind bars.

Sisodia's release also comes as the AAP struggles to govern Delhi and counter Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.

According to experts, Sisodia will have to wait to join the Delhi Cabinet as there are several issues that need to be dealt with since the Chief Minister himself is in jail. "For Sisodia to be inducted in his Council of Ministers, Kejriwal needs to send his recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor from Tihar Iail, which seems difficult currently," experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI**

The Narendra Modi Government on Friday constituted a high-level committee, headed by a top Border Security Force (BSF) official, to monitor the situation along the Indo-Bangladesh border in view of the ongoing state of affairs in the neighbouring country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said.

He said the committee would be in touch with counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus other and minority communities living there. "In the wake of the ongoing

situation in Bangladesh, the Government has Modi constituted a committee to monitor the current situation on the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB). The committee will maintain

communication channels with their counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus, other and minority communities living there. The committee will be headed by the ADG (Additional Director General), Border Security

post. Apart from the BSF ADG, the four other members of the

Force, Eastern Command,

Shah said in a social media

Hundreds clamour

to cross the border

SAUGAR SENGUPTA GEDE/NADIA

Abdul Hakiq Rumel, Farshatulla Khan, Apurba Sarkar, Mrinal Deb Roy, Achintya Biswas may be from different religions but they share the same illfate and nationality. Bangladeshi These

nationals are stranded in the no-man's land at various entry points of the Indo-Bangla border of Sitalkuchi in Cooch Behar district, Fulbari in

Jalpaiguri district, Hili in Dinajpur and Gede in Nadia district. "We are returning to the mango orchards or paddy

fields in the night and returning to this place during the day time as we fear for our lives... many of our friends and relatives are missing... some have been killed and their houses looted, women raped by the members of BNP and Jamaat," said one of them at Gede border.

committee are the BSF's Inspector General of Police (IGP) for the South Bengal frontier, the IGP for the Tripura frontier, member (planning and development)

of the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI), and secretary of the LPAI.

The BSF has increased vigil along the borders adjoining Bangladesh.

Monsoon chokes and inundates Delhi

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

Tommuters had a tough Ctime reaching their respective destinations due to traffic congestions choking arterial junctions of the national Capital caused by flooding of roads and water logging following heavy rain on Friday evening.

The adjoining regions of Noida and Ghaziabad were also lashed by the downpour and experienced similar situation. Delhiites fumed and fretted as the rain brought the city to a screeching halt with traffic snarls extending to miles thanks to the heavy waterlogging and blocking of roads by fallen trees uprooted by the rain.

Centre expands CAA for more inclusivity



PNS NEW DELHI

The Centre has expanded the ambit of the rules issued under the citizenship Citizenship

(Amendment) Act (CAA) through which Indian nationality will be given to persecuted minorities coming from Afghanistan,

Bangladesh or Pakistan. The Union Home Ministry announced that document" issued by the Central State or Governments or quasi-judicial body in India proving that either of the great-grandparents is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries will be acceptable.

Home Ministry came after many applicants seeking Indian nationality under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 were reported to be facing difficulties due to a particular clause of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024.

said that his government is

considering this longstanding

demand and would initiate

steps to frame the modalities

Families of the freedom

fighter would soon be identi-

fied as a step towards imple-

for the same.

The clarification of the

 $T^{\text{he Delhi Police Special}}_{\text{Cell has averted a possible terrorist attack in}}$ the national Capital ahead of the Independence Day on August 15 by arresting a most wanted terrorist member of the Pune module of the ISIS, carrying a reward

The accused has been identified as Rizwan Abdul Haji Ali who was on the Investigation Agency's (NIA) most wanted list and the probe agency had announced a reward for information leading to his arrest following his escape from the custody of the Pune

According to a senior police officer, Rizwan was planning an attack ahead of I-Day as he and his associates were doing recce of many VIP

ISIS terrorist caught by **Delhi Police**

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

of ₹3 lakh.

National Police since July 2023.

areas of Delhi.

For freedom fighters' families I announces 'Kutumba Yojana' Quit India Movement, the CM

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Friday said families of freedom fighters of Odisha would soon receive pension under a scheme named 'Kutumba Yojana'.

Speaking at an event on the August Kranti Day, which marks the anniversary of the

SRC alerts DMs

BHUBANESWAR

Even as heavy rains con-

tinue to lash several parts of

Odisha for the last couple of

days, the India Meteorologi-

cal Department (IMD) on Fri-

day said the State would wit-

ness rainfall till the Indepen-

of 10 dists of

possible floods



menting the scheme, he Rains to continue in State till I-Day

ing for some places in north

On Saturday, heavy rainfall

overall rainfall activity is likely

dence Day, August 15. The Regional Office of the IMD here issued a Yellow warn-

Odisha on August 9, 10, 13, 14 and 15.

is likely in Sundargarh and Jharsuguda districts. According to the IMD's ex-

tended weather outlook, fairly widespread to scattered rain or thundershower with isolated heavy rains may occur in Odisha till August 22. The to remain above normal to normal during this period.

Meanwhile, with 5.78 lakh cusecs of water flowing in the Mahanadi at Mundali, the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) on Friday instructed the Collectors of 10 districts to remain alert. "Special attention should

be given to people residing in low-lying areas of Sambalpur, Subarnapur, Nayagarh, Angul, Boudh, Puri, Khordha, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapada. Entry to the submerged or submersible, roads culverts, bridges to be restricted. Any untoward incident to be reported immediately," the SRC said.

The Water Resources Department reported a significant increase in flow of water in the Mahanadi at Mundali on Friday morning. Six more sluice gates were

opened at the Hirakud Dam to release more floodwater following rains in the upper catchment areas of the Mahanadi. Currently, floodwater was being released through 14 gates. The water level of the dam stood at 612.25 feet at 6 am against its water-holding capacity of 630



Probe underway into Pandian's chopper rides

taken if norms violated: Minister BHUBANESWAR

Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena on Friday informed that an investigation into the expenditures on VK Pandian's whirlwind tours across Odisha using helicopters is underway and stern action would soon be taken if any violation of norms is found.

There are rules as to who can use helicopters and appropriate action would definitely be taken if any violation is found in the investigation, said Minister Jena.

Jena further said Chief Minister Mohan Majhi has so far met thousands of people, but no money has been spent for



the purpose. Whoever it may be, if any officer is found to have misused the government exchequer, the Mohan Majhi government would definitely take action against him.

"Now, the people of Odisha are asking this question about his (Pandian's) tours as they have seen how he was roam ing around Odisha in chopper from February 2020 to De-

cember 2023. They (people) are unable to digest it. Our government is committed to zero corruption and we can't accept misuse of public money," added Jena.

Rasananda wins Handloom Award



For saree with info on Odisha's GI products

 $R_{\hbox{\scriptsize asananda}}$ Meher of Sonepur has been felicitated with the National Handloom Award by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar at New Delhi for weaving a unique Sambalpuri Bandha saree.

The award, which is instituted by the Union Ministry of Textiles, was conferred on to the handloom sector. He was honoured for weaving a Sambalpuri Bandha (Ikat or tie and dye) saree which has motifs and information on the 17 GI-tagged products of Odisha.

According to reports, researcher Anita Sabat helped the weaver with the idea. Weaver Prafulla Meher had also provided guidance to Rasananda.

In 2015, his son Biswanath Meher had won the first National Handloom Award for

MNCs.

Panel formed to probe various aspects of StartUp Odisha

The Mohan Majhi government has formed a three-member committee headed by Director of Industries to inquire into various aspects of StartUp Odisha.

The other two members are Additional Secretary/ Joint Secretary, Finance Department and Additional Secretary/ Joint Secretary, Public Enterprises Department, an official notification issued by the MSME Department said.

The committee will look into financial grant of startups within and outside the State, fund distribution/grant to different private institutions stating them as incubator, output of project management consultants, contribution of NPS and EPF of project officials and use of office space by

It has been asked to submit its report by August 21.

Last month, the government had restricted the financial powers of the Startup Odisha authorities after MSME Minister Gokulananda Mallik visited O-Hub, the State's maiden centralised incubation centre amid allegations of irregularities and negligence. This saw a cap of Rs 1 crore and Rs 10 crore on financial power of executive chairman and board of directors respectively.

"The department, which is 100-per cent shareholder of Startup Odisha, however, has the full power for sanctioning and incurring expenditure of any type, including schematic, non-schematic, recurring, non-recurring, revenue and capital," the notification said.

Startup Odisha was launched in 2016 by the then Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government to support 5,000 startups in the State by 2025.

'Promoting Wellness' prog at RD Varsity



The Rama Devi Women's University concluded a fiveday (August 5-9) intensive and interactive workshop titled 'Promoting Wellness'. It was a collaborative initiative led by Vice-Chancellor Professor Aparajita Chowdhury organised by the university's Counselling and Wellness Centre, Internal Quality Assurance Cell and Theosophical Order of Service.

It was conducted by the Manam Foundation, a notfor-profit mental health

working in the area of mental health. The objective of the workshop was to interact with over 200 faculty members and non-teaching employees and generate awareness on mental, emotional and psychological issues while dealing with students and in their respective professional and personal

The sessions were driven with an activity-based interaction with innovative techniques by Somya Mohapatra, Chief Therapeutic Counsellor, Manam Foundation.

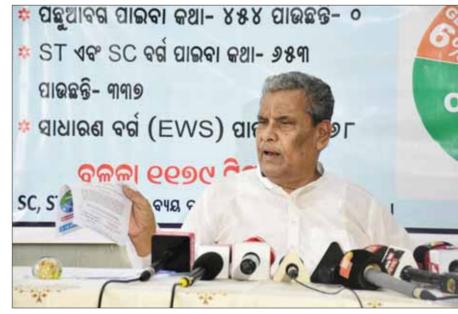
Srikant demands edu reservation for backward classes

BHUBANESWAR

Former Union Minister and Congress leader Srikant Jena on Friday raised the issue of non-implementation of statutory reservation system for the reserved category social groups in Odisha especially in the higher education system.

He told the media that in a letter written by him on Thursday to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, he has demanded implementation of reservation system from the current educational year and conducting of a "caste-census" in the State immediately to know the socio-educational and economic status of the State's population.

Explaining how the reservation system is not working in the higher education sphere in Odisha, Jena said that though the SC-ST population constitutes 40% of the State's population, they get 38.7% reservation in jobs but only 20% reservation in higher and technical education. And 54% OBC/



SEBC population avails only 11.25% reservation in jobs and no reservation in higher edu-

He stated that due to nonimplementation of the reservation policy, 5,100 SC-ST students and 7,000 OBC/SEBC students have been deprived of medical education facility in last few years. There is no reservation for OBC/SEBC students in degree colleges and State universities too.

Out of total 2,525 medical seats, there are 1,684 seats after fulfilling NEET and Deemed Universities' seats. Out of this, the SC-ST students get 337 seats due to 20% reservation criteria while they are eligible to get 653 seats as

per 38.75% criteria. They lose 316 seats every year due to faulty reservation policy in the State. Similarly, the OBC/ SEBCs are fully deprived of reservation. Jena, who is a proponent of social justice and reservation for SC, ST, OBC/ SEBCs in Odisha, is also a top running contender for the PCC president post.

will be more defined and con

Commissioner-cum-Secre-

Dy CM asks officials to streamline paddy procurement

Till now, 8.57 lakh farmers sell paddy in Mandis SUDARSHAN CHHOTORAY **BHUBANESWAR**

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo on Friday chaired a high-level meeting to streamline paddy procurement and discussed ways and means for implementing the Rs 3,100-MSP per quintal promised by the new BJP government in the State.

The Minister directed officials to ensure P.Pas facilities to procure paddy from the farmers in both Rabi and Kharif seasons, proper supervision and monitoring be done in preservation and storage of procured paddy and all these should be done through Mandis.

identify farmers after Aadhaar scrutiny so that they get the MSP of Rs 3,100.

The meeting also discussed to verify stocks and capacities of millers at regular intervals and expanding lapse period of tokens and regular renewals. Singh Deo said that to em-

power farmers, the government has earmarked Rs 500 crore this year under the Samruddha Krushak Yojana. Till date, as many as 8.57 lakh farmers have sold their crop this year. If necessary, the government would send tokens through WhatsApp to the eligible farmers and it was directed to pay the MSP within 24-48 hours of the procurement. The department is using Digital Crop Survey to find crop loss and malpractices, besides satellite observation being done to monitor P.Pas. The meeting asked to instruct PACSs, LAMPS,

WSHGs and Pani Panchayats

He also asked officials to

to act as registration centres.

 ${f A}$ Junior Engineer (JE) and hended by the Vigilance police for alleged acceptance of a bribe of Rs 25,000 from a contractor in Jagatsinghpur district on Friday.

The JE, identified as Smruti Ranjan Nayak and posted in Naugaon block of the district, and Babina Das, a private person, were caught during acceptance of the bribe from the contractor for handing over of a cheque for clearing his final pending bill.

As per the direction of Nayak, the private person was allegedly accepting the bribe



the accused and the entire bribe money was recovered from their possession and Following the trap, simul-

taneous searches were conducted at two locations of Nayak from disproportionate assets angle. In this connection, a case was registered and investigation was in progress.

In Bargarh Drunk driver hits divider; 19 hurt as bus overturns

At least 19 passengers had a close snave and escaped with minor injuries after a bus ferrying them overturned in the Barpali area in Bargarh district late on Thursday night. The mishap occurred while

the private bus was en route to Damanjodi in Koraput dis-While no exact reason for

the mishap was ascertained immediately, passengers claimed that the driver was drunk and rammed the vehicle into the road divider after losing con-

All the injured were rescued and admitted to the District



of the injured passengers wors-Institute of Medical Sciences And Research (VIMSAR).

Headquarters Hospital (DHH). The condition of one ened, following which he was referred to the Burla-based VSS

Police registered a case and launched a probe into the incident while the driver was currently absconding.

Odisha recognises 3 Habitat Rights for PVTGs

lisha has become a

leading State in the

country to accord

Habitat Rights to the Particu-

larly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

Rights Act (FRA). With the

Odisha has become a forerun-

recognised for the PVTGs, the

maximum in India. Earlier on

August 6, the Habitat Rights

of Juang community of Jajpur

district had been approved by

Major success under FRA

district was the first PVIG community in the State to receive Habitat Rights title on March 7, 2024. While Habitat Rights of Paudi Bhuyan (PVTGs) under the Forest have been recognised over 32 villages under Barkote block, recognition of Habitat Rights Habitat Rights of Juangs in of Juangs in Keonjhar district Jajapur district have been on August 7 by the District recognised covering 13 vil-Level Committee (DLC), lages under Sukinda block and Habitat Rights for ner with three Habitat Rights Juangs in Keonjhar district have been recognised cover-

> blocks. The Juangs of Keonjhar will become the sixth such

> ing 134 villages across four

title awarded in India under PVTGs and with this Habi-Paudi Bhuyan of Deogarh the category along with the tat Rights recognition this Juangs of Jajpur, Paudi Bhuyans of Deogarh in Odisha and Bharia PVTG in Madhya Pradesh and Kamar PVTG and Baiga PVTG in Chhattisgarh, having legal title and rights over their forest habitats.

Minister ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Nityananda Gond, expressing his happiness over the development, said, "Our propeople government is always there to see overall development of the tribal commu-

tary ST, SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare Department Roopa Roshan Sahoo said, "The Habitat Rights for three PVTG communities are a remarkable achievement and we would be planning for

more as a major chunk of our State's population (around 23%) are tribals. Our efforts will be more focused on the welfare of these communities and especially for the PVTGs nities and especially the across the State."

KISS students enter Guinness Records

Render National Anthem in largest single group BHUBANESWAR

The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) here has achieved another milestone after 13,944 KISS students entered the Guinness Book of World Records by rendering the Indian National Anthem as the largest single group.

They collaborated with three-time Grammy Award winner Ricky Kej to create a monumental version of the anthem, which would be officially released on the eve of Independence Day on August

Guinness World Records officials announced the



record-breaking feat on Friday in New Delhi

The National Anthem would feature Ricky Kej, who directed the music in collaboration with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The group performance also influte maestro

Hariprasad Chaurasia, sarod

maestros Aman and Ayaan Ali Khan, and santoor maestro Rahul Sharma, among many other renowned artists.

Expressing his happiness over this achievement, KIIT and KISS founder Dr Achyuta Samanta said this is not just a proud moment for KISS but also for Odisha and India.

Advisory issued against exploitation of child artists in TV, Jatra

Raising concerns over the safety of children engaged in entertainment industry, the Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) has issued an advisory, instructing all district Collectors to prevent any kind of exploitation through effective implementation of various existing rules and regulations related to their rights.

While hiring a child artist, TV or film producers and Jatra party owners are required to obtain permission from the Collector of the district where the activity will take place. They have to provide the Dis-

trict Magistrate with an undertaking in Form C (as per the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2017), a list of child participants, parental or guardian consent and the name of the person responsible for the child's safety and security.

"For live shows, there must be an announcement specifying that all necessary measures are taken to ensure no child was abused, neglected, or exploited during the performance or shooting. There should be a disclaimer to be displayed at the beginning of films, each episode of TV serials, reality shows, or content

on social media platforms,"

reads a letter issued by OSCPCR Chairperson Mandakini Kar.

It further said the Collectors may instruct the District Child Protection Units (DCPUs) to inspect the workplace and issue a permit, valid for six months only, to the producers, Jatra party or theatre owners. A DCPU also has to submit the list of child artists engaged in such shows to the Child Welfare Committee and the Labour Inspector of the district.

The commission has instructed that no child or adolescent should be cast in a role or situation that is inappropriate for their age, maturity, emotional or psychological development or that may distress or embarrass them.

Infants under three months old may not participate in shows except for programmes promoting breastfeeding or immunisation.

"Minors, especially those under six years old, must not be exposed to harmful lighting or irritating or contaminated cosmetics. Producers and Jatra party owners must ensure that children/adolescents receive adequate and nutritious food and water during the shooting and live performance," added the advi-

The commission has strictly instructed that no child shall work more than five hours a day and no more than three hours without a break

All production units and Jatra parties have been asked to develop guidelines for dealing with children/adolescents on set. These

guidelines should include general principles, procedures for obtaining parental consent, best practices, staff protocols for engagement and a child/adolescent protection

The Collectors have been instructed to submit the compliance report on the advisory at the earliest.

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State Govt to provide potatoes at Rs 30 per kg

Agitators detain WB-bound food trucks

BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government has decided to procure potatoes from Uttar Pradesh through the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) to combat the scarcity crisis.

Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushan Chandra Patra said the decision has been taken to supply potatoes to consumers at Rs 30 per kg.

Potato would be sold in the fair price shops and initially 300 tonnes would be procured from Uttar Pradesh.

Odisha has been facing an acute potato crisis after

In Deogarh

 $oldsymbol{\mathcal{H}}$ youth died after an SUV

of an Indian Reserve Battal-

ion (IRB) Constable hit him

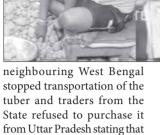
late on Thursday night near

Balanda Chowk under the

Barakote police station in

Deogarh district.

100 metre.



The price of potatoes in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack was as high as Rs 60 per kg on Thursday.

people don't like the variety

available in the northern

In a related development, protesting the move of the West Bengal Government,

which has stopped potato supply to Odisha, members of several social organisations stopped vehicles laden with food items en route to the neighbouring State in Cuttack on Friday.

As per reports, the protestors stopped all the vehicles carrying food items to West Bengal along National Highway-16 near Manguli Chhak in a peaceful manner. As a result, hundreds of vehicles laden with food items were halted for

Later, police reached the spot and pacified the agitators.

"West Bengal Chief Minis-

ter Mamata Banerjee is not allowing procurement of potatoes from her State without any reason, resulting in the potato crisis in Odisha. Despite requests from our Chief Minister, Mamata has not facilitated movement of potatoladen vehicles from West Bengal to Odisha with some ill intention," said a leader of the agitators. "The protest will continue till Mamata allows the movement of potatoladen vehicles from West Bengal to Odisha. We will not tolerate the injustice. Movement of trucks carrying food items from Odisha to West Bengal will be stopped until the potato crisis is fully resolved," said an-

Clash over land: Five women injured in U'kote monohar mohanty complaints against each other

NABARANGPUR

At least five women were injured in a clash between two groups over a patch of Government land in Pagdiaguda village under Umarkote block on Wednesday.

As per reports, the clash occurred over around 20 acre of Gochar land near the village. While cows from the village used to graze on the land, two years back, a group started cultivating black gram and ragi on it. This did not go down well with another group from the village. On the day, hundreds of villagers opposed those engaged in farming on the land. The situation soon escalated and the groups came to blows injuring five women.

This apart, the maize crop cultivated on around eight acre land was also destroyed in the clash. While both sides filed

complaints against each other at the Umarkote police station, hundreds of women rushed to the tehsil office and shouted slogans alleging apathy on the part of the Revenue and Disaster Management Department to settle the land dispute. A written complaint was filed at the tehsil office seeking eviction of the land one month

The villagers said the district Collector was also informed of the issue in a grievance hearing camp a month back. They alleged the clash on the day was a result of indifference of revenue officials in resolving the issue and warned the confrontation could escalate further if no steps are taken by the administration soon.

Umarkote Dambarudhar Pradhan said investigation was on and police were keeping a vigil in the

basis. I request the administra-

tion to address the issue as soon

as possible," said Councillor of

Ward No.6 Indumati Mishra.

In response, Keonjhargah

INBRIEF

HC admits plea challenging KV Singh Deo's election

Cuttack: The Orissa High Court has admitted a petition challenging the election of BJP MLA and Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo from the Patnagarh Assembly constituency in the 2024 polls. Saroj Kumar Meher of the



BJD, who lost the election by a margin of 1,357 votes, has filed the election petition praying to declare the election as void on the ground of improper acceptance of Singh Deo's nomination papers by the Returning Officer despite noncompliance with statutory provisions.

Another senior IPS officer repatriated to Odisha cadre

Bhubaneswar: Senior IPS officer of Odisha cadre Parul Gupta has been repatriated to the home cadre. The 2010batch officer was serving as Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau. This move came close on the heels of the premature repatriation of YB Khurania,



who was posted as Special DG of Border Security Force, to the State cadre last week, leading to speculation about his appointment as the next DGP of Odisha.

Utkal Sammilani news magazine unveiled

Bhubaneswar: The news magazine of Utkal Sammilani was unveiled at the Naveen Niwas here on Thursday by Leader of



Opposition (LoP) and former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Utkal Sammilani general secretary and magazine editor Dillip Dashsharma felicitated Patnaik on the occasion. Among others, Sammilani branch advisor Niranjan Das, vice-president Sital Chandra Mohanty, secretary Gobinda Chandra Subudhi and Sanjay Swain were present,

3 labourers hurt as crane falls at SCB

Cuttack: At least three labourers suffered critical injuries after a crane fell on them at the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack on Friday. The crane had been installed for the ongoing expansion work of the medical college. When the work was going on in full swing, a portion of the crane collapsed on the labourers working on the ground, leaving three seriously injured. The injured labourers were admitted to the Casualty Ward of the hospital.

Ganjam College celebrates foundation day

Chhatrpur: The Ganjam College, one of the oldest of the State, celebrated its 56th foundation day on Wednesday. Chief guest Transport and Mines Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena inaugurated the function. Chhatrapur MLA Chandra Nayak was honourable guest. Former Assembly Deputy Speaker Rama Chandra Panda and Ganjam NAC Chairman



Pratibha Padhy were the other guests. Ganjam College Principal Simanchal Bholo read out the annual report of the college and Laxminarayan Panda coordinated the programme. Minister Jena released the college souvenir and also promised to fulfil all the demands raised by the college staffs The minister, who is an alumnus of this college, also laid the foundationstones of a science laboratory, a cafeteria and two roads in the college campus.

Villagers make wooden bridge as govt fails

Chhatrpur: This is the story of the willpower of common people where the government fails to take any initiative. They approached the panchayat office and also block office several times, but there was no response for construction of a bridge in Niladripur village of Pallinandha panchayat. Finally, the villagers decided to construct a wooden bridge by collecting money from them. They collected around Rs 2 lakh for completion of the bridge. As the old bridge was broken, students, daily



labourers and locals could not use it for several years.

Minority community man

As requested by school authorities

in Kendrapada PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

A minority community

According to sources, the

school for its infrastructure development and Karim agreed. He went to the Garadpur Sub Registrar office and do-

nated his land by registering it in the name of the school in the presence of DEO Pradip Kumar Nag and headmaster Dillip Kumar Swain. For his generosity, mem-

bers of the alumni association of the school, Mo School Committee and locals praised

Many drains left uncovered in Keonjhar town

Youth dies after hit by IRB Constable's SUV at night who went to the field

> Following the incident, locals and family members of the deceased staged a demonstration demanding justice and immediate arrest of the Con-

Deogarh SDPO Soumya Ranjan Mallik said, "We have arrested the Constable in the Barkote accident case. He has

The deceased, identified as Sipun Patra (23) from Balanda village, died on the spot after being dragged by the vehicle of the Constable, identified as

The deceased was waiting on the road for another youth

Sudhir Bilung (36), for nearly

to attend nature's call when the SUV lost balance and hit him from behind. He was rushed to the Barkote Hospital, but the doctor pronounced him dead on arrival.

been forwarded to court.

Organ donation camp held in Jajpui

 ${
m D}_{
m r}$ Nihar Ranjan Kar and Nagarika Mancha organised an organ donation camp at Marjitapur under Dharamasala block here on Tuesday.

Odia daily "The Samaja" CAO and social worker Dr Pravas Acharya inaugurated the camp, appreciated the efforts of the organisation for holding the camp and exhorted personnel to participate in such exercises in more num-

He said organ donation has proved to be a miracle for the society as it is a noble act of transplanting healthy organs from a donor to a patient receiver. Human body organs and tissues that function properly are collected and transplanted into patients' bodies



to save their lives. In most cases, organ donations are performed after the donor's death. But some organs can be donated even when the donors are alive, he said.

Dr Nihara Ranjan Kar said organ donations are completely voluntary actions, and people cannot be compelled to engage in these activities. As many as 304 persons pledged to donate organs at the camp. Among others, Gyanaranjan Sahoo, Parmanada Sahoo and Saroj Kumar Behera were

Invisible drains under overflowing water

during rains make them deathtraps PNS ■ KEONJHAR

I hough local residents of Keonjhar have requested the concerned authorities to cover the drain with slabs umpteen times, it has fallen on deaf ears. There are massive uproars following many accidents caused due to several uncovered drains in the headquar-

As per reports, there is a 90 km stretch of drain in 21 wards under Keonjhargah Municipality. While some portions of the drain have been covered,



ing place during the ongoing rainy season on a daily basis.

With heavy rain lashing, the rising water level in the open drains is causing water logging on roads. In such a situation, the open drains have turned into death traps for the

"The residents of the area are facing severe problems due virtually turned into death traps. Apart from people, the lives of cattle are also under threat. Though we have requested the authorities about the issue several times, they are not paying any attention to our plea," said Subhendu Patnaik, a resident of Keonjhargah. "Apart from the commuters, the lives of little children are also under threat

Municipality Chairman Niku Sahu said that some portions of the drains have not been covered due to some issues in the tender process.

"Some portions of the drains have not been covered with slabs. We had passed a resolution in this regard and called for tenders. A lot of work has been completed. However, contractors are not participating in the tender process for the drain work in some wards. We will discuss the matter in a meeting and take steps to complete the work

due to the open drains. Several accidents are happening as soon as possible," said Sahu. ECoR to go green with 21,826 KWp solar units

To cover 149 station buildings, 248 service buildings, 6,924 residential buildings, 366

LC gates ■ BHUBANESWAR

The East Coast Railway (ECoR), in line with the policy of the Indian Railways, is adopting various steps to generate more green energy by installing rooftop solar power plants in stations and service buildings and other installa tions over its jurisdiction.

It plans to install 21,826



sulting in savings of approximately Rs14 crore from energy bill and Rs 91.41 lakh from carbon credit.

Under the project, the ECoR will instal solar power plants at 149 station buildings, 248 service buildings, 6,924 residential buildings, and at 366 Level Crossing (LC) gates over its jurisdiction.

Out of the above, tenders have been floated for Rs 83.79 crore, which includes solar power plants/renewable solar energy sources on grid plants of different capacities on rooftops and shed tops in various locations.

They include the Brahmapur-Palasa Railway Section at a cost of Rs 9.13 crore; the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack-Paradeep-Bhadrak Railway section of Rs 8.86 crore; Angul Section of Rs 9.48 crore; headquarters area in Bhubaneswar of Rs 9.10 crore; Khurda Road-Puri Section of Rs 8.74 crore;

way Section of Rs 8.10 crore; Visakhapatnam area of Rs 7.25 crore; Visakhapatnam Electric Loco Shed area of Rs 7.10 crore; Duvvada-Palasa Main Line/ Naupada - Gunupur/ Vizianagaram-Rayagada area of Rs 8.78 crore and Kottavalasa-Kirandul Rail Line Section of

Paradeep-Kendujhargarh Rail

Major station buildings and service buildings like headquarters building, Rail Sadan, at Chandrasekharpur, have been provided with rooftop solar power plants/renewable energy sources. Level Crossing gates at most of the places in ECoR jurisdiction have also been installed with solar/renewable energy systems.

Aug 10 is World Lion Day King of Jungle still an endangered species in India

Though their number is otherwise on the rise

n August 10, people around the world come together to celebrate the World Lion Day. The international event is dedicated to raising awareness about the protection and conservation of lions. Its purpose is to educate people about the challenges that these majestic creatures face worldwide and to support efforts aimed at ensuring their survival.

World Lion Day was established in 2013 by Big Cat Rescue, the world's largest accredited sanctuary dedicated to lions. It was co-founded by Dereck and Beverly Joubert, a husband-and-wife team who recognized the urgent need to highlight the declining lion populations and the threats they were encountering in their natural habitats.

In collaboration with "National Geographic," the Jouberts initiated the Big Cat Initiative (B.C.I.) in 2009. In 2013, the Jouberts united the



efforts of both "National Geographic" and the Big Cat Initiative under a single banner, aiming to safeguard the remaining big cats living in the

Lions are among the most iconic and recognisable animal species. Often hailed as the 'Kings of the Jungle,' their majestic presence is characterised by their impressive stature and striking mane-covered appearance. With a mighty roar that can resonate up to five miles away, lions command attention and respect.

However, despite their historical prevalence, lion populations have dwindled drastically over the past century, with fewer than 50,000 remaining poaching and hunting. By focusing the spotlight on

lions and their conservation requirements, the day plays a pivotal role in galvanizing support and action. It underscores the urgency of preserving these remarkable creatures in their natural habitats, not only for their ecological significance but also for their cultural importance. The status of lions in India is

improving, but they are still considered to be an endangered species. At present, the Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the only abode of the Asiatic lion. The last surviving population of the Asiatic lions is a compact tract of dry deciduous forest and open grassy scrublands in southwestern part of Saurashtra region of Gujarat. In 2015, there were an estimated 523 lions in the Gir Forest, but this number increased to 674 in 2020. This is a significant improvement, but there are still many challenges to the conservation of lions in

The main threats to lions in India include habitat loss, conflict with humans, and poach-



ing. Habitat loss is a major problem because lions need large areas of land to roam and hunt. As human populations grow, the Gir Forest is being encroached upon by agriculture and development. This is forcing lions to live in smaller and smaller areas, which makes them more vulnerable to conflict with humans.

Lions often prey on livestock, which can lead to retaliation from farmers. In some cases, lions have even been poisoned or shot by farmers. Lions are killed for their fur, bones, and meat. Despite these challenges,

efforts underway to protect lions in India The Government of India has established the Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary to

there are several conservation

managed and has a strong antipoaching force. The Government is also working to reduce human-lion conflict by providing compensation to farmers for livestock losses and by educating communities about lions. The conservation measures $\,$ in Gir Forest include banning lion hunting, habitat protection, anti-poaching patrols, and managing the prey base. African lions are slightly big-

ger than Asiatic lions in size. Although lions are social species, male Asiatic lions are generally solitary and may form a loose pride of up to three males. Females are more social and often have a strong group called 'pride' of up to 12 females and their cubs. The pride of female lions will always share carcasses among themselves. Males and females often only associate for a short time during the mating season. Males have a large home range (56-89 square miles) compared to females (26-33 square miles). But African Lions remain together in pride. Males defend the pride's territory while females do most of

the hunting.

through a variety of vocalisations like purrs, snarh, miaws and hissing. It is a lazy animal and rests or sleeps for about 21 hours a day. It has terrible night vision and can run 50 km per hour. IUCN has listed it as vulnerable

"World Peace and Environmental Stewardship." The Ashoka Chakra (Ashoka

the centre of the National Flag of India. The actual Sarnath capital features four Asiatic lions standing back to back, symbolising power, courage, confidence and pride, mounted on a circular base.

The lion was used to symbolize the "majesty of the Roman People," and also conveyed wisdom, power, courage, dignity, domination, ferocity and authority. Hindu Lion God Narasimha is regarded as an incarnation of the God Vishnu, an avatar. Lord Narasimha's name literally means "manlion" in Sanskrit and refers to his half-man, half-lion appearance in Hindu mythology.

(Dr Patro is president, Orissa Environmental Society)

The theme for 2024 is

wheel) on its base features in

donates land to school School requested Karim to donate a patch of land belonging to him near the

member has donated his land to a local school for its infrastructure development. Sayed Fazal Karim donated the land to the Fazal Huq Government High School, the oldest school in Tendakuda area in Kendrapada district.

alumni association of the Fazal Huq Government High

Opp silence on threat to Hindus in Bangladesh unfortunate: BJP

Bangladesh

replacing Hasina.

RÎP MP from

Dhenkanal Rudra Narayan

Pany, while raising the issue of

Hindu temples being attacked

in Bangladesh, said the

Government of India should

interfere to ensure their safety.

"Hindu temples have been

attacked in Bangladesh, and

the photos that have come out

show that the statue of Lord

condemnable and painful...," Pany said. "What is this mentality behind damaging Hindu temples?" he asked.

Pany said this has hurt not just

the people of Odisha but people all across India. "The

Government of India should

Jagannath was attacked.

Odisha's

unfortunate,



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

 $B^{\text{JP MPs}}_{\text{Opposition parties, saying}}$ their silence on the situation of Hindus and other minority communities in Bangladesh is unfortunate.

Several Hindu temples, households and businesses have been vandalised in violence in Bangladesh since Monday when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India. During the Zero Hour of the Lok Sabha, BJP MP Anurag Thakur tried to corner the Leader of Opposition and Congress MP, Rahul Gandhi, by alleging that he has not spoken on ensuring the safety of minorities in

Bangladesh. the "When interim Government of Bangladesh took over. Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated them but at the same time he asked them to ensure the safety of minorities," he said. "It is unfortunate that the Leader of Opposition extended congratulations to the interim Government (of

security of Hindus and the minorities. What was the compulsion? You spoke about Gaza but not minorities

Bangladesh) but did not mention the safety and

Bangladesh," Thakur said. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took oath as the head of the interim Government of that the guilty are punished, he said. MP from Assam's

Darrang-Udalguri Dilip Saikia also raised concerns the situation Bangladesh and urged the Government to strengthen security along the India-Bangladesh border.

"India wants peace to be restored in Bangladesh. India has a 4,096-kilometer border with Bangladesh," he said and added that security along the Indo-Bangladesh border should be as strong as that along the India-Pakistan border.

He also said the Indian Government should ensure that minorities are protected in Bangladesh. BJP MP from Andaman and Nicobar Islands Bishnu Pada Ray said, "My father came to West Bengal in 1946 from East Pakistan to save his life. Then he went to Andaman... What is happening in Bangladesh today...""Congress, CPI(M) and TMC should condemn what is happening in Bangladesh. They are sitting quietly," he said and added that they are quiet due to their 'votebank".

He also said that the Parliament should pass a resolution on the situation in Bangladesh.



Parliament adjourned sine die

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Both the houses of Parliament on Friday were adjourned sine die, one sitting ahead of the scheduled end of the session. The current session was scheduled to end on August 12. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House sine die (for an indefinite period). The Rajya Sabha was also adjourned sine die. During the session, the Finance Bill was

A Bill to amend the Waqf law was also introduced and referred to a joint committee of Parliament amid protests over its provisions. Birla said the productivity of the House was above 130 per cent.

After multiple adjournments in the post-lunch session, when the Upper House reassembled at 1530 hrs, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar expressed his concern over the manner in which Opposition members conducted themselves in and outside the house. He later adjourned the House sine die at 1554 hrs.



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Parliament on Friday commemorated the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India Movement, with Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha paying homage to the martyrs.
Both Houses stood in silence

for a brief moment as a mark of respect for those who sacrificed their lives.Before the start of proceedings, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar recalled the historic day when Mahatma Gandhi launched the movement in 1942.

'Today marks the 82nd anniversary of the historic day when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement in 1942. His clarion call of 'do or die'

ignited the nation and ultimately led Bharat gaining independence from colonial rule," Dhankhar said.
The Chairman highlighted

the movement's continued relevance, describing it as a "testament to the power and will of the people and their determination to overcome any challenge."As India enters the 75th year of its Constitution's adoption, Dhankhar emphasized that movement's foundational foundational principles remain crucial in shaping the nation's destiny.

Modi assures BJP MPs on SC/ST reservation policy PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI

Adelegation of BJP MPs on Friday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed concern over the Supreme Court's observation on identifying the creamy layer among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Schedule Tribes (ST).

After the meeting, Modi said in a social media post, "Met a delegation of SC/ST MPs today. Reiterated our commitment and resolve for the welfare empowerment of the SC/ST communities.

On August 1, Supreme Court Judge Justice B R Gavai had said States must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the SCs and STs, and deny them the benefit of reservation.

BJP Rajya Sabha member Sikander Kumar, who was part of the delegation, said " All of us were concerned over the Supreme observation. We were getting phone calls from people expressing concern over the matter."

"A delegation of MPs representing SCs and STs met the Prime Minister this morning and expressed their concern in this connection," he said in the Parliament



The Prime Minister held a serious discussion with the MPs and assured that the Government will not let the apex Court's observation be implemented, Kumar said. 'We express our gratitude towards the prime minister for this," he said.

BJP MP Faggan Singh Kulaste said the delegation in its memorandum to the Prime Minister urged that the apex Court's observation on the issue of creamy layer should not be implemented. The Prime Minister was also

held a similar view. He assured us that he will

look into the matter and asked us not to worry, saying it will not be implemented in the SC and ST category," he



SC stays HC order on college ban on hijab

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday partly stayed a Mumbai college circular banning 'hijab, burqa, cap and naqab' on the campus and said freedom to choose what they

Educational institutions, it said, cannot force on them their choice.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar issued notice to the Chembur Trombay Education Society, which runs the 'N G Acharya and D K Marathe College, and sought its response by November 18. "Girl students must have

freedom of choice in what they are wearing and college cannot force them...It's uniortunate that you suddenly wake up to know that that there are many religions in the country," the bench told the college administration at

the centre of a fresh row over a dress code for Muslim students. It added why the college did not ban 'tilak' and 'bindi' if it intended the religious faiths

of the students to not be

revealed. "Will the students' names not their reveal religious identity?" the bench asked Senior Advocate Madhavi Diwan, appearing for the

The Court, however, said no burqa can be allowed to be worn by girls inside the classroom and no religious activities can be permitted on the campus.

educational society.

The bench said its interim order should not be misused by anybody and granted liberty to the educational society and the college to approach the Court in case of any misuse.

The top Court was hearing a plea challenging a Bombay High Court verdict upholding the college's decision to ban hijab, burqa and naqab inside

the campus. Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves and advocate Abiha Zaidi, appearing for the petitioners, including Zainab Abdul Qayyum, submitted that students were not able to attend classes because of the

Bill introduced to expand bank | Cong accuses RS chairman nominees, safeguard depositors of partisanship, Opp walks out

Bill seeking to provide for Afour nominees by a bank account holder was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday to ensure better protection of depositors and enhance customer convenience. Introduced by Minister of

State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in the Lower House, the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has a provision for simultaneous and successive nominations to bank accounts, lockers etc. As per the provision of the Bill, a bank account holder can nominate up to four India,

The Bill also seeks to transfer of unclaimed dividends, quality in public sector shares, and interest or banks, bonds to Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF), allowing individuals to claim transfers or refunds from the fund, thus safeguarding investors' interests.

As the banking sector has evolved over the years and with a view to improving governance and investor protection, it has become necessary to make certain amendments to five Acts, according to Statement of Objects and Reasons of the

The Bill, which was approved by the Union Cabinet last week, proposes to amend the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the State Bank of India Act, 1955, the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970, and the Banking



Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980. The proposed Bill seeks to

improve governance standards. provide consistency in reporting by banks to the Reserve Bank of ensure better protection for depositors and investors, improve audit bring customer nominations and to provide for increase in the tenure of the directors in co-operative banks.

Therefore, it was felt necessary to amend the said enactments and for that purpose to introduce the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in Parliament.

Another proposed change relates to redefining 'substantial interest' for redefining directorships, which could increase to Rs 2 crore instead of the current limit of Rs 5 lakh, which was fixed almost

six decades ago. Congress member Manish opposed Tewari introduction of the Bill saying the power to legislate with regard to cooperatives vests with State Governments. RSP member N K Premachandran opposed

amending five legislations through one Bill, while TMC member Saugata Roy termed the Bill "superfluous" saying the the amendments proposed in the Bill could have been done through administrative decisions. administrative Responding to Opposition's remarks, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the various amendments done in Banking Regulations Act with respect to cooperative banks are not just one or two but several. "Simple understanding is we

are not touching any aspect of the cooperatives other than that which claims under the of banking.The name sections which have been brought in for amendments, as also the Court verdicts, that Banking point Act and the Regulation Cooperative Banks do have this relationship and therefore it has to be taken through this route," she said. Otherwise, there is no attempt to undermine the cooperatives, particularly cooperatives dealing with everything other than banks, she said defending the Bill. The Bill proposes to increase the tenure of directors (excluding the Chairman and whole-time director) in cooperative banks from 8 years to 10 years, so as to align with the Constitution (Ninety-Seventh Amendment) Act, 2011. Once passed, the Bill would allow a director of a Central

The Congress on Friday accused Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar acting in a "partisan" manner against the entire Opposition. Soon after Opposition walked out of the Rajya Sabha protesting against what they termed as "unacceptable" tone and disrespect shown by Dhankhar, the Congress held a press conference to claim that the Chairman was not giving the Opposition the importance it deserves in the Upper House.

"Opposition parties feel that the Chairman's approach is partisan. The Rajya Sabha is a House that sets parameters for other legislatures. In that House, the Chairman should Congress alone does not feel that way, all Opposition parties feel his behaviour is partial towards one side," Congress Leader Ajay Maken said at a press conference.

The Opposition is not getting the importance it deserves in the Upper House, he said. "If the Opposition's voice does not resonate in Rajya Sabha, where else will it resonate," he

asked. Congress' Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha Pramod Tiwari claimed that Leader of Mallikarjun Opposition Kharge is not allowed to speak, he is frequently interrupted and microphones are often shut. "It is not about one party. Two-three days Ghanshyam Tiwari used such words for the Leader of

Opposition which were not



unacceptable. We had given notice for privilege motion. We wanted to know the ruling on it, the ruling has not come, it has to be in writing," he said. Earlier. the Opposition

walked out of the House, with Congress parliamentary party Sonia Gandhi and other senior leaders in tow. The walkout came after

Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Bachchan and Vice President heated exchange in the Upper House 'Main kalakar hoon, body

language samajhti hoon, expression samajhti hoon... Par sir, mujhe maaf kariyega magar apka tone jo hai is not acceptable. We are colleagues sir, you may be sitting on the chair," she said. Dhankhar hit back, saying,

'Jaya ji, you've earned a great reputation. You know, an actor is subject to director. You've not seen what I see from here. I don't want schooling. I am a person who has gone out of the way, and you say my tone...,enough of

After the walkout, Bachchan told reporters that she objected to the tone used by the Chair. "We are not school children. I was upset with the tone and especially when the LoP stood up to speak, his mic was switched off. How can you do this? If he is not going to be heard in the House, then what are we doing? On top of that, every time (they are) using words which are unparliamentary," she said.

Congress General Secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh told reporters that Ghanshyam Tiwari had insulted the Leader of Opposition in the House in

front of everybody. "Today it was said that Ghanshyam Tiwari came and in a closed door meeting praised Kharge ji. So what he said privately, we demanded that he should say it in the House. He insulted Kharge ji, he should say that what I said was wrong and I respect him and by mistake 1 said," Ramesh said.

(Chairman) interrupting me, I have no objection to that but LoP is not allowed to speak. LoP has been insulted. The dignity of a constitutional post has been lowered. We are against this. Jaya Bachchan had gotten up for this issue only that the Leader of Opposition is being repeatedly insulted and not being allowed to speak," he said.

"Issue was that Tiwari made serious allegations against Kharge which we wanted wanted should be erased from records," he said.

Addressing the Rajya Sabha, Bachchan, a Samajwadi Party expressed disapproval of Dhankhar's tone in the House which led to an exchange of words between the two.

Jaishankar updates LS on 69 Indians in

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Russian army

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said in the Lok Sabha the Government is awaiting the release of 69 Russian army and that in many cases there are indications that the Indian Nationals were misled into joining that country's army.

On action taken with respect to misleading of people and getting them recruited into the Russian army, the Minister told the house that the CBI has registered a criminal case against 19 individuals and entities while evidence has surfaced against 10 human traffickers whose identities the Government knows.Two of the accused were arrested on April 24 and two more on May 7.

"We should not jump the gun and say Russians are not serious on this matter. I think it is important to hold the Russian Government to their word and most important for us, we are not here to score points or enter into debates. We are here to get back those 69 people because Indian citizens should not be serving in the army of foreign countries," he said during the Question Hour. He was responding to queries from AIMIM member Asaduddin Owaisi on action being taken against individuals who are misleading youth to join the Russian army and whether India will stop buying

discounted oil from Russia if

it does not act on releasing

Indians recruited into that

So far, the Minister said there

are a total of 91 cases of

Indian Nationals being

recruited into the Russian

army. Out of them, eight have

discharged or in some

manner have come back with

the Government's assistance

and "there are 69 Indian citizens awaiting release from

the Russian army," he added.

Out of the eight who died, the

mortal remains of four have

been sent back to India and in

two cases one from Haryana

and Punjab DNA samples

have been sent to the Russian

passed away, 14

country's army.

Lucknow lab finds herbal way to manage gout

the board of a

Cooperative Bank.

Cooperative Bank to serve on

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant advancement in the ▲ management of gout, a prevalent form of arthritis affecting many, particularly those above 35, scientists from the Lucknow-based CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) have developed a herbal formulation to target the condition caused by elevated uric acid levels that leads to severe pain, swelling, and inflammation in joints, most commonly the big toe. Unlike many existing herbal products which lack rigorous scientific backing, 'NBRI-Gout Out', has undergone extensive testing.

Its efficacy has been evaluated through a range of in-vitro and invivo assays, demonstrating its effectiveness in reducing uric acid levels by 80 per cent and inflammatory mediators by about 70

The herbal remedy is developed by Dr Ankita Misra under the mentorship of Dr. Sharad Srivastava (Chief Scientist and Head) at Pharmacognosy Division of CSIR-NBRI. It has been found synergically efficacious in



standard drug colchicine. This highlights its potential as a reliable alternative or adjunct to conventional treatments.

"The bio-efficacy of combination was tested through a battery of in-vitro and in-vivo assays under the laboratory conditions and further, the safety and toxicity of NBRI-Gout out was also established in animal models. Studies showed a significant reduction in uric acid (80%) and about 70 per centreduction in inflammatory have

mediators, the primary causes underlying the pathogenesis of gout," said Dr Misra. Additionally, it showed a significant reduction in pain, and stiffness in joints and improved locomotion. It is completely water soluble with no

solvent residue. The raw materials used are widely available in the herbal drug market and do not threaten biodiversity. The product has been developed in AYUSH mode and is cost-effective, and two companies shown interest

commercialization.

The herbal remedy can also be used as an adjuvant therapy along with existing line of treatment in gouty arthritis, gouty flare, prophylaxis cases and idiopathic cases having gout symptoms, she added.

There are few herbal products available in the market specifically targeting gouty arthritis to address the problem. However, many of the existing products with claims like alleviating pain and inflammation of joints, lack scientific validation and are marketed, based on traditional

claims only. "Besides, the number of ingredients in existing products is also quite high. The problem could be addressed through the development of a natural plant-based supplement which can be used as an adjuvant therapy to the existing line of treatment for the management of conditions," said an official from the Union Science and

Technology.
The CSIR-NBRI initiative was funded under the "Scheme for Young Scientists and Technologist", SEED Division of the Ministry.

Lightest bulletproof jacket unveiled



PNS NEW DELHI

Defence Research and Development Organisation(DRDO)has developed the Bullet Proof Jacket (BPJ) consisting of lightest Front Hard Armour Panel (FHAP), Minister of state for defence Sanjay Seth in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Giving details, he said this jacket has been developed in two configuration viz. In-Conjunction-With (ICW) and Standalone with different





areal density of FHAP.



Vinesh's Olympics exit echoes of Shiny 1986 hearthreak

The whole of India is yet to recover from the shock disqualification of Vinesh Phogat from the 50 kg wrestling event in the Olympics being held at Paris. Notwithstanding the histrionics displayed by our politicians and "intellectuals" which was similar to adding insult to injury, there are many facts that remain undiscussed. In international events like Olympics, laws are not for breaking. he whole of India is yet to

The judges are intransigent when it comes to rules and regulations. Questions like whether the Prime Minister would congratulate Vinesh Phogat are, to make it blunt, simply childish and premature.

not for breaking.

În the melee that followed a la Vinesh Phogat affair, our sporting organisations and followers of the game forgot an event that happened during the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul. (Thankfully, there were no private satellite TV news channels dishing out cacophony round the clock). Shiny Wilson, an ace athlete from Kerala who reigned supreme in the 800 meter race was participating in the event



and was on her way to set a new Asian record. She was ahead of all other when contestants inadvertently cut into the inner lane, which was an error and mistake.

Though there were no runners anywhere near Shiny, the organizers disqualified her. The entire nation was shocked and the entire news rooms across the country were stunned.

But there were no political discourse and channel discussions as sports had not degenerated into the level which we saw when Vinesh Phogat was disqualified. No prime minister or sports minister rang her up to

her. Shiny had console courage in her and she was not the kind who ran away from battlefront.

In the Asian Track and Field Events of 1989 she won her favorite item with a gold medal.

The story is not yet over. Within months of her having a baby, Shiny ran the 800 meters in a career best time of 1 minute 59.85 seconds in the New Delhi edition of South Asian Federation Games in 1995 and raced with the gold medal to cuddle her baby.

The saying during those days was that Shiny ran better and faster after the child birth. Vinesh Phogat, are you reading this?

'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative now mass movement: Maha CM

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday said the Centre's 'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative has become a mass movement and invokes a spirit of nationalism and patriotism among the younger generation.

generation.
Launching the campaign at the August Kranti Maidan in south Mumbai on the occasion of the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India movement, Shinde said the national flag will be hoisted atop 2.5 crore houses, offices commercial

establishments in the state.
"The Har Ghar Tiranga initiative which started three years ago has turned into a mass movement. It evokes a sense of nationalism and patriotism among the younger generation," he said. The campaign which began on Friday will continue till August 15, he added.

People are encouraged to display the national flag at their homes and other establishments during the run up to the Independence Day on August 15 as part of the



'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign. The Quit India call given from the August Kranti Maidan was the final struggle for independence and the new generation should be made aware of the sacrifices of the freedom fighters," Shinde Programmes like said. 'Tiranga March' and felicitation of freedom fighters will be held across the state, he

On the occasion, Shinde administered a pledge to citizens that they will hoist the national flag in their homes, and also flagged off a cyclathon and a padyatra (foot march) of students and youth. Shinde paid floral tributes to martyrs at the August Kranti Maidan to mark the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India

Andhra CM promises to uplift tribals through all-round development

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday greeted the tribal community on the occasion of World Tribal Day here and promised to empower them through development on fronts such as education and health.

The Chief Minister said his government will explore all possibilities to raise the income of tribal people. "On this World Tribal Day, I not only extend my greetings to all of you but with a definite plan, I will take the responsibility to develop tribal people," said Naidu, addressing a large gathering Tummalapalli Kalakshetram. Noting that the per capita income of tribal people in the state was only Rs 1.25 lakh per annum, the CM said the government would

focus on this aspect to enhance it. Assuring to promote tribal products, which include organic agricultural produce, Naidu said the state government will use the Centre's Open Network for

Digital Commerce (ONDC)

platform for this purpose. He

observed that ONDC can enable tribals from villages to directly sell their products to consumers in cities such as Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Referring to GI-tagged Araku coffee, cultivated in the southern state, the CM said steps would be taken to promote it. Pointing to the absence of proper infrastructure in tribal villages, Naidu said Rs 2,373 crore will be spent to supply tap water to over 16,000 tribal homes while roads will be laid in 2,191 hamlets without road connectivity. He also promised to build the necessary infrastructure for the community to get access to medical facilities.

Students strip-searched in school: HC issues notice to MP Govt

PTI ■ INDORE

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Friday issued a notice to the state government in connection with an incident in a school in Indore where some students were allegedly strip-searched by a teacher to find out who among them brought a mobile phone to class.

Justices Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Duppala Venkata Ramana of the Indore bench of MP HC issued notice to the state government on a PIL filed by social activist Chinmoy Mishra. The notice sought a report within a week from the state government on the steps taken in connection with the alleged incident.

During the hearing, Mishra's lawyer Abhinav Dhanodkar claimed Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act provisions have not been complied with in the case as yet, though parents filed a police complaint on August 2.

Gujarat Congress launches 'Nyay Yatra' for victims of major tragedies in State



PTI MORBI (GUJARAT)

The Gujarat Congress on Friday launched a 14-day 'Nyay Yatra', a foot march, here to seek justice for the victims of four major tragedies that took place in the BJP-ruled state over the last five years.

The Bharatiya Janata Party was shielding the real culprits of these incidents including the recent Rajkot game zone fire, it alleged.

Congress Legislative Party Chavda, Seva Dal president Lalji Desai and MLA Jignesh launched campaign. The march will cover nearly 350 kilometers before reaching Gandhinagar on August 23, said party spokesperson Manish Doshi. Family members of the deceased from these tragedies -- 2019 Takshashila fire incident in Surat, Morbi bridge collapse of 2022, and this year's Vadodara boat capsizing incident and TRP game zono fire in Pails game zone fire in Rajkot -will join the the Yatra, he said. Mevani said that nearly 200 people died in these incidents

due to the rampant corruption under the BJP government.

We are taking out this Nyay Yatra because people do not trust ongoing investigations. Victims of Morbi bridge collapse demand that the probe be conducted by the CBI, or some non-corrupt officers. We will get justice the day all the real culprits, be it IAS, IPS officers, businessmen or BJP leaders, are behind bars," said the MLA who is the working president of Guiarat

"We demand that all the cases be tried in fast-track courts. The kin of the victims must get a minimum compensation of Rs 1.5 crore because the compensation of Rs 4 lakh is too meagre.

Nagarpalika should be Morbi office-bearers booked for murder," Mevani added. On July 6, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had visited Ahmedabad and met the family members of some of the victims, promising to raise their grievances in

Mizoram, Assam hold border talks after 20 months

 $M_{
m discussed}^{
m izoram}$ and Assam border issues on Friday, twenty months after the two northeastern neighbours held a meeting to find an amicable solution to the inter-state boundary dispute, an official

The meeting between delegations of both states is being held in Aizawl. The two states held the last round of talks in November 2022 in Guwahati.

During Friday's meeting, the Assam delegation is led by Border Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora while the Mizoram side is headed by Home Minister

K Sapdanga, the official said. This is the fourth ministeriallevel talks between the two neighbouring states since August 2021 and the first meeting after the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) came to power in December last year. Three Mizoram districts

Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit share a 164.6 km border with Assam's Cachar, Karmganj and Hailankandi districts. The dispute mainly stemmed from two colonial demarcations - 1875 and

Mizoram claims that 509 square miles area of the inner line reserved forest, notified in 1875 under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation



territory. Assam, on the other hand, regarded the map prepared by the Survey of Îndia in 1933 as its constitutional boundary. Vast areas within the inner line reserved forest now fall

There

Similarly, a certain extent of the area, as per the 1933 demarcation line, is now on the Mizoram side.

demarcation of boundaries

Gujarat Govt school teacher remains on payroll despite settling in US in 2016; probe ordered

PTI ■ PALANPUR

The Gujarat government has ordered a probe against a government schoolteacher who allegedly continues to be on the payroll despite settling in the US and remaining absent from duty for nearly eight years, an official said on Friday.

The in-charge principal of a primary school in Panchha village in Banaskantha district claimed the teacher, Bhavna Patel, has been on the school's payroll despite reporting to duty only for a month every and going on

PTI ■ PANAJI

the Goa government has

reactivated its high-level

ground-level revenue officials

responsible for reporting

Minister

disaster

making

Pramod

committee on

illegal hill cutting.

management,

unauthorised leave as she lives in the US. learning about the

principal's allegations, Gujarat Education Minister Kuber Dindor ordered a

Talking to reporters, Dindor said, "I have ordered an inquiry and sought a report from district officials. We do not allow such practice. If found guilty of unauthorised absence, we will punish the teacher and recover the salary she was paid.'

State Minister of Education Praful Pansheriya asserted that the teacher had

Post-Wayanad, Goa reactivates

not been paid since January. "She is one of 11 teachers in Danta taluka of Banaskantha. As per a primary report submitted by officials, she has been taking leaves at regular intervals. However, the report clearly stated that she has not been paid a single rupee since

January. We will take action if

she is found guilty of availing

any other benefits despite living abroad," Pansheriya The issue came to the fore after Parul Mehta, the incharge principal of the school, informed local media that despite settling in the US in 2016, Patel continues to be on the payroll.

'Bhavnaben Patel settled in the US in 2016. But, to ensure her service continues, she comes to school once a year and serves for a month. This has been going on for several years. Children are suffering because of her long absence. She should either resign or join duty," Mehta told

reporters. She also shared a letter dated July 18, wherein she urged District Education Officer Vinubhai Patel to take action against the teacher, who will retire in 2027.

Assam ex-BJP MLA Sarma joins Congress

Former BJP MLA Ashok Sarma on Friday joined Congress along with hundreds of his supporters. At a joining programme here, the senior BJP leader took the membership of Congress in the presence of its deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi, state president
Bhupen Kumar Borah,
Leader of the Opposition
Debabrata Saikia along with
AICC leaders Prithviraj
Sathe and Vikas Upadhyay.

'On this day, the Quit India movement started to get Independence from the British. I chose this day to join the Congress in recognition of the sacrifice made by the party and its leaders," Sarma said, addressing the huge crowd.

He said it was a tough decision to join the as his family, including all three brothers and two sisters, was associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

"My political existence was at stake in the BJP. The party's arrogance to destroy Congress was also not well accepted by common party workers. After Himanta Biswa Sarma joined the BJP, the downfall started. Because of such an attitude, Congress will form a government again next time," he claimed.

During the Congress regime in Assam, the society was never divided and it was also



not so during former CM Sarbananda Sonowal's

tenure, he added. "However, we are seeing only Hindu-Muslim politics in the last three years. I do not agree with the politics of division in society," Sarma

said. Nalbari district BJP leaders and workers also joined the

Congress. Borah said, "We are really happy to welcome Sarma into the Congress. We are happy that this joining programme is taking place at the Nalbari Congress office and we are not able to accommodate the supporters. It shows our

growing popularity.' Gogoi said Sarma's joining Congress will create a "tremor" in BJP in lower Assam districts and more leaders will come to the opposition party in coming

Centre withdraws ₹66 cr sanctioned for Mizoram border road project

The Centre has withdrawn Rs 66 crore initially sanctioned for construction of a border road Sangau Saisihchhuah, intended to connect south Mizoram's Lawngtlai district with Myanmar's Chin state, Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar said on Friday.

In a written reply to a question from Mizoram's Rajya Sabha member K. Vanlalvena in Parliament, Majumdar said the Rs 66.08crore border road project was sanctioned in February 2021 and was to be executed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), a release by the state's Information and Public Relations Department said.

"The sanctioned amount for the project was withdrawn by the Centre as the state government failed to provide the required land free of cost by June this year," Majumdar,

the Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), was quoted as saying in the statement. The Minister also mentioned that the Sangau-Saisihchhuah road project has now been incorporated into the Thingsai to Pangkhua-Sangau road project under General Staff (GS) funding of the BRO scheme. another

Majumdar, who also holds the Education informed Parliament that the Centre has sanctioned Rs crore construction of a permanent campus for the National Institute of Technology (NIT) at Lengpui, near Aizawl.

added that government is taking steps to obtain the necessary forest clearance for the project. Majumdar noted that the first academic session of NIT in Mizoram began in 2010, and the institution currently has 668 students.

Sawant on Friday chaired a high-level meeting of the state disaster management committee, for which state Revenue Minister Atanasio Monserratte and other highportfolio, ranking officials at Porvorim for the were present. Talking to reporters after the meeting, Sawant said the state government has woken up after the Wayanad landslide,

reviving its machinery to prevent such incidents in Goa shares Sahyadri Hill with Karnataka, ranges Kerala and Maharashtra.

disaster

Sawant said the committee will now be called the state



authority, with dedicated officers working around the

He recalled landslides in Sattari taluka inside the forests of Satrem, Karanzol and Mauxi villages in 2022 and said the committee formed to probe the incident had concluded that it happened due to heavy rains

and deforestation. The chief minister said minor landslides have been reported in Bardez, Mormugao, Sattari, Bicholim, Pernem and Salcette talukas in the last few years

The committee will identify landslide-prone areas, The main focus would be on

the committee has the power to immediately stop hillcutting if they find that it could be dangerous to people living in the vicinity. another

said committee comprising mamlatdars (local revenue officers), zonal agriculture officers and range forest officers will monitor the situation in their respective Guidelines would be issued to

the revenue, forest, town and country planning, public works department, panchayat and urban development departments, which will not allow construction in no development zones and ecosensitive management the areas on the foothills, and

Tripura VHP unit urges Centre to ensure safety of Hindus in trouble-torn Bangladesh

PTI AGARTALA

The Tripura unit of Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) has urged the Centre to ensure the safety of Hindu families living in Bangladesh in the wake of the unrest in the neighbouring country. "Since the fall of the Sheikh

Hasina's government in Bangladesh, the minority Hindu community is being targeted, with miscreants looting and setting fire to their homes and businesses," Sankar Roy, VHP Tripura Prantha Mantri, told a press

conference here on Friday. Roy alleged that the majority has community threatening Hindus, asking them to leave the country while also attempting to violate the dignity of Hindu women.

'We are in contact with the VHP's central leadership. They have informed us that the unrest in Bangladesh is an international issue. They are pressuring the Indian government to ensure the



safety of Hindu lives and properties in Bangladesh," he

He called on the Centre to take up the issue with the new regime in Dhaka and ensure that Hindus are not attacked or forced to leave their country

Earlier, Tipra Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma expressed concern over the vandalism of the 135vear-old Maharaja Chandra Library in Comilla, Bangladesh, by hooligans who burned books and historical records.

Goods train derails in mountainous South Goa

PTI PANAJI

Agoods train derailed in a mountainous region of bordering Goa South Karnataka on Friday morning, affecting the movement of trains on the South Western Railway (SWR) route, officials said. The train with 17 loaded wagons derailed in the ghat section between Sonalium and Dudhsagar stations under the Hubballi division at 9.35 am, SWR's chief public relation officer Manjunath Kanamadi said. As a result of the derailment, three trains were diverted and two others were cancelled, he said in a release. Accident relief trains with 140-ton cranes and other required materials have dispatched to the site and restoration work underway, he said. Due to the derailment, train

number 17420/17022 Vasco Tirupati/Hyderabad weekly

express, has been diverted.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Reaching out

PM Modi congratulates Muhammad Yunus, expresses concerns over the plight of minorities in Bangladesh

ndian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reached out to Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Laureate from Bangladesh, to congratulate him on heading the interim government of Bangladesh. PM Modi took to X, to express concerns over the situation of Hindus and other Minorities in Bangladesh amidst the ongoing political turmoil. Muhammad Yunus, on his part has emphasised his commitment to restore law and order. Meanwhile, the Indian government, through various channels has reiterated its concerns about the situation of minorities for regional stability. Hundreds of people trying to cross over to India but have been sent back by the Border Security Force. The situation in Bangladesh is rather fluid as the students, the initial protesters have been overshadowed by the rogue elements who are taking advantage of the situation and indulging in looting and arson while attacking minorities to garner popular support. Slowly but surely the political tension has also exacerbated communal tensions within Bangladesh. The Hindu minority,



which makes up about 8-10% of the population are worst hit. Recent reports have indicated a surge in attacks on Hindu temples, businesses, and homes, triggering fear and insecurity within the community.

Prime Minister Modi's outreach to Yunus can be seen as a calculated move to engage with a respected figure in Bangladesh who has international credibility and influence. By engaging with Yunus, Modi may be signalling India's support for democratic values and human rights in Bangladesh, while also voicing concerns about the security and well-being of the Hindu community. India is at the moment in a quandary. It has all along supported Sheikh Hasina and continues to do so but

things have changed drastically. Sheikh Hasina is now unpopular while her opponents are all powerful. She may be called to join the investigation against her which may put India in dilemma. The silver lining is that Yunus is now in command, and he is widely regarded as an honorable man with an impeccable track record, even though he is an outsider in the corridors of power. He is India's best bet as China and Pakistan who have allegedly supported the movement to oust Hasina would like to subvert Indo Bangladesh relationship. He could be persuaded to be neutral. The political instability and potential for communal violence could lead to a refugee crisis, with many Hindus and other minorities seeking asylum in India. This could complicate India's domestic political landscape, especially in the bordering states of West Bengal and Assam. Meanwhile, the trade with Bangladesh has already nose-dived and the refugee crisis is growing. Bangladesh is a key partner in maintaining security in the Bay of Bengal region. This is a time for serious diplomacy. Prime Minister Modi would do well to engage with Muhammad Yunus at the earliest opportunity. While Twitter diplomacy is a good starting point, it needs to be followed up with direct engagement. A lot is at stake for India in Bangladesh's future direction.



Military aircrafts during the multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024', in Sulur

Gender rights and reality: Bridging the gap



Gender equality in India remains a distant dream, as deep-rooted gender norms continue to impede the nation's progress towards women emancipation

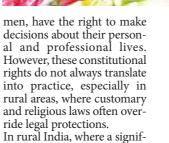
ender equality is not just a fundamental human right but a crucial component of a peaceful, cohesive, and sustainable world. It demands equal opportunities, treatment, and access to resources for all individuals, regardless of gender. Historically, women have faced discrimination on multiple fronts, from limited educational opportunities to restricted participation in decision-making processes. However, after years of struggle, women today have made significant strides, becoming prominent members of the workforce and key decision-makers in various fields. This progress aligns with the goals set by 193 countries that signed the Beijing Platform for Action, the most comprehensive global plan to eliminate systemic barriers and achieve women's human rights across social, economic, political, and environmental domains.

Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform, much has been achieved. Women now serve as heads of state, entrepreneurs, educators, scientists, judges, and administrators, excelling in many unconventional careers.

This paints a promising picture of the progress toward gender equality. However, a closer examination of statistics from government reports, non-governmental organizations, and local surveys reveals a grim reality: significant challenges remain.

This is particularly true in India, a country where women have historically been revered as goddesses and have played crucial roles as scholars, rulers, and warriors. Despite this rich history, modern India continues to struggle with deeply entrenched gender inequalities.

India, in the 21st century, is a country with progressive laws and robust institutions rooted in its Constitution. The Indian Constitution, one of the world's finest legal documents, guarantees equal rights for men and women. Rights such as personal liberty, freedom of speech and expression, free movement and association, and the freedom to choose one's residence and occupation all imply that Indian women, like



icant percentage of the popu-ONE OF THE MOST lation resides, gender equality remains elusive. Here, rigid customary practices contribute to a skewed sex ratio, early marriages, and limited educational opportunities for women. Women are often married off at a young age, without receiving proper education or being informed about their rights. Even when they are aware of their rights, they frequently lack access to opportunities for personal and professional growth. Legislation like the Pre-Natal professional Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act has helped improve the sex ratio in India, but the harsh reality remains that many women face discrimination in basic survival needs. In many families, women and girls eat last and least, while boys and men are given nutritionally rich diets. Women who cook for their families often do not cook for tnemserves, and from a young age, they are conditioned to prioritize the needs and preferences of men. The average



FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF PERSONAL FREEDOM IS THE ABILITY TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER ONE'S BODY AND SEXUALITY. SADLY, THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHOICES **ABOUT INTIMATE** RELATIONSHIPS, WHETHER OR WHEN TO HAVE A CHILD, AND THE USE OF CONTRACEPTION IS STILL DENIED TO MANY WOMEN IN

has her first child is 22 years, but in rural areas, this age is often much lower, with many girls married off before they turn 18. These young women are not physically or mentally prepared to handle the responsibilities of marriage and family life, making them vulnerable to physical, sexual, and verbal abuse for perceived failures in their duties.

In urban households, gender stereotypes are beginning to shift, with men taking on more household chores. However, they are not held to the same standards of diligence and regularity as women. Most women, regardless of age, class, caste, or community, remain vulnerable to domestic violence for reasons as trivial as poorly prepared meals or wearing a dress of their choice—issues that men rarely

One of the most fundamental aspects of personal freedom is the ability to exercise control over one's body and sexuality. Sadly, the right to make choices about intimate relationships, whether or when to have a child, and the use of contraception is still denied to many women in India. According to a survey, a significant percentage of women aged 18-49 nave experienced forced sex or sexual abuse at least once in their lives. This gendered expression of power has severe consequences for the mental

and emotional well-being of women, who are often reluctant to share their ordeals. Despite advancements in healthcare, many Indian women do not enjoy the right to health. In conservative settings, cultural norms discourage men from addressing the health needs of their female

family members, and women themselves often do not recognize or report health issues. The presence of male doctors in rural areas further restricts women from undergoing necessary examinations and checkups. The literacy gap between men and women in India remains

significant, particularly in rural areas where deeply entrenched gender norms discourage girls from pursuing education. Girls are often pushed into work at a much earlier age than boys, with little or no control over their earnings. Even in urban settings, working women are often not financially independent, either bearing the burden of family expenses or having no say in how their money is spent. Achieving gender equality in India requires a fundamental shift in attitudes among both men and women. Only through such changes can the goal of true gender equality be

(The writer is assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, DU; views are personal)

realizea.

The role of technology in driving financial literacy



With the power to democratise financial literacy, it can bring people from every stratum of society onto a level playing field

inancial literacy is no longer just a useful skill. It is now essential knowledge required to traverse the modern economic landscape. Studies have shown financially literate individuals can use their money wisely to plan for a secure future.

Today, technology is an important enabler of access to resources required to cultivate financial literacy, democratise the sector, and empower people to improve lives.

However, despite the increasing penetration of the Internet and technology, a 2021 survey found only 27% of Indians are financially literate.

Furthermore, only 16.7% of students have a general understanding of finances. With India projected to become one of, if not the leading, global economies by 2030, our society must be educated on the best practices for handling funds and making smart financial

decisions. Online platforms such as YouTube, Skillshare, Udemy, and others are invaluable tools in the pursuit of with a barrage of informa-

knowledge. YouTube has tutorials and explanations for practically every subject under the sun. Not only does it boast a vast catalogue, but everything on the site is free to access.

This is a critical requirement in India where the common man is looking to save as much money as possible. Channels such as Khan Academy are great starting points for everyone's financial literacy journey. It's not just about breaking down complex informa-

While the concepts should be easy to understand, the modules must also be presented engagingly to retain the person's interest. No one enjoys being lectured

tion in a boring manner. Social media and digital channels have also made it easier for educators and financial experts to share information. Instagram, TikTok, and X are now filled with financial gurus offering their opinions on the latest economic trends, up-and-coming investment opportunities, and the state of the global economy.

Keep in mind that advice from such channels shouldn't be taken at face value. But they do offer a macro perspective of the economy and break down complex information into easily digestible pieces.

Advancing technology also allows financial institutions such as banks and NBFCs to offer financial literacy directly to their customers. Bank apps can utilise push notifications, pop-ups, bank representatives, and even Al avatars to offer pertinent

and timely advice. NBFCs can leverage subscription services to reach out to their customers via messengers to advise them on how to manage funds effectively. Artificial intelligence is going to significantly improve access to and delivery of financial literacy. With just a smartphone, one can access tools such as ChatGPT to help answer common questions regarding finances.

While it should not be used to gain investment advice, the current models of Al tools can offer practical knowledge regarding financial literacy and point the curious reader towards additional sources to gain more knowledge.

It's no wonder that AI in BFSI is expected to hit a whopping \$100 billion by 2032. Technology is a powerful tool in the hands of those with an understanding of how to use it.

With the power to democratise financial literacy, it can bring people from every stratum of society onto a level playing field.

However, as technology evolves, so must we to enjoy the benefits of its advancement. This is a crucial step not just for society but also for our personal and finan-

cial well-being.
(The writer is a MD at StoxBox; views are personal)

THE EDITOR

A COURT IS A COURT

Madam — The special feature of Indian judiciary is the relative non-interference in its functioning from either the executive or the legislature. Also, the hierarchical system of judiciary has ensured that no litigant goes unsatisfied with a particular court's verdict. The Supreme Court has time and again reiterated that no court in the country is above another. Besides, the SC has made it clear that although its judgements are binding on every court in India under Article141 of the Constitution, the High Courts are in no way inferior to it because the former's administrative control is independent of the top court. SC has consistently refused to direct High Courts to clear cases in a time bound manner for

age at which an Indian woman

the same reason. Justice Abhay Oka of the SC, during the course of a hearing, had succinctly remarked that "a court is a court". Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, in 2022, had decried the tendency to refer to the district courts as subordinate judiciary because there was no definition of the word "subordinate" although the world is frequently used in the Constitution.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

VINESH PHOGAT HAS BEEN WRONGED

Madam- In an unfortunate turn of events, Vinesh was disqualified from a crucial Olympic match due to a minor weight discrepancy, sparking outrage and disappointment across the nation. This incident, which resulted in the loss of a potential medal for India, raises serious questions about the handling and management of the situation by the coaches and officials.

Vinesh Phogat, who had successfully won three bouts in a single day, found herself disqualified just 24 hours after her semifinal victory. The controversy stems from the fact that it is highly improbable for an experienced athlete like Vinesh to gain 100 grams of weight in such a short period, leading many to suspect foul play. This suspicion casts a shadow over the transparency and fairness of the Olympic Games, prompting Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Economics should not be politicised



his refers to the editorial "Finance Minister yields" (Aug 8). Facing a backlash from the people. Members within NDA and the Opposition over changes to the property transaction taxation, the Finance Minister has given some concession to home owners, by way of two options. The tax payers can now choose to calculate their tax on long term capital gains either at 12.5% without indexation under the new scheme or at 20% with indexation under the old scheme. This is akin to income tax options. She

also stated in her speech on reduction in the income tax on annual income of Rs. 15 lakh. But the budget is not only taxes, it deals with development of the people as well as the country. People are burdened with high GST rates and fuel prices, no relief in them as they have cascading effect on overall inflation, which affects the poor most. On one hand government provides free ration & electricity to poor, on the other hand they are burdened with high taxes which nullify the former. FM did not mention about decreasing the fiscal deficit, decreasing the borrowings, increasing foreign investment in the country, boosting employment generation, rationalizing the freebies & subsidies that are affecting economy etc. which are equally important components of a budget. Development of the country should be the high priority in the budget and it should not be compromised by keeping people happy

Dr O Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

to urge the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President, P.T. Usha, to explore every possible avenue to ensure that justice is served for Vinesh. There is also a need to investigate whether Vinesh was unknowingly given a weight-gain substance during the 24 hours between the semi-final and the final weigh-in, as a similar incident reportedly happened to another wrestler from a different country.

These concerns raise serious questions about the integrity and transparency of the Olympic Games' management. While human error is possible in such a vast sporting event, the circumstances surrounding Vinesh Phogat's disqualification do not appear to fall into the category of innocent mistakes. If it is determined that Vinesh was wronged, India should strong-

ly consider appealing the decision

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

BANGLADESH: A WARNING FOR INDIA

Madam —Bangladesh, which had seemed politically stable for the past 15 years under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, is now show ing signs of distress. Hasina's extended

tenure, while initially successful, has led to growing concerns about her increasingly autocratic behavior. This shift has resulted in the imprisonment of political opponents and numerous legal battles against figures like Nobel laureate Mohammad Yunus, who gained significant popularity for his work with Grameen Bank. Could similar public discontent emerge in India? The government's actions, particularly over the past two terms, have shown tendencies toward authoritarianism

This has been evident in the public backlash against the Citizenship Āmendment Act (CAA), prolonged farmer protests against agricultural reforms, and discontent among youth over the Agniveer recruitment scheme. Rising inflation, unemployment, and corruption, coupled with selective legal actions against opposition members, contribute to a growing

sense of frustration. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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FIRST COLUMN

DO NOT LET SKY BE YOUR LIMIT

Stay resilient in the face of adversity, and you'll find that there's no limit to what you can achieve



n the realm of corporate success, there is a fundamental truth: the sky is not your limit, but merely the starting point. With a powerful drive and unwavering determination, ambition propels you to surpass all perceived boundaries. Just like a high-performance engine, achieving your dreams requires proper focus and direction. Today, we all have unique goals and dreams, both in our personal lives and careers. Nevertheless, the journey from having a vision to making it a reality can be challenging and draining.

It calls for unwavering dedication, relentless effort, and occasionally, the need to ignore those who doubt you. In our business environment, having a strong drive and steadfast determination is not just a cliché, but a crucial factor in setting ambitious goals and relentlessly striving for excellence. We must connect these grand aspirations to careful planning, unwavering commitment, and consistent hard work. Only then will the aspiration reveal its magic. Many times, the biggest obstacles we face are a result of the actions of

There will always be those who view our dreams as unattainable or doubt our abilities. It's crucial to remember that our potentials are not defined by external voices. Throughout history, countless individuals have faced ridicule and scepticism, only to prove their doubters wrong ultimately. The proper environment can truly make a difference in our pursuit of success. It is an environment that fosters growth by providing opportunities to use our skills and allow-



ing for energetic and unwelcome ambition, which drives change and advancement. Surround yourself with mentors and peers who share your vision and are there to support you on your journey. Embrace growth opportunities and always value the feedback of others to refine your approach. Equally crucial is the art of expressing our goals. Make sure to communicate your goals and progress with both supervisors and colleagues. It's important to keep everyone in the loop and stay motivated.

When you openly express your aspirations and the steps you're taking to achieve them, not only do you attract valuable encouragement, but you also establish a sense of personal responsibility. However, the true basis of ambition stems from the constant trust within oneself. It is important to have a strong belief in your abilities and to acknowledge the unique qualities that you bring to the table. Recognising and celebrating the small victories along your journey to greater success is crucial. Embrace challenges as chances to grow and learn.

Stay resilient in the face of setbacks. Ambition is a potent force. When properly harnessed, it has the potential to unlock remarkable outcomes. Despite facing obstacles and encountering negativity, you will always choose to embrace a positive mindset. And getting encouragement from prominent individuals will help you hugely achieve your goals.

After all, everyone deserves a chance to shine. So set the bar high, work, and let the ambition catapult you to new heights. The sky is not the limit in the corporate world; it is just the beginning of your

journey toward success. (The author is a freelance writer and a motivator; views are per-

Bangladesh: Uncertainty and chaos grip the nation



As the nation grapples with a rising wave of Islamist extremism and escalating violence, the future of its democracy and regional stability hangs in the balance



he turmoil in Bangladesh, which led to Sheikh Hasina's resignation as prime minister and departure to India, raises two questions. Why could she not prevent it? What lies ahead for Bangladesh and India? She should have reached out to the students--trying to win over the bulk of them who are moderates, and isolating the Islamist fundamentalist extremists--before their Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement (ADSM), had snowballed. She could have argued that her government did away with 30 per cent reservation for the descendants of the freedom fighters of the 1971 liberation war in 2018, which was their demand to start with. Bangladesh's High Court PROMINENT ROLE restored it following a petition by several descendants. Indeed, her government had appealed to the Supreme Court against the High Court's order.

In fact, the appellate division of the Supreme Court had, on July 21, 2024, ordered the allocation of 93% of government jobs on the basis of merit, reserving five per cent for freedom fighters and their descendants, and one per cent each for tribes, the differentially abled and sexual minorities. There could have been two reasons for the agitation continuing even after that. First, the rancour created by the government's harsh response to the agitation, which had led to a large number of deaths of students and others, was too great for the students to call a halt. They now wanted Sheikh Hasina's resignation. Second, Islamist terrorist organisations like Ansar al-Islam, linked to Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) and Jama'at-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), as well as the Bangladesh Jama'at-e-Islami (BJeI)and its students' wing, Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir (BICS), closely tied to them, had joined the movement and tried to steer it to serve their own agenda—ousting Hasina and the Awami League Government, and installing a fundamentalist Islamist and pathologically anti-India dispensation in its place.

Sheikh Hasina knew all this, and should also have known the convulsive impact students' movement has in Bangladesh on at least four occasions. The first was the language



STUDENTS ALSO PLAYED A IN THE

LIBERATION

STRUGGLE AGAINST PAKISTAN'S COLONIAL RULE, WHICH EXPLAINS THE PAKISTAN ARMY'S SAVAGE ATTACKS ON THE **CAMPUS AND** HOSTELS OF DHAKA AND **OTHER**

UNIVERSITIES ON THE NIGHT OF ITS NOTORIOUS CRACKDOWN

movement which demanded that Bengali along with Urdu, and not the latter alone, should become Pakistan's official language, and not Urdu alone, which Pakistan's ruling establishment, based in West Pakistan, wanted. Defying police repression, the movement peaked on February, 21, 1952, when there was a country-wide general strike. Police firing led to the deaths of four students, whose names-Rafiq, Barkat, Jabbar and Salam—shine prominently in Bangladesh's martyrs' pantheon. The movement continued to swell and compelled Pakistan's acceptance of both Bengali and Urdu as the country's official language. Again, students were at the forefront of the move-ment against General Ayub Khan's coup in 1958 and establishment of a military dictatorship, whose character could not be disguised by the fraudulent representative government introduced on March 23,

piayed a prominent role in the liberation struggle against Pakistan's colonial rule, which explains the Pakistan Army's savage attacks on the campus and hostels of Dhaka and other universities on the night of its notorious crackdown, codenamed Operation Searchlight, killing hundreds of students, on the night of March 25, 1971. Finally, there was the massive Shahbag Square movement in Dhaka (February-May 2013) demanding death penalty to the war criminals of 1971. The government agreed to move the International Crimes Tribunal, set up by an amendment in 2009 to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, to investigate and prosecute personnel of the Pakistan Army and Razakars, Al-Badr and Al-Shams, accused of committing genocide during the 1971 liberation

Given all this, Hasina should have

tried to diffuse the latest movement $% \left(t\right) =\left(t\right) \left(t\right) \left($ at the beginning. Be that as it may, what now in Bangladesh? What should India do now? Things do not look good. Hindu temples, including the emblematic Dhakeshwari temple, from which Dhaka derives its name, have been attacked and vandalised. Hindus shops, business establishments and homes, have been attacked, a Hindu municipal councillor aligned with the Awami League, has been killed. Many have been injured. Women have been assaulted.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's statues have been pulled down and/or vandalised. Āwami League ministers, leaders and activists are under attack, as are many of their homes and establishments. In Khulna, three persons, including an Awami League functionary, Mohsin Reza, have been lynched. Film producer Selim Khan, who made a movie on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's life, has been murdered along with his son, Shanto Khan. A hotel owned by an Awami League politician was set ablaze, causing 24 deaths, in Jashore. The house of Mashrafe Mortaza, Awami League MP and former Bangladesh test cricketer,

has been destroyed. These are just a few instances indicating the kind of open season that has been declared on the minorities, supporters of the Awami League and civil society elements opposed to Islamist fundamentalists. The question is whether things will improve or become worse. Much would depend on whether the interim government, headed by Nobel laureate, Muhammad Yunus, is able to establish order, or whether supporters of the BJel, BICS and Ansar al-Islam, who are behind the current violence along with sections of Begum Khaleda Zia-led Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), are contained or allowed to

lence and terror.

hatred for India. The backgrounds of some of his colleagues, however, raise questions. The Army's role is of critical importance. The report that it is being purged of those perceived to be pro-Sheikh Hasina, should worry those who want a peaceful, democratic and tolerant Bangladesh. Looking beyond the interim government, of critical importance is how free and fair are the parliamentary elec-tions, that would have to be held now that Bangladesh's national parliament has been dissolved. New Delhi is rightly watchful. The BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government ruling Bangladesh from 2001to 2006, was pathologically hostile to India and actively shel-

Yunus is neither a fundamentalist

nor known for his pathological

Bangladesh, engaged in a repeat eriormance, is not what Nev Delhi wants. Meanwhile, External Affairs' Minister, S. Jaishankar, has said that he does not rule out the machinations of a foreign hand behind the Bangladesh developments. Given his official position, he has to be circumspect with his words. But it is prima facie clear that Pakistan's ISI,

tered and armed the secessionist

groups active in the north-eastern

parts of this country. A hostile

and perhaps even China, have been involved. Pakistan, which is having serious problems with the Taliban which it had once wet-nursed, and China, which has its troubles with Islamists, should remember William S. Baring-Gould's limerick, There was a young lady of Riga/ Who went for a ride on a tiger/ They returned from the ride/ With the lady inside/ And a smile on the

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed

face of the tiger."

Integrative health approaches for mental wellbeing

The road to mental well being doesn't have to be paved with pills alone; sometimes, it is as simple as finding our breath and practicing Yoga

¬here is enough scientific evidence to validate that the mind, body, and soul are interconnected on a subtle level. This connection influences our thoughts and emotions, hence, our physical reality and our physical state impact our mental health and

processes True health is signified by a harmonious balance between mind and body. Even a minor imbalance can lead to a range of issues, from physical illnesses and mental health challenges to a sense of unfulfillment with oneself and life.As per the WHO, nearly 80% of mental health cases arise in low- and middle-income

countries. Conditions like depression and anxiety affect approximately 9% of the world's pop-



ISHAN SHIVANAND

ulation and account for over 10% of years lived with disabil-

Drawbacks **Traditional Approaches** Pharmaceutical treatments have long been a cornerstone of mental healthcare, aiding in the management of severe cases and stabilisation. These targeted therapies address specific disease mechanisms based on biomarkers, leading ment. Medical technology advancements enhance the efficacy of these treatments and improve patient outcomes. However, the reliance on medication alone often overlooks the holistic nature of mental well-being.

Embracing Integrative **Health Approaches**

Integrative health approaches, particularly those rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems such as yogic modalities, offer a promising complement to traditional pharmaceutical treatments.

A combination of breathwork and meditative protocols helps individuals penetrate a heightened state of non-judgemental awareness. They enable a physiological state of rest and digestion or relaxation, which to more personalised treat- is opposite to the flight-or-fight

stress response. This interruption in the stress response helps foster a sense of balance and union between the mind and body.

Yogic practices are also underpinned by a few principles: The human body is a holistic entity comprising various interrelated dimensions inseparable from one another. The health or illness of any one dimension affects the others. Secondly, every individual's needs are unique and must be approached with tailored practices that acknowledge this individuality.

Yogic modalities empower individuals: to be their healers, actively engaging in their journey toward health, and fostering autonomy. Also, the quality and state of an individual's mind are crucial to heal-



ing. A positive mind-state accelerates healing, while a negative mind-state can pro-

The Science Behind the Practice: A consistent yogic practice has been shown to alleviate depression, leading to significant increases in serotonin levels and decreases in monoamine oxidase, an enzyme that breaks down neurotransmitters and cortisol. Yoga-based interventions also

help manage depressive disorders, stress, and anxiety by inhibiting the sympathetic area of the hypothalamus. This inhibition optimizes the body's responses to stressful stimuli and restores autonomic regulatory reflex mechanisms associated with stress. Moreover, yogic practices inhibit areas responsible for fear, aggressiveness, and rage, while stimulating the pleasure centres in the brain, resulting in a state of bliss and reduced anxiety. Regular practitioners of yoga and meditation experience lower heart rates, respiratory rates, blood pressure, and car-

diac output. Broader Health Benefits: Beyond mental well-being, yogic protocols improve cardiorespiratory performance, psychological profiles, and

plasma melatonin levels. It significantly reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure, mean arterial pressure, and orthostatic tolerance. Yoga also enhances cardiovascular efficiency and homeostatic control, leading to better autonomic balance, respiratory performance, and overall wellbeing. Studies have shown that yoga-based lifestyle modifications can even aid in the regression of coronary lesions and improve myocardial perfusion in patients with coronary artery disease (CAD). Integrating Yoga into Modern Healthcare: An integrated approach to mental

health care leverages insights from traditional Indian knowledge systems, combining pharmaceutical treatments with non-pharmaceutical medita-

tive practices. This synergy not only addresses the immediate symptoms but also promotes long-term recovery and wellbeing. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, it's crucial to embrace the wisdom of ancient practices. By integrating yoga and other noninvasive approaches into our mental health toolkit, we can achieve a balanced state where the mind and body work in harmony. The road to mental well-being doesn't have to be paved with pills alone; sometimes, it's as simple as finding our breath and grounding ourselves in practices that connect us to our core.

(The writer is mental health researcher and the founder of Yoga of Immortals (YOI) meditative program; views are personal)

Israeli troops launch new assault as mediators push for cease-fire

Tsraeli troops launched a new **▲**assault Friday into the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, targeting Hamas fighters who the military claims still operate there despite repeated offensives, as American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators renewed their push for Israel and Hamas Haniyeh, was assassinated in a presumed Israeli blast in Tehran on July 31.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office would send negotiators to talks that mediators have called for on August 15, to be held in either Qatar's capital of Doha or Egypt's capital of Cairo

the expectations of all parties. It did not elaborate on what that would look like.

A key question hanging over the talks is the impact of confirmed Thursday that it Sinwar's elevation to Hamas' top leadership post. Seen as a hard-liner within the group, Sinwar has been in deep hiding in Gaza throughout the war as Israel vows to kill him.



to reach a cease-fire deal.

Israeli evacuation orders triggered yet another exodus of Palestinians from the heavily destroyed eastern districts of Khan Younis, where many had just returned less than two weeks ago — after the Israeli military's last incursion into the city in July

Thousands fled Thursday, carrying essentials like small gas cylinders, mattresses, tents, backpacks and blankets.

Officials from Israel and the United States have said they believe Yahya Sinwar, Hamas newly named top leader and one of the architects of the October 7 attack on Israel, could be hiding in tunnels under Khan Younis.

The military said Friday its warplanes struck 30 Hamas targets in the city, including fighters and weapons storage sites. It said troops were searching for Hamas tunnels and other infrastructure while engaging in combat "above and below ground." After 10 months of war in Gaza, the mediators' push aims to resume indirect negotiations for a cease-fire that have been on hold since Sinwar's predecessor, Ismail

There was no immediate response from Hamas, which announced Tuesday that Sinwar, the group's leader in Gaza, would replace Haniyeh as the group's top leader. Haniyeh previously served as the key interlocutor in the negotia-tions. Haniyeh's killing and that of a top Hezbollah commander in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut brought vows of retaliation from Hezbollah and Iran. International diplomats have been scrambling to prevent an escalation and to seal a deal to stop the fighting in Gaza and release the hostages still captive in the enclave.

In a joint statement, the United States, Egypt and Qatar called for the new round of talks, to be held either in Doha or Cairo, and pressed both sides to move ahead. "There is no further time to

waste nor excuses from any party for further delay," they said, adding that the negotiators have already finalized a framework for the deal. They said mediators were pre-

pared to present a final compromise "that resolves the remaining implementation (19 square miles) on the Gaza

Sinwar has already been close ly involved in negotiations from behind the scenes. Hamas officials and mediators have said Hamas negotiators regularly sought his approval on the group's positions as it pressed for guarantees that a deal would bring a complete end to the war and withdrawal of all Israeli troops from Gaza, in return for the release of all hostages.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas after the Oct. 7 attack, in which militants from Gaza stormed into southern Israel killing around 1,200 people and abducting 250 others. After a round of release exchanges in November, Israel says 111 hostages remain in Gaza including 39 bodies.

Its campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,600 Palestinians and wounded more than 91,700 others. More than 1.9 million of Gaza's pre-war population of 2.3 million have been driven from their homes, fleeing repeatedly across the territory to escape offensives. Most are now crowded into ramshackle tent camps in an area about 50 square kilometers

Bangladeshis welcome interim govt with hope for normalcy

 $P^{\text{eople in Bangladesh have}}_{\text{welcomed the new interim}}$ government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, hoping it would restore order, end repression and hold a fair election to facilitate a democratic transition of power.

Yunus, 84, on Thursday took oath as the head of an interim government, replacing Sheikh Hasina who abruptly resigned and fled to India leaving the country in turmoil following deadly protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

He was sworn in as the chief advisor - a position equivalent to prime minister.

Women's rights activist Farida Akhtar, right-wing party Hefazat-e-Islam's deputy chief AFM Khalid Hossain, Grameen Telecom trustee Nurjahan Begum, freedom fighter Sharmeen Murshid, chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Supradip Chakma, Prof Bidhan Ranjan Roy and former foreign

secretary Touhid Hossain are among the advisory council

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury said that one of the duties of the interim government would be to restore order, which has been disrupted over the last few days following the fall of Hasina. "The other task is to ensure the safety of citizens," The Daily Star newspaper quoted Choudhury as saying after the oath-taking of the interim government.

The government would also need to eliminate all forms of oppression and the culture of fear prevailing across the country, he said.

However, the main responsibility of the government, he emphasised, would be to hold a fair and acceptable election to facilitate a democratic transition of power.

Eminent jurist Kamal Hossain said, "The change that has happened was welcomed by everyone. There has been an extraordinary turnout at the event. Everyone feels that

change has come.
"We hope they [members of the advisory council] will be able to address the new crises. People will expect a meaningful change — let this be that change," he said.

Barrister Sara Hossain said: My main expectation from this government is that it will enable substantial reforms to institutions in Bangladesh and clear the path for truth-telling about what has happened not only in the immediate past or the past few weeks but even over the last 14 years and before that. The students' anti-discrimina-

tion movement was for reforms and against repression and these should be the interim government's main themes, she told the newspaper. "What I perhaps am a bit troubled by is that, unlike previous years, there is no balance of political background and police. We obviously have no representation from (Hasina-led) Awami League. This absence of balance could cause a problem," she

Constitution, history and tradition, which has not denied any faith but encouraged pluralism, but the swearing-in today did not reflect that, she said, expressing hope that "it is not a sign of things to come." The inclusion of students is of course unprecedented, she said, adding, "But I think it can only add energy to the whole process ... I believe they can be a part of keeping the interim government in the right direction and keep it within the demands of the students and general people. We need to remember that even post-Liberation in 1971, we had

many young leaders." Samina Luthfa, associate professor at Dhaka University, said, "While I welcome the interim government, it is to be noted that many of them are from non-government organisations and require a specific kind of skill set. However, there is much work to be done to reform the nation, whether they have the skills for that remains a question. I think of the anti-discrimination student movement] in the government brings hope."

Asked whether minority and women representation were enough, she said, "I believe those could be higher. Many other women and actors from religious minority backgrounds are skilled and have been supporting the movement, they too could have been included. More people from these segments of society could have ensured a higher possibility of a 'discrimination-free' country. She added that since the Jamaat-e-Islami was banned the Hefazat Ameer may have been included to balance out participation from all religious backgrounds. "We are in an extraordinary situation and of course, we cannot expect everything to be perfect already, it will all take time. "However, at this moment, the first thing the interim government must look after is the safety of all citizens, justice, the

economy, and restoring law and order."

UN concern over racially-based attacks in B'desh

PTI UNITED NATIONS

 $A^{\rm mid\ violence\ against\ the}_{\rm minority\ Hindu\ communi}$ ty in Bangladesh, a spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he stands against any racially based attacks or incitement to violence.

"What we've made clear is we want to make sure that the violence that has been occurring in Bangladesh in recent weeks is tamped down. Certainly, we stand against any racially based attacks or racially based incitement to violence," Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, said here on Thursday.

He was responding to a question on the Secretary-General's reaction to attacks on Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh.

Several Hindu temples, households and businesses have been vandalised, and at least two

Hindu leaders affiliated with former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party have been killed in the violence since Monday, when Hasina resigned and fled to India.

Since Hasina fled the country, media reports from Bangladesh have flagged more and more cases of violence against minorities, including the massive vandalism and destruction at popular folk band Joler Gaan's frontman Rahul Ananda's residence on Monday, prompting the singer and his

family to go into hiding. However, it is not just Hindus that are targeted. At least 232 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government on Monday, taking the death toll to 560 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-

Police stations reopen with military support in Dhaka

PTI DHAKA

Police stations in Bangladesh, which were deserted during the peak of the anti-government protests, are slowly resuming their normal activities with the assistance of the military, according to media reports on Friday.

Following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on Monday due to student-led protests, all police station activities came to a halt. Several police stations were attacked, looted and set on fire, leading to many officers evacuating their stations and going into hiding due to the threat of more attacks.

More than 400 people, including police personnel, were killed in the violence centring the students' movement.

After about four days, activities resumed at some 29 police stations with the assistance of the military, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported, quoting military and police officials. On Thursday, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was sworn in as the head of Bangladesh's interim government, vowing to restore law and order in the

Commander Company Shakhawat Khandakar from 25 East Bengal Regiment said: 'Seeing how criminals were killing people, including the police, we decided that it was critical to save the police members. They serve the people; we needed to give them a chance to reform.

'Many weapons are in the Tejgaon police station. If these fell into the hands of criminals, the country would be in grave danger. That is when we took measures to reinforce the security of the station," Khandakar

Tejgaon Deputy Police Commissioner Azimul Haque said, "We are grateful to the members of the military who came forward to save our policemen and played an important role in protecting the lives and properties of the people. Today, we have started all police activities with the help of the military. I request all citizens to come to the police station. We are ready to serve He added that out of six police

stations in Tejgaon division, three police stations have been fully operational. Work is underway on a small scale at the affected

police station. In the meantime, many policemen have joined work in the police stations. The others are starting to arrive. We hope that all our policemen will join the workplace by afternoon, Haque said.

On Wednesday, the newly appointed Inspector General of Police, Md Mainul Islam, ordered officers to join their respective units within the next 24 hours.

People from all walks of life, including different political parties leaders and students, are extending all-out necessary support to the returnee police personnel so they can come to their workplaces safely, according to a press release issued by police headquarters on

British authorities still on alert for further unrest

AP KONDON

 $B_{\text{Thursday they were prepar}}^{\text{ritish}} \text{ authorities said}$ ing for the possibility of further unrest, even as they applauded the efforts of anti-racism campaigners and police officers who largely stifled a threatened

wave of far-right demonstra-

tions overnight. Prime Minister Keir Starmer sounded the note of caution after a week of anti-immigrant violence that has scarred communities from Northern Ireland to the south coast of England. Starmer spoke to reporters at a mosque in Solihull, near Birmingham, where demonstrators shut down a shopping center on Sunday.

"It's important that we don't let up here," Starmer said. At an emergency meeting with law enforcement officers at his office, Starmer said on Thursday evening that police need to remain on "high alert," Britain's Press Association

reported. He credited strategic police staffing and swift justice for rioters in the courts for creating a deterrent that kept trouble at a minimum the night before.

Police across the United Kingdom had braced for widespread disorder on Wednesday, after far-right activists circulated a list of more than 100 sites they planned to target, including the offices of immigration lawyers and others offering services to migrants.

But those demonstrations failed to materialize as police and counter-protesters filled the streets. Carrying signs saying "Refugees Welcome" and chanting "Whose streets? Our streets," people turned out in force to protect asylum service centers and the offices of immi-

gration attorneys. The government also declared a national critical incident. putting 6,000 specially trained police on standby to respond to any disorder. Police said that protests and counter-protests were largely peaceful, though a small number of arrests were made.

"The show of force from the police and, frankly, the show of unity from communities together defeated the chal-lenges that we faced," said Commissioner Mark Rowley, the head of London's Metropolitan Police Service. "It went off very peacefully last night, and the fears of extreme right disorder were abated."

But tensions remain high after right-wing agitators fueled the violence by circulating misinformation about the identity of the suspect in a knife attack that killed three young girls in the English seaside town of Southport last week. The last child hospitalized in the July 29 stabbing has been released, police said Thursday.

Nearly 500 people have been arrested around the country after anti-immigrant mobs clashed with police, attacked mosques and overran two hotels housing asylum-seekers.

Aarrested in connection with a foiled attack on nowcancelled Taylor Swift con-

certs in Vienna, Austria's inte-

rior minister said Friday. Austrian Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said an 18vear-old was taken into custody Thursday evening in Vienna after allegedly being in contact with the main suspect. Karner announced the arrest during an unrelated news conference

Investigators are scrutinizing the "networks" of the suspects, the Austrian interior ministry told The Associated Press on Friday, adding in a statement that investigators have turned to evaluating physical and electronic evidence

The 19-year-old main suspect and a 17-year-old were arrested Tuesday, while a 15-year-old was also interrogated but was not arrested. Officials said Thursday afternoon that no additional suspects were being sought. They did not immediately offer further details Friday.

al-Qaida. Investigators found bomb-making materials at one of the suspects' homes. Officials say one suspect has confessed to planning to "kill as many people as possible outside the concert venue.

Officials say the main suspect and the 18-year-old arrested Friday both pledged "oaths of allegiance" to the Islamic State

"He had been in contact with the main perpetrator, but is not directly connected to the attack plans," Karner said. "But, as was found out a few days ago, he took an oath of allegiance specifically to the IS on August

The 18-year-old "comes from the social environment" of the main suspect, Karner said. Three sold-out concerts were cancelled Wednesday because of the plot, devastating Swifties from across the globe. Many of them had dropped thousands of euros (dollars) on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city to attend the

Authorities say the plot Eras Tour shows at the Ernst anticipation for this concert. violence. appeared to have been inspired Happel Stadium, which sat But it's also important that in In Austria, the main suspect Europe is enamoured with the American superstar: The

German town of Gelsenkirchen renamed itself "Swiftkirchen" before its mid-July concerts. Concert organisers in Austria said they had expected up to 65,000 fans inside the stadium at each concert and as many as 30,000 onlookers outside. where authorities said the suspects planned to strike. The foiled attack was planned for Thursday or Friday, according to Austria's interior minister, Gerhard Karner.

Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer defended the decision to cancel the concerts, saving the arrests of the suspects took place too close to the shows, scheduled for Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

"I understand very well that those who wanted to experience the concert live are very sad," Nehammer told a news conference Thursday. "Moms and dads are looking after their daughters and sons, who were full of enthusiasm and

it's inevitable that safety comes first.

Swift is also scheduled to perform at London's Wembley stadium in five concerts between August 15 and 20 to close the European leg of her record-setting Eras Tour. London Mayor Sadiq Khan

said that while he understood

Vienna's reasons for canceling,

"We're going to carry on." Khan said the capital's authorities were prepared for shows there following lessons learned from a 2017 attack at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, that killed 22 people. A suicide bomber had set up a knapsack with explosives in Manchester Arena. The bomb detonated at the end of Grande's concert as thousands of young fans were leaving.

Last month, an attacker in England killed three girls and wounded 10 people in a knife attack during a Taylor Swiftthemed dance and yoga class. Swift at the time said she was 'completely in shock' over the

3rd person in custody over foiled plot targeting Swift show

planning the attack in July, authorities said. The 19-yearold just a few weeks ago uploaded to the internet an oath of allegiance to the current leader of the Islamic State

He was "clearly radicalised in the direction of the Islamic State and thinks it is right to kill infidels," said Omar Haijawi-Pirchner, head of the Directorate of State Security

and Intelligence. Haijawi-Pirchner added that the suspect "wanted to carry out an attack in the area outside the stadium, killing as many people as possible using the knives or even using the explo-

sive devices he had made." During a raid of the suspect's home in Ternitz, south of Vienna, investigators found chemical substances and technical devices that indicated "concrete preparatory acts," said Franz Ruf, director general for public security at the Ministry of the

Iran accelerating cyber activity to influence US poll: Microsoft

AP NEW YORK

Iran is ramping up activity that appears intendran is ramping up online ed to influence the upcoming US election, in one case target ing a presidential campaign with an email phishing attack, Microsoft said Friday.

Iranian actors also have spent recent months creating fake news sites and impersonating activists, laying the groundwork to stoke division and potentially sway American voters this fall, especially in swing states, the technology giant found.

The findings in Microsoft's newest threat intelligence report show how Iran, which has been active in recent US campaign cycles, is evolving its tactics for another election that's likely to have global

implications. The report goes a step beyond anything US intelligence officials have disclosed, giving specific examples of Iranian groups and the actions they have taken so far. Iran's United Nations mission denied it had plans to interfere or launch cyberattacks in the US presidential election.

The report doesn't specify Iran's intentions besides sowing chaos in the United States, though US officials have previously hinted that Iran particularly opposes former President Donald Trump.

US officials also have expressed alarm about Tehran's efforts to seek retaliation for a 2020 strike on an Iranian general that was ordered by Trump. This week, the Justice Department unsealed criminal charges against a Pakistani man with ties to Iran who's alleged to have hatched assassination plots targeting multiple officials, potentially including Trump. The report also reveals how

Russia and China are exploiting US political polarisation to advance their own divisive messaging in a consequential election year. Microsoft's report identified four examples of recent Iranian activity that the company expects to increase as November's election draws closer.

First, a group linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard in June targeted a high-ranking US presidential campaign official with a phishing email, a form of cyberattack often used to gather sensitive information, according to the report, which didn't identify which campaign

The group concealed the email's origins by sending it from the hacked email account of a former senior adviser, Microsoft said.

Days later, the Iranian group tried to log into an account that belonged to a former presidential candidate, but wasn't successful, Microsoft's report said. The company notified those who were targeted. In a separate example, an

Iranian group has been creating websites that pose as USbased news sites targeted to voters on opposite sides of the political spectrum, the report said. One fake news site that lends itself to a left-leaning audience insults Trump by calling him "raving mad" and suggests he uses drugs, the report said. Another site meant to appeal to Republican readers centres on LGBTQ issues and gender-affirming surgery. A third example Microsoft cited found that Iranian groups are impersonating US activists, potentially laying the groundwork for influence operations closer to the election. Finally, another Iranian group

in May compromised an account owned by a government employee in a swing state, the report said. It was unclear whether that cyberattack was related to election interference efforts.

Iran's UN mission sent The Associated Press an emailed statement: "Iran has been the victim of numerous offensive cyber operations targeting its infrastructure, public service centres, and industries. Iran's cyber capabilities are defensive

and proportionate to the threats it faces. Iran has neither the intention nor plans to launch cyber attacks. The US presidential election is an internal matter in which Iran does not interfere?

The Microsoft report said that as Iran escalates its cyber influence, Russia-linked actors also have pivoted their influence campaigns to focus on the US election, while actors linked to the Chinese Communist Party have taken advantage of pro-Palestinian university protests and other current events in the US to try to raise US political tensions.

Microsoft said it has continued to monitor how foreign foes are using generative AI technology. The increasingly cheap and easy-to-access tools can generate lifelike fake images, photos

and videos in seconds, prompting concern among some experts that they will be weaponised to mislead voters this election cycle.

While many countries have experimented with AI in their influence operations, the company said, those efforts haven't had much impact so far. The report said as a result, some actors have "pivoted back to techniques that have proven effective in the past — simple digital manipulations, mischaracterisation of content, and use of trusted labels or logos atop false information. Microsoft's report aligns with

recent warnings from US intelligence officials, who say America's adversaries appear determined to seed the internet with false and incendiary claims ahead of November's

Top intelligence officials said last month that Russia continues to pose the greatest threat when it comes to election disinformation, while there are indications that Iran is expanding its efforts and China is proceeding cautiously when it

comes to 2024.

undermining candidates seen as being more likely to increase tension with Tehran, the officials said. That's a description that fits Trump, whose administration ended a nuclear deal with Iran, reimposed sanctions and ordered the killing of the top Iranian general. The influence efforts also coin-

Iran's efforts seem aimed at

cide with a time of high tensions between Iran and Israel, whose military the US strong-

Russia declares emergency in region under attack from Ukraine

Russia's Ministry for Emergencies on Friday declared the situation in the Kursk region a "federal level" emergency, four days after hundreds of Ukrainian troops poured over the border in what appeared to be Kyiv's biggest attack on Russian soil

since the war began. Meanwhile, a Russian planelaunched missile hit a Ukrainian shopping mall late morning Friday, killing at least nine people and injuring 26, authorities said.

The mall in Kostiantynivka, in the eastern Donetsk region, is located in the town's residential area. Thick black smoke rose above it after the strike.

"This is another targeted attack on a crowded place, another act of terror by the Russians," Donetsk regional head Vadym Filashkin said in a Telegram

The operational situation in the Kursk region remains difficult," Kursk acting governor Alexei Smirnov said on ciations are providing assistance to people forced to flee their homes by the fighting, he said. The last Russian figure for evacuations in Kursk was 3,000. Little reliable information about the surprise Ukrainian operation has emerged, and its strategic aims are unclear. Ukrainian officials have refused to comment specifically about the incursion, which is taking place about 500 km (320 miles)

But a top adviser to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that border region attacks will cause Russia to "start to realise that the war is slowly creeping inside of Russian territory." Myhailo Podolyak also suggested that the operation would improve Kyiv's hand in the event of negotiations with

southwest of Moscow.

The assault came as the Ukrainian army toils to hold at bay an intense Russian push at places on the front line in eastern Ukraine, especially in the Donetsk region. Russian President Vladimir Putin has Kremlin's forces don't already

Russia declares federal level emergencies when there are more than 500 victims or damage exceeds 500 million rubles (about \$6 million).

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, says Ukrainian forces have pressed on with their "rapid advances" deeper into the Kursk region, reportedly going up to 35 km (20 miles) beyond the berger. miles) beyond the border.

The lack of a coherent Russian response to the Ukrainian incursion into Kursk ... and the reported rate of Ukrainian advance indicates that Ukrainian forces were able to achieve opera-tional surprise," the Washington-based ISW said late Thursday.

A Russian Defence Ministry statement Friday said only that the military "continues to repel the attempted invasion" and is responding with airstrikes, artillery and troops on the ground.

made clear he wants to capture the parts of Donetsk that the strategy of hitting rear areas strategy of hitting rear areas with long-range drones, targeting military sites, oil refineries and other infra-

> Ukrainian drones attacked Russia's Lipetsk region, which is about 300 km (180 miles) from the Ukraine border, during Thursday night, authorities said.

> Drones operated by Ukraine's Security Service hit a military airfield there, a security official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak publicly.

> The airfield was a base for fighter jets and helicopters and more than 700 powerful glide bombs in storage, the source said.

Ukraine's Army General Staff also confirmed the strike on Lipetsk-2 airfield Friday morning, saying it was used as a base for multiple Su-34, Su-35 and MiG-31 jets. The Russian Defence Ministry

said that 75 Ukrainian drones were shot down during the night, 19 of them over Lipetsk.

Upset over curbs, Paraguay orders US ambassador to leave

AP ASUNCION (PARAGUAY)

¬he government of Paraguay The government of ratagua, on Thursday effectively ordered the US ambassador to leave the South American nation, escalating tensions between the allies in the wake of the Biden administration's sanctions on a tobacco company linked to the country's powerful former president.

In a dramatic statement that took diplomats aback, the Paraguayan Foreign Ministry asked the US government to "accelerate the departure process" of Ambassador Marc Ostfield, a career diplomat appointed by President Joe Biden in June 2021.

Ostfield's expedited departure, the ministry said, would "avoid the loss of confidence in a person damaging the relationship that we have historically main-

The request appeared to be in protest against the White House's latest move to tighten its sanctions against Horacio Cartes, one of Paraguay's wealthiest people who served as president from 2013-18, owns dozens of lucrative businesses and retains considerable influence over the country's ruling Colorado party.

The US government first sanctioned the cigarette tycoon last year, accusing him of "significant corruption."
On Tuesday, the US Treasury

Department announced sanctions on Tabacalera del Este, a large tobacco producer that the US government accused of illegally funnelling millions of dollars to Cartes, its former majority shareholder.

The company, also known as Tabesa, has angrily rejected the accusations and referred to the sanctions as an "abuse of power" by the US government. Cartes has denied all allegations of corruption and said he no longer owns nor is directly involved in Tabesa's opera

The US Embassy in Paraguay confirmed that the Foreign Ministry had summoned Ambassador Ostfield for a meeting Thursday, saying only that they "had a good discussion and talked about the sanction announcement as well as other topics." Summoning a foreign ambassador for explanations is typically intended to express protest on the part of a host

country. The embassy did not comment on Paraguay's demand that Ostfield leave on an accelerated timeline. Ambassador Ostfield had planned to remain in his post until the end of Biden's term in January 2025. His successor has been named but the Senate has not started the confirmation process, which could take anywhere

Ín a news conference, Paraguayan Foreign Minister Ruben Ramirez Lezcano said the government objected "to the media coverage and politicization of the administration's

from a few months to a few

"The direct or indirect intervention of any state in the intermises our independence and sovereignty," he said. His remarks seemingly referred

to a news conference called by Ambassador Ostfield earlier this week in which he stressed his commitment to anti-corruption reforms in Paraguay saying that the Biden adminis tration was prepared to "use the range of relevant tools to combat corruption, including visa restrictions, designations, financial sanctions, and extra-

Although standard language in diplomacy, the mention of extradition nonetheless raised alarms and stirred frantic debate in Paraguay, where Cartes' loyalists have a majority in both houses of Congress In a show of support and defi-ance — and a display of Cartes enduring influence — dozens of lawmakers from the conservative Colorado party showed up to Cartes' mansion in the capital of Asuncion on Tuesday after the sanctions announce

Cars drive along a snow-covered road in Santiago (Chile)

US jury convicts Mozambique's ex-finance minister in 'tuna bonds' corruption case

Finance Mozambican
Chang was convicted Thursday in a financial conspiracy case that welled up from from his country's "tuna bond" scandal and swept into a US court. A federal jury in New York delivered the verdict.

Chang was accused of accepting payoffs to put his African nation secretly on the hook for big loans to government-controlled companies for tuna fishing ships and other maritime projects. The loans were plundered by bribes and kickbacks, according to prosecutors, and Mozambique ended up with USD 2 billion in "hidden debt," spurring a financial

'Today's verdict is an inspiring victory for justice and the people of Mozambique who were betrayed by the defendant, a corrupt, high-ranking government of Girlush are stated in the possibility of up to 20 years in prison, though sentencing guidelines for any ment official whose greed and self-interest sold out one of the poorest countries in the world," Brooklyn-based US Attorney Breon Peace said in a state-

Messages seeking comment were sent to Chang's attorneys and to Mozambique's embassy in Washington. Chang was his country's top financial official from 2005 to 2015

from 2005 to 2015. Chang had pleaded not guilty to the US conspiracy charges. His lawyers said he was doing as his government wished when he signed off on pledges that Mozambique would repay the loans, and that there was no evidence of a financial quidpro-quo for him.

No sentencing date was set for Chang, 48. The charges carry

given case can vary depending on a defendant's history and other factors

Between 2013 and 2016, three

Mozambican-government-

controlled companies quietly borrowed USD 2 billion from major overseas banks. Chang signed guarantees that the government would repay the loans crucial assurances to lenders who likely otherwise would have shied away from the

brand-new companies. The proceeds were supposed to finance a tuna fleet, a shipyard, and Coast Guard vessels and radar systems to protect natural gas fields off the country's Indian Ocean coast.

But bankers and government officials looted the loan money to line their own pockets, US

The evidence in this case shows you that there is an international fraud, money laundering and bribery scheme of epic proportions here," and Chang "chose to participate," Assistant US Attorney Genny Ngai told jurors in a closing argument

Prosecutors accused Chang of collecting USD 7 million in bribes, wired through US banks to European accounts held by

Chang's defence said there was no proof that he actually was promised or received a penny. The only agreement Chang made "was the lawful one to borrow money from banks to allow his country to engage in these public infrastructure works," defense lawyer Adam Ford said in his summation

Maduro suspends X network in Venezuela for 10 days

President Nicolas Maduro said he has ordered a 10-day block on access to X in Venezuela, accusing the owner Elon Musk of using the social network to promote hatred after the country's disputed presidential election.

Associated Press journalists in Caracas found that by Thursday night posts had stopped loading on X on two private telephone services and state-owned Movilnet. "Elon Musk is the owner of X

and has violated all the rules of the social network itself," said Maduro in a speech following a march by pro-government groups. Maduro alleged Musk "has incited hatred."

Maduro also accused the social network of being used by his opponents to create political

Venezuela's president said he had signed a resolution "with the proposal made by CONA-National



Telecommunications Commission, which has decided to remove the social network X, formerly known as Twitter, from circulation in Venezuela for 10 days so that they can present their documents." Maduro did not provide more details about the

process taken against X. X's press office did not immediately respond to an email from AP requesting comment. "X out for 10 days! Elon Musk out!" Maduro said.

The president's announcement

comes after Maduro and Musk Venezuela's disputed July 28 presidential election. Electoral authorities declared Maduro the winner but have yet to produce voting tallies. Meanwhile, the opposition claims to have collected records from more than 80 per cent of the 30,000 electronic voting machines nationwide showing the winner was their candidate, Edmundo Gonzalez. Musk used the social network to accuse the self-proclaimed socialist leader of a "great electoral fraud."

Shame on the dictator Maduro," Musk said on

Monday in a post. Since the election, Maduro has expressed the need to "regulate" social networks in Venezuela. Maduro also denounced that the social platform was used by his adversaries to threaten the families of his followers and political allies, military personnel, police officers and to generate a state of anxiety in

Houthi rebels attacks ship off Yemen

AP DIIRAI

Three suspected attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a ship in the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait linking the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea, including one that saw private security guards shoot and destroy a bomb-loaded drone boat, authorities said Friday. The Houthis did not immedi ately claim the assaults, though they follow a monthslong campaign by the rebels targeting shipping through the Red Sea corridor over Israel's war on

Hamas in the Gaza Strip. "The operations are ongoing our operations toward occupied Palestine to target the Israeli enemy, our operations at sea, the inevitable forthcoming response, as well as coordination with the axis in any joint operations," warned the Houthi's secretive leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, in a speech

mid instances of unscrupu-Alous elements overcharging members of the Indian community for consular services and other fraudulent activities, India's mission here has cautioned against using such agents and highlighted measures undertaken by it to streamline visa, passport and other services for the diaspora.

Consul General of India in New York Binaya Pradhan told reporters here that several instances have come to the notice of the Consulate where various travel agents are "misusing people's trust".

They have been charging higher amounts of money in the name of providing services. Such unscrupulous elements

have overcharged applicants for assistance in getting Consular services such as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI), visa, passport and an emergency certificate. Pradhan cited instances where travel agents have charged as much as USD 450 to provide an emergency certificate to travel to India, while such a service costs only USD 17.

The Consulate said it has also come across instances where fake documents about identity, residential address, and utility bills have been submitted by the agents on the applicants' behalf, often without the knowledge of the applicant. The Consulate said that this not only causes undue avoidable delay but is also a violation of prescribed Indian the wrong side of the law in the

The agents "claim that they have a relationship with the Consulate," Pradhan said, adding that "they put our community members in trouble by providing false documents, fake certificates.' Pradhan underscored that

whether it is an Indian citizen, an American citizen or an Indian-American person, they "don't have to come to us through an agent. You can come to us directly for the services that we provide at the Consulate. There is no requirement of using an agent, and on top of that to pay money, which is exorbitantly higher," Pradhan said. Additionally, Pradhan noted that it has also been brought to the Consulate's notice that several fake E-visa websites, claiming to provide such services, are active on the internet. To mislead the applicants, some of these websites have created images and home page templates mimicking the Government of India's websites.

The Consulate strongly urged members of the community and diaspora to apply on the correct website for E-visa services and not go through any other portal listed on the inter-

The Consulate has issued an advisory to create awareness about not using the services of 'unscrupulous elements" who have been overcharging and submitting fraudulent docu-

Indian Consulate in NY cautions community against using unscrupulous agents for services

> has also publicised the fees and charges for all the services provided to ensure applicants don't end up paying higher amounts. The New York Consulate serves the northeastern states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire,

New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont, Pradhan noted that of the 5.4 million strong Indian diaspora in the US, about 2.5 million or 40-45 per cent of the total, live in these 10 states. Over 113.000 Indian students out of the 354,000 in the whole country study in universities in these 10 northeastern states.

Pradhan also highlighted a slew of measures undertaken by the Consulate to ensure efficient consular services, including digital initiatives for ease of avail ing services and digital assistance tools like 'Pramit', 'Bharti Chatbot' and mobile app. It also organizes an open house twice a month when applicants can walk in without prior appointOfficers for any query they may have regarding the consular

services. Amid a string of tragic and concerning incidents involving Indian students in the US in the recent past, Pradhan emphasised that there has been a 'special focus" on students. The Consulate's approach has been to connect the student community to the larger Indian community so they get a "helping hand" in their initial months. In this regard, the Consulate developed a special platform for the students to find internship opportunities at companies in the US as well as provide access to attorney and medical infor-

mation. Deputy Consul General Varun Jeph added that under a recent initiative aimed at addressing the problems of students, the Consulate will host an open house twice a month when they can walk in without taking prior appointments and meet

Trump praised Minnesota Gov. Walz in 2020 over Floyd's murder

AP MINNEAPOLIS

While former President Donald Trump and running mate JD Vance have been hammering Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz over his response to the violence that erupted after George Floyd's murder, Trump told the governor at the time that he fully agreed with how Walz handled it.

"What they did in Minneapolis was incredible. They went in and dominated, and it happened immediately," Trump told Walz and other governors and officials in a phone call on June 1, 2020. The Associated Press on Wednesday obtained an audio recording of the call, which has taken on new significance now that Walz has been tapped as Vice President Kamala Harris'

running mate against Trump and Vance. Other administration officials on the call included Defense Secretary Mark Esper; Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Attorney General William Barr.

ABC News reported on the call earlier Wednesday, a day after Harris introduced Walz as her vice presidential pick. CNN posted a transcript of the call back in 2020.

Protests erupted in Minneapolis and around the world after Floyd was murdered by Derek Chauvin, a white former officer who knelt on the Black man's neck for nearly 9 1/2 minutes, on May 25, 2020. A bystander video captured Floyd's fading cries of "I can't breathe." His death forced a reckoning with police brutality and racism. Some of the protests turned vio-Walz mobilized the Minnesota National Guard three days later to help restore order to Minneapolis after rioting that included the burning of a police station and numerous businesses. Trump offered federal help to Walz later that day, but the governor did not take him up on it.

wouldn't have Minneapolis

today," Trump told a Republican

audience. Trump made similar

claims at a rally in St. Cloud last

described Walz as "an excellent guy" and later said: "I don't During a May 2024 fundraiser in St. Paul, Trump repeated a claim he had been making lately that he blame you. I blame the mayor. was responsible for deploying the governor at the time. National Guard. "The entire city was burning down. ... If you didn't have me as president, you

It was actually Walz who gave the mobilization order in response to requests from the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Although Walz came under criticism at the time for not moving faster. There was finger-pointing between Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and Walz on who bore responsibility for the delays. Trump, in the June 1, 2020, call

The president didn't criticize the Tim, you called up big numbers and the big numbers knocked

them out so fast, it was like bowling pins," Trump said. But Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt put a different spin on the call in a statemen

to the AP on Wednesday.

(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001) Phone no. 01881-275289 E-mail: se-hq-ggsstp-ropar@pspcl.in Press (Open) Tender Eng. No. 55/P-3/EMP-W-12765 dated 08.08.24

Dy.Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTF Roopnagar invites Press Tender for Erection of MS pipes used for supply of water to fire hydrant system at GGSSTP, Rupnagar. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to PSPCL website www.pspcl.ir from 08.08.24 from 05:00 P.M. onwards

76155/12/3269/2023/36555 Dated CHD :- 8/9/2024

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD. Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website- www.pspscl.ir

Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at

PSPCL website www.pspcl.in

RTP-84/24

तद द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न जनपदों में स्थित औद्योगिक

नेत्रों में विद्युत विकास, अनुरक्षण कार्यो हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्मों/ नेगमों/प्राधिकरणों/परिषदों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत फर्मों/ठेकेदारों से प्रत्यकालीन/पूर्णकालीन ई-निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है।

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	निविदा का प्रकार	कार्य की सागत सर (सास व
1.	Supply and Installation of high mast lighting system and street light network in dark zone at IA. Kosi Kotwan Ext. I&II (Mathura).	पूर्णकालीन	49.09
2.	Providing LED street light network on balance road no. 5,6,9,10 and 11 at IA. Pilikhani Saharanpur.	अल्पकालीन	13.82
3.	Providing power line on balance road no. 5, 6,9,10 and 11 at IA. Pilikhani Saharanpur.	अल्पकालीन	16.10
4.	Providing LED street light network on remaining Begrajpur road at IA. Begrajur (Muzaffarnagr).	अल्पकालीन	14.83

18:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसे दिनांक 19.08.2024 को 11:00 बजे य इसके पश्चात् खोला जायेगा एवं क्रमांक 02 से 04 पर अंकित निविदा दिनांव 10.08.2024 को 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 17.08.2024 को 18:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिसे दिनांक 19.08.2024 को 11:00 बजे या इसके पश्चात् खोला जायेगा निविदादाताओं द्वारा अपलोड शपथ पत्रों की मूल प्रतियों निविदा खोलने के बाद 03 कार दिवस में पंजीकृत डाक / व्याक्तिगत रूप से कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है।

नोटः 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदाओं में समस्त कर सहित दरें अंकित करें अलग से मात्र जी**०एस०टी० देय होगा।** 2. विद्युत कार्यों हेतु निविदादाताओं के निविदा अपलोड करते समय "विद्युत सुरक्षा विभाग" उ०प्र० शासन, लखनऊ में 'क' श्रेणी अनुमोदित लाइसेन्स एवं Eligibility Criteria के अनुसार समस्त प्रपत्र अपलोड करना प्रनिवार्य होगा, अन्यथा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी website: www.onlineupsida.com पर स्थापित लिंक यूपीएलसी की website: https://etender.up.nic.in पर देखी जा सकती है |



Sensex bounces back

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded 1 per cent each on Friday following buying in blue-chips such as Reliance and Infosys amid a rally in

global equity markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex bounced back 819.69 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,705.91 with 28 of its constituents closing in green and two in red. The index opened higher amid gains in Asian markets and later surged 1,098.02 points or 1.39 per cent to hit a high of 79,984.24.

The NSE Nifty soared 250.50 points or 1.04 per cent to 24,367.50. During the day, it rallied 302.75 points or 1.25 per cent to 24,419.75.

"Positive US jobless claims data eased the fears of recession and provided a favourable broader market reaction," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. Most of the Sensex firms settled in the positive territory. Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, JSW Steel, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Reliance Technologies, Industries and Infosys were the biggest gainers. Kotak Mahindra Bank and



Maruti were the laggards.

"The markets started strong, gaining over a per cent, buoyed by positive global cues," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.21 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.79 per cent. All the indices ended in the positive territory, with IT surging 1.59 per cent, consumer discretionary by 1.57 per cent, realty by 1.56 per cent, auto by 1.51 per cent,

teck by 1.41 per cent and capital goods by 1.37 per cent. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark slumped 1,276.04 points or 1.57 per cent, while the Nifty declined 350.2 points or 1.41 per cent.

A total of 2,330 stocks advanced while 1,579 declined and 97 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Seoul and Hong Kong ended higher while Shanghai settled lower. European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended

significantly higher Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,626.73 crore on Thursday, according exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.03 per cent to USD 79.18 a barrel. The BSE benchmark declined

581.79 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 78,886.22 in a volatile trade on Thursday. The NSE Nifty retreated to settle lower by 180.50 points or 0.74 per cent to 24,117.

Equity mutual funds' inflow drops in

Rupee rises two paise to close at 83.95 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by 2 paise at 83.95 (provisional) against US dollar on Friday, supported by gains in the domestic markets.

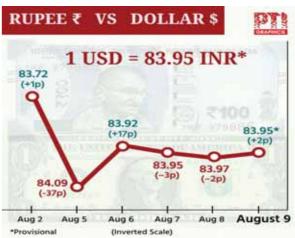
Forex traders said the rupee edged up slightly on gains in the domestic markets. However, a surge in crude oil prices capped sharp gains for the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.95 and touched an intraday low of 83.96 and a high of 83.88 against the dollar during the

It finally settled at 83.95 (provisional) against the American currency, higher by 2 paise from its previous

The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on Monday. On Thursday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow

range and settled for the day lower by 2 paise at 83.97 against US dollar. Forex traders said post the



Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy

announcement, markets now wait for the US CPI data, India CPI, WPI and IIP data, and India's trade data, all scheduled to be released next week.

Holes Jackson The Symposium to be held after next week will also remain in focus, traders said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index. which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.05 per cent to 103.15, on better-thanexpected unemployment claims data. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.18 per cent higher at USD 79.30

per barrel in futures trade. We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on selling pressure from foreign investors and a positive US dollar. Ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East may also pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary

- Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. Choudhary further noted that

positive global markets after easing worries over the yen carry-trade may support the rupee at lower levels. "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.75 to Rs 84.20," he said.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 819.69 points, or 1.04 per cent, to close at 79,705.91 points, while the Nifty jumped 250.50 points, or 1.04 per cent, to 24,367.50 points.

Foreign institutional investors

(FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Thursday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,626.73 crore, according to exchange data. Meanwhile, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank kept the benchmark repurchase or repo rate unchanged at 6.50

Announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy review RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said Indian rupee remained largely range-bound so far this financial year.

per cent.

Das further noted that the country's forex reserves touched a record high of USD 675 billion as on August 2.

Enabling framework needed to help companies issue ESG bonds domestically: RBI official

PTI ■ MUMBAI

There is a need to create an "enabling framework" to help Indian companies environmental, social and governance (ESG) bonds locally, a senior RBI official said on Friday.

Underlining that capital markets regulator Sebi which looks after the regulations for the bond markets has done significant work, Dimple Bhandia, the chief general manager in RBI, also rued that the development in the repo for corporate bonds has not been satisfactory

"...We find that lot of our companies are going overseas and issuing ESG bonds. This is an area where we need to look at an enabling framework," Bhandia said, speaking at an event organized by industry lobby grouping Assocham here. Another disappointment has derivatives market, she said, recalling that very limited number of trades have taken place in it. She, however, said that the

overall secondary market activity in corporate bonds is



not as bad as one would think. Bhandia said even though its base is lower, the the growth in corporate bond issuances has been higher than banks' credit growth in the last decade and added that the broadly stable spread on corporate paper over G-sec is illustrative of the

She also welcomed foreign portfolio investors' response to the voluntary retention route facility, pointing out that 99 per cent of the money under it is on corporate bonds and added that the increased interest forced the RBI to revise its

The move to allow banks to hold corporate bonds under the held-to-maturity category has met with a success, she said, adding that banks are giving a feedback about it giving a boost to demand for corporate bonds.

July; industry AUM touches ₹65 lakh cr

Inflow in equity mutual funds declined 9 per cent month-on-month to Rs 37,113 crore in July owing to the drop in fund infusion in large-cap, small- and mid-cap categories.

Despite the dip, the quantum of net inflows witnessed in July was the second highest flows ever received in a month. Also, this was second only to the flows of Rs 40,608 crore received in June. The latest flow also marks the

41st consecutive month of net inflows in equity funds, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Friday monthly Moreover,

contributions from Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) rose to an all-time high of Rs 23,332crore in July as against Rs 21,262 crore in the preceding month.

financial discipline among retail investors, helping them build wealth systematically over time, Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive, AMFI, said. Overall, the mutual fund industry has witnessed an



inflow of Rs 1.9 lakh crore in the month under review as compared to an outflow of Rs 43,637 crore in June. The inflow was due to investment in equity as well as debt schemes. With these inflows, the

industry's net assets under management rose to an all-time high of Rs 65 lakh crore in July-end from Rs 61.15 lakh crore in June-end.

has been increasing rapidly and within financial assets mutual fund market share is relatively high. Mutual funds play a key role in enabling wealth creation for individual investors and providing tools

long-term financial planning. I am sure that the mutual fund industry will surpass the milestone trillion AUM and 100 million investors in the next 3 to 4 years; time," Hitesh Thakkar, Acting CEO of ITI Mutual Fund, said.

According to the data, except for the focused and equity-linked saving schemes (ELSS) categories, all the other inflows.

"Inflows into equity mutual funds witnessed a dip after two months of record surges, as the flows in the large-cap category slumped by 31 per cent Rs 670.12 crore. Equity inflows declined by 8.61 per cent MoM to stand at Rs 37,113.39 crore in July backed by a decline in the flows for small & mid cap category as well (witnessed a MoM fall of 7 per cent to Rs 1,644 crore & 35 per cent to Rs 2,109 crore respectively)," Christophe Gougeon, Director & Chief Marketing Officer, Sharekhan by BNP

Paribas, said. Feroze Azeez, Deputy CEO, Anand Rathi Wealth Ltd, said the decline was partially fuelled by shift from PMS to mutual funds due to change in

taxation.

Within the equity schemes, sector or thematic funds attracted investors with the highest net inflows of Rs 18,386 crores during the month. However, flow in the segment was less compared to Rs 22,352 crore in June. This suggests that the previous surge was likely driven by

Sector or thematic funds was followed by the multi-cap category that witnessed inflow of Rs 7,084 crore, Flexicap (Rs 3,052 crore, Large & Midcaps (Rs 2,622 crore) and Value (Rs 2,170 crore).

ılation Aze

Forex reserves jump by USD 7.533 bn to record USD 674.91 bn

India's forex reserves jumped by USD 7.533 billion to a new record high of USD 674.919 billion for the week ended August 2, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

The overall kitty had dropped by USD 3.471 billion to USD 667.386 billion in the previous reporting week ended July 26. The previous high for the reserves had stood at USD 670.857 billion, reached on July

For the week ended August foreign currency assets, a major component reserves, increased by USD 5.162 billion to USD 592.039 billion, the data released showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US

units like the euro, pound



and ven held in the foreign exchange

reserves. Gold reserves increased by USD 2.404 billion to USD 60.099 during the week, the RBI

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 41 million to USD 18.161 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was up by USD 8 million to USD 4.62 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

Sebi asks mutual fund industry to proactively conduct stress test

Markets regulator Sebi has asked the mutual fund industry to proactively conduct stress tests, a key component of risk management for the financial sector, which will help strengthen the ecosystem, its whole-time member Ananth Narayan Gopalakrishnan said on Friday.

The regulator's stress testing emphasizes the need to assess and manage liquidity risks, especially in small and midcap equity schemes.

Speaking at a mutual fund Gopalakrishnan highlighted the importance of modelling stress scenarios not just for individual schemes or fund houses but for the entire mutual fund ecosystem.

"It is also important to model stress scenarios for the entire composite mutual fund ecosystem. I would strongly encourage the industry and AMFI to take the lead and proactively conduct objective and credible industry wide tests. Themselves," Gopalakrishnan said. He also emphasized the need to

better ways risks communicate the associated with different mutual fund schemes. The Sebi official mentioned

that while the current risk measurement system is straightforward and has had a significant impact, it doesn't fully capture the differences in among

According to him, many schemes are just labelled as high risk, even though they have different kinds of risks. The goal is to improve this system to better reflect those differences while keeping it simple and easy to understand. One possible approach is to consider the portfolio's volatility and liquidity from stress tests to give a clearer picture

While ensuring simplicity and ease of understanding remains a key objective, perhaps the underlying volatility of the portfolio along with the liquidity of the portfolio from stress tests could be used to provide better colour all around," he added.



This comes at a time when the holdings of mutual funds by Domestic Institutional (DIIs) Investors

individuals have risen from about 54.3 per cent of free float of all mid cap and small cap companies as of March 2020 to 60.6 per cent as of March 2024. Several fund houses have proactively stopped lump sum investments in some small-cap schemes and also capped the amount that can be invested

through Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) into small-cap schemes.

He also highlighted the potential mismatch between the demand for paper and the supply of fresh paper coming into the ecosystem. Gopalakrishnan said the

industry can make more progress in streamlining operations and improving efficiency for investors. "At a time when instantaneous

Gold jumps ₹1,100; Silver bounces ₹1,400

fund transfers have become ubiquitous in our country, perhaps we should look to improve our internal processes and the security settlement ecosystem to ensure that funds are passed on to investors on the day of the settlement itself rather than a day after or two days after," he added. Over the last few years, the

mutual fund industry has made impressive strides and is now playing a crucial role in channeling financial savings towards risk capital formation. This was driven by stable macros, increased formalization, robust corporate earnings, digitisation and user friendly access.

Moreover, the number of mutual fund investors has grown significantly from about 2 crore as of March 2019 to nearly 4.7 crore as of June 2024 an impressive compounded annual growth rate of 18 per cent during that period.

Gopalakrishnan mentioned that several exciting initiatives are in the works, developed with input from all stakeholders. These include a proposed low-ticket SIP, further breaking down regular SIPs into smaller, more accessible units (sachetisation and tokenization), and the introduction of "mutual funds lite" regulations. These new regulations will simplify rules for passively managed funds, reducing the compliance burden and encouraging competition and innovation.

closely monitor the upcoming

CPI data next week, as it will likely confirm the trajectory

of interest rate cuts going

forward, setting a clearer tone

for the market's direction," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research

Analyst - Commodity and

Currency, LKP Securities,

LIC shares climb 3% after earnings announcement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) climbed 3 per cent on Friday after the company reported a 10 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 10,461 crore in the June

2024 quarter. The stock jumped 3 per cent to Rs 1,159.60 on the BSE. At the NSE, it climbed 3 per

cent to Rs 1,160 apiece. The state-owned life insurance behemoth had a net profit of Rs 9,544 crore in the year-ago

period. The total income increased to Rs 2,10,910 crore during the latest June quarter as against Rs 1,88,749 crore in the year-ago period, LIC said in a

regulatory filing on Thursday. LIC MD and CEO Siddhartha Mohanty said the Assets Under Management (AUM) increased to Rs 53,58,781 crore as on June 30, as compared to Rs 46,11,067 crore at the end of same quarter previous year, registering an increase of 16.22 per cent

the quarter increased by 16 per cent to Rs 1,13,770 crore, as compared to Rs 98,363 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Asked about entry into the health insurance business, he said, LIC is exploring the option of picking up majority stakes in a standalone health insurance company.

The total premium income for

PFC secures long-term loan from Japan bank for wind energy project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

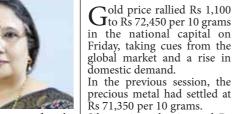
 $P^{\text{FC},\ a\ Maharatna\ company}_{\text{and leading NBFC\ in\ Indian}}$ power sector, has secured a long-term loan of JPY 25.5 billion from the Japan Bank for Cooperation International (JBIC). This loan is part of 'Global Action for Reconciling Economic Growth Environmental Preservation' ("GREEN")

initiative JBIC's In addition to contribution, the loan is cofinanced by Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation and other Japanese Banks. JBIC will also



provide a guarantee for the portion of the loan co-financed these private financial institutions

The loan proceeds will be used to finance 300.3 MW Wind Project of Ostro Kannada Power Private Limited (OKPPL) in Karnataka, India.



precious metal had settled at Rs 71,350 per 10 grams. Silver prices also jumped Rs 1,400 to Rs 82,500 per

kilogram on Friday against Rs 81,100 per kg in the previous trade, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity bounced by Rs 1,100 to Rs 72,100 per 10 bank abstained from gold

of Rs 71,000 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to fresh demand from local jewellers and a firm trend in international markets. Globally, Comex gold is trading higher at USD 2,468.90 per ounce, up by USD 5.60 per ounce from the

grams from the previous close

previous session. Experts said the rise in metal price occurred despite a strong US dollar and rising Treasury yields, driven by a broader market rally.
"The metal gained traction even though China's central

Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities,

purchases for the third In the international markets, consecutive month," Kaynat Comex silver marginally

'Gold traders are advised to

Comex silver marginally declined to USD 27.60 per

geopolitical tensions.

said.

On the outlook, Prathamesh Mallya, DVP- Research, Non-Agri Commodities Currencies, Angel One Ltd, said that gold is likely to remain buoyed by safe-haven demand and expectations of a US Federal Reserve policy cut amid ongoing







A POWERFUL PORTRAIT OF FAITH THROUGH **PHOTOGRAPHY**



The Promised Land: A Visual Anatomy of Human Faith by Aashvi Agarwal and Kounteya Sinha offers a profound exploration of Ayodhya's spiritual heritage, capturing the raw emotions and devotion of millions in striking black-and-white photography, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

t just 14 years old, Aashvi Agarwal from Kolkata has created something truly remarkable. Her collection of over 350 black-and-white photos goes beyond simple documentation, offering deep emotional insight into the city's visitors. Under the mentorship of Kounteya Sinha, a renowned journalist and photographer, her work captures the essence of Ayodhya with both historical depth and artistic flair. This coffee table book provides a unique perspective on the profound spiritual connection that draws millions to Ayodhya, a city imbued with cultural and religious significance.

Agarwal's ability to depict the essence of Ayodhya's spiritual landscape is particularly noteworthy. Her images The book skillfully balances the political or religious controversies. of the book as a "masterclass in collection of images that are not only each image a powerful window into the heart of the city's devotion. Her use of light and shadow brings out the nuances of human expressions, highlighting moments of personal

connection with the divine.









almost feel the reverence and awe images of devotees gathered at the emanating from the crowds of Ganga ghats, their silhouettes etched pilgrims captured in her lens. The against the flowing river, symbolise monochrome format highlights the the eternal journey of faith. Another intricate details and emotions, making poignant photograph of a mother and child in the temple's soft glow captures the intimate bond between the sacred and the everyday.

the city. This approach makes the book accessible and engaging to a diverse audience, inviting viewers from all walks of life to appreciate its universal themes of faith and humanity.

Uma Nair, one of India's top art curators and critics, describes the book as "historic and unparalleled," While the book focuses on the commending Agarwal for capturing spiritual essence of Ayodhya, it the essence of faith without political consciously avoids delving into bias or personal agenda. Nair's praise

artistic and cultural value.

sophisticated artistic voice, capable of the human soul. conveying complex narratives through Self - Published a single frame. The result is a Price - 4500

reveal the intense faith that envelops grandeur of Ayodhya's architecture Instead, Agarwal's lens is focused on storytelling and documentation" beautiful but also deeply meaningful. the city, especially in the wake of the with the intimate stories of the the human element - the pilgrims, highlights its significance in the visual The Promised Land: A Visual Anatomy Ram Mandir's inauguration. One can individuals who visit. For instance, the priests and children who bring life to art world. Her contribution to the of Human Faith is more than just a preface further enriches the book with coffee table book. It is a profound her insightful perspective on its exploration of faith, culture and the human spirit, captured through the lens Kounteya Sinha's influence as a of a young photographer with an mentor is evident in the disciplined yet extraordinary gift. Aashvi Agarwal's expressive composition of the debut work is a monument to her talent photographs. His guidance has helped and a powerful reminder of the shape Agarwal's natural talent into a enduring power of visual art to touch

A POIGNANT PORTRAIT OF SRINAGAR'S BEAUTY AND STRUGGLE

Sadaf Wani's City as Memory is a heartfelt exploration of Srinagar, where breathtaking beauty and deep-rooted pain exist side by side. Wani shares her personal experiences, creating a vivid picture of a city that is both fascinating and deeply scarred

TEAM VIVA

👝 adaf Wani's City as Memory S- A Short Biography Of Srinagar offers a deeply personal and insightful look into Srinagar, Kashmir - a city where breathtaking landscapes are often overshadowed by ongoing conflict. Wani blends personal stories with historical context to present a nuanced portrait of Srinagar, revealing how its natural beauty is entwined with its troubled past.

The book begins by delving into Srinagar's rich historical backdrop. Founded in 250 BCE by the Buddhist king Ashoka, the city's history is marked by conquest and foreign rule. Wani uses this historical context to set have shaped the city. The teenage years in the early 2000s, the stage for understanding Srinagar's contemporary struggles. Her childhood memories from the mid-1990s, a presence of military forces, which period of waning insurgency and



beautiful gardens and serene lakes of Srinagar are persistently overshadowed by the heavy are a constant reminder of the militarisation, city's ongoing issues.

illustrate how historical forces As Wani transitions to her picturesque Dal Lake and the

the focus shifts to a time of intensified violence and civilian unrest. Her personal experiences during this period offer a closeup view of life in a conflict zone. The contrast between the

harsh realities of military checkpoints becomes a powerful symbol Srinagar's contradictions. Wani's descriptions of restricted access to public spaces and tourist sites shed light on the psychological

and emotional impact of living

under constant surveillance. This juxtaposition highlights the deep scars left by ongoing conflict on both the city and its people.

Wani's writing seamlessly weaves personal memories with broader historical and political analysis. Her stories reveal how conflict influences both individual identities and public spaces, providing thoughtful

commentary on how political recounting of events; it's a strife shapes a city's character. The contrast between Srinagar's scenic beauty and its troubled reality underscores the city's profound contradictions. Through vivid descriptions and reflective insights, Wani captures a place that is both enchanting significant addition to the and beleaguered.

The cover of the book, illustrated by Zainab Tambawalla, truly brings Srinagar to life. It features a charming cityscape with a mosque, majestic mountains and a serene lake dotted with traditional boats. A delightful "Flower Man" in a shikara adds a touch of local character. The illustration's gentle, watercolorlike style creates a warm, nostalgic feeling, while the subtle barbed wire design hints at the region's complicated past. This artwork beautifully complements Wani's story, offering a vivid, heartfelt glimpse into Srinagar's captivating blend of beauty and struggle.

City as Memory is more than a

Publisher Company (Rs 399)

page is turned.

Aleph Book

profound exploration of

Srinagar's complex character.

Sadaf Wani's portrayal offers

readers a deeper understanding

of how beauty and conflict

coexist, shaping the lives of its

inhabitants. This book is a

literature on Kashmir, providing

both personal and political

perspectives on a city at the

crossroads of history and

identity. Adding this book to

your bookshelf is not just a

literary choice but a way to

relationship between place and

memory. Wani's work is a must-

read for anyone interested in the

interplay between historical

conflict and personal experience.

It offers a compelling narrative

and valuable perspectives that

will resonate long after the last

appreciate the

the pioneer



LEGENDARY ATHLETE ON FIELD, A SUPERSTAR SANS PRETENSIONS

eeraj Chopra is all about greatness pretensions.

A fierce competitor, a superstar of Indian sports, a humble human being who would make no bones about his limitations or desires, the double Olympic medallist from India, is all rolled into one

He may want the top prize for himself but would not be envious if the rival pips him. He would tell himself to accept what he got, and work harder to achieve what he desires.

He would not pretend that he does not care for brand endorsement. He certainly wants it, money matters, but would not compromise on his training for that.

The 17-minute interaction with the Indian media after winning a silver medal in the Paris Olympics was more than just a routine question-answer

'Your first throw was foul then in the second...,' the scribe had not even completed his question before Chopra quipped, "Saari throw fouls hi thi sir sirf doosri hi theek thi (All throws were foul, except the second one)," he said, chuckling, and the 50-strong group joined him in laughter.

It was not a great deal for him to say he fouled five of his six

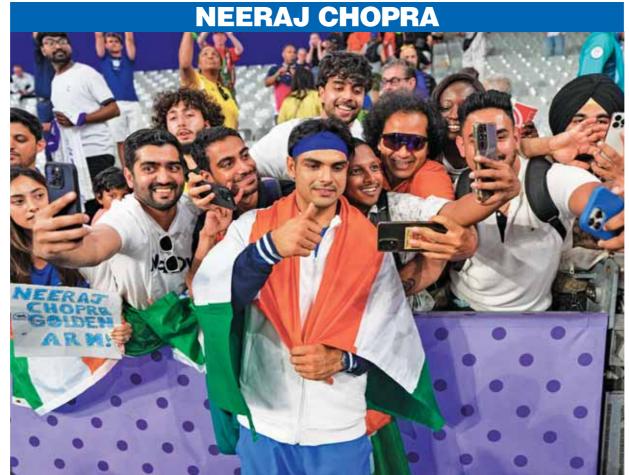
The long Q and A session was largely in Hindi with Indian and Pakistani journalists asking questions, but when the volunteer requested an answer in English for the benefit of few foreign scribes, Chopra laid bare his simplicity.

'Now I need to motivate myself to speak in English, the way I motivate myself for competition," he said with a smile, as the gathered group burst out in laughter. 'Can you describe the competition between you and Nadeem, India and Pakistan,' the foreign scribe asked again, requesting the answer in English.

Well, he explained pretty well, effortlessly.

"It was a really great competition. Maybe one of the greatest competitions in history. Arshad threw really well. I was also in good shape. But I don't know. My runway was not that good today," he responded quickly, without having to think much.

It was inevitable that he would be asked about the missed competitions in the 2024 season, leading up to the Paris Games. It led to speculations whether he was carrying injury into the Paris Games.



He had skipped the Paris Diamond League in July, just before the Games, though he later clarified that the event was not part of his competition calendar.

He revealed how difficult it becomes for him to say no to the organisers despite fitness concerns.

With a wide grin, he said, "Of course I need to play more but then I send those carefully drafted messages that I have suffered a strain and I won't

"In few competitions I have played just for the sake of organisers so that they don't feel bad. I keep thinking that I have entered the competition and if I don't go, they will say I am making excuses. Personally I love to compete as much as possible.

I make plans but then you tell your team, 'let's draft a good message, saying sorry for pulling out," he said, laughing, but the pain of missing the event was writ large.

'No happiness is greater than playing. You work hard to compete only. Whatever strength God has given me I

Then came a tricky one. He was asked about the pressure of sponsors in the Olympic cycle. How he finds that balance

obligations and training? Again, he came up with an

honest answer. "I put my game on top priority after Tokyo and after Tokyo Games only I got the opportunity to get associated with brands. It is difficult for us

that brands come after you,

and if you get it, why will you leave that opportunity. Just do it," he said, with all honesty. "It also opens the way for kids (next generation), 'nahi to shreer hi tootega khel khel key, last mein kuch nahi rahega." How many athletes say that so

openly?
"So I balance it. Priority is an Olympic sport. This was an Olympic commitments I had, I fulfilled in the first half.

You have seen I have been training outside since Tokyo." He could be upset inside for not being able to defend his title but accepted that Thursday was Nadeem's day. Lastly, volunteers did their best to push him out of the mixed zone but he would keep coming back either to sign autographs or honour the request for selfies.

After all, he knows how to find a balance between different things and saying no is the most difficult thing for him.

Sreejesh to join Bhaker as India's flag-bearer in closing ceremony

PTI ■ PARIS

¬elebrated hockey **└**goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will join star shooter Manu Bhaker as the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games here on Sunday, a fitting honour and recognition contributions to the team.

Before homing in on Sreejesh, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chief PT Usha spoke with Neeraj Chopra, and she said even the superstar javelin thrower wanted to see the retiring legend as flag-bearer. Chopra claimed a silver here to become the first Indian track and field athlete to win two Olympic medals. He won a historic gold in the Tokyo



edition three years ago. "I spoke with Neeraj Chopra appreciate spontaneity and grace with which he agreed that Sreejesh should be the flag-bearer at

the Closing Ceremony," Usha said in a statement. "He told me 'Ma'am, even if

you had not asked me, I would have suggested Sree bhai's name. It is reflective of an emotional and popular

the immense respect Neerai has for Sreejesh and his contribution to Indian sport," she revealed.

leadership, including Chefde-Mission Gagan Narang, the entire Indian contingent.

within the IOA

The legendary Sreejesh retired from the game after India's bronze medal-winning feat at the ongoing Games, bringing to an end a glorious career spanning 18 years. "The Indian Olympic

Association is delighted to announce the nomination of hockey goalkeeper Sreejesh as the joint flag-bearer with pistol shooter Manu Bhaker at the Closing Ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games," the IOA said in a statement.

The 2-1 triumph over Spain, in the bronze medal playoff match here on Thursday, was

a fitting farewell for the 36-year-old custodian who has served the team distinction for so long.

'Sreejesh has serveď Indian

hockey in particular and

Indian sport in general admirably through more than two decades," Usha said. Sreejesh was also the flagbearer in the closing ceremony of the Hangzhou

Asian Games last year. The IOA had earlier named Bhaker as the female flagbearer after she became the first Indian athlete post Independence to win multiple medals in a single Olympic Games. She won bronze medals in the women's 10m air pistol and the 10m air

pistol mixed team (with

Sarabjot Singh).

Name of the work

Total No. of Work

Period of Completion

Period and time of av

Date and time of opening of Tender

Name and address of the officer inviting bid

portal for bidding

COVID-hit Lyles misses out on a double

dated, 08.08.2024

www.tendersodisha.gov.in 03(Three) Nos.

03(Three) Calendar months

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Varies from Rs. 29.37 lakhs to 46.22 lakhs

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AP ■ PARIS

Sprinter Noah Lyles revealed he had COVID-19 after missing out on another gold medal for the United States at the Paris Olympics.

Elsewhere, French basketball star Victor Wembanyama moved closer to his dream of a first gold after helping Les Bleus beat Germany to set up a dream final against the U.S. Team after the Americans edged Serbia 95-91. On the same Stade de France

track where he won the historically close 100 meters by five thousandths of a second, Lyles was third behind gold medalist Letsile Tebogo of Botswana and U.S. Teammate

Government of Odisha "e" procurement Notice

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No. 4030

Kenneth Bednarek. Medics tended to a tired-looking Lyles and took him off in a wheelchair. Wearing a mask as he spoke with reporters, Lyles later said he had COVID. "It definitely affected my performance," said Lyles,

adding that he tested positive early Tuesday morning but was cleared to compete. The U.S. Track federation said it and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee adhered to all Olympic and Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Over at Bercy Arena, with former NBA stars Dirk

Nowitzki and Tony Parker watching their respective countrymen, France held on to win 73-69. e-mail ID- rw_sambalpur@yahoo.co.in

Phone No.0663-2401850

Boxer Imane fights for Gold to cap Olympics filled with misinformed scrutiny

AP PARIS

lgerian boxer Imane Khelif Algerian boxer manage from is one victory away from wrapping up her tumultuous Paris Olympics with a gold medal around her neck - a potential prize that she has called the best response to a cascade of online abuse she has endured over misconceptions about her sex.

Khelif fights Yang Liu of China on Friday night in the final of the women's welterweight division at Roland Garros.

Khelif has yet to lose one round on a judge's scorecard in her first three fights in Paris, going on the most dominant run of her boxing career while facing an extraordinary amount of scrutiny.

It stems from Khelif and fellow two-time Olympian Li Yu-ting of Taiwan getting disqualified from last year's world

championships by the Russian-Boxing Association, which claims both fighters failed a murky eligibility test for women's competition.

The International Olympic took Committee unprecedented step last year of permanently banning the IBA from the Olympics following years of concerns about its e, competitive and fingovernance, fairness transparency.

The IOC has called the arbitrary sex tests that the governing body imposed on the two boxers irretrievably flawed.

The IBA did nothing to help its argument this week at a President shambolic news conference in leadership which its contradicted itself about the tests and declined to answer basic questions about them, born as women, who have



citing privacy concerns from the Olympic committees of

Algeria and Taiwan. The IOC repeatedly reaffirmed the two boxers' right to compete in Paris, with President Thomas Bach personally defending Khelif and Lin while calling the criticism "hate speech." "We have two boxers who are

been raised as women, who have embraced both Khelif and and have competed for many years as women," Bach said. That hasn't stopped the international outcry tied to misconceptions around the fighters that have been Russian amplified by disinformation networks, but neither has it slowed the two. Khelif has dominated all three bouts. But, she faces her most significant test in Yang, the 2023 world champion and the No. 2 seed in their weight class. Khelif told SNTV, a sports video partner of The Associated Press, that the wave of hateful scrutiny she has received "harms human dignity," and she called for an end to bullying athletes. She also said a gold medal would be "the best response" to the backlash against her. The crowds in Paris, however,

but cheers during their bouts.

A huge contingent of flagwaving Algeria fans greeted serenaded throughout her semifinal victory Tuesday night, and she's become a hometown hero in her North African country. Khelif has already secured Algeria's first Olympic medal in women's boxing. She will attempt to become only her country's second boxing gold medalist, joining Hocine Soltani (1996).

The gold medal fight is the culmination of Khelif's nineday run through an Olympic tournament that began with a bizarre event. Khelif's first opponent, Angela Carini of Italy, abandoned their bout after just 46 seconds, saying she was in too much pain from Khelif's punches.

(1) Other details can be seen from detailed notice inviting tenders, available in website www.tende (2) Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the website: www.tenderodisha.gov.ir

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, BALANGIR (R&B) DIVISION: BALANGIR e - Procurement Notice BID IDENTIFICATION No: BGR R&B/ 04/ 2024-25

// Dtd.08.08.24 No.3017

The Superintending Engineer, Balangir (R&B) Division, Balangir on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate Composite bid in Double cover system in ONLINE MODE for the construction of works detailed in the table below from B Class Contractors registered with the State Governments and contractors of equivalent Grade/ Class registered with Central Government/ MES/ Railways for execution of Road /Building /Bridge works. The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the bid.

Building work Building work: 01 Nos. 3. No. of tender

4. Tender Cost "B" Class (Registered with CDMS) Class of Contractor From Dt.14.08.24, 10.00 A.M. to

Dt.27.08.24 up to 05.00 P.M. Dt.28.08.24 at 11.00 A.M.

Date of opening Bid The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website

http://tendersorissa.gov.in. All future corrigendums will be available on ONLINE MODE only. Superintending Engineer Balangir (R&B) Division

OIPR-34062/11/0006/2425



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KHARIAR (R&B) DIVISION, KHARIAR. E-mail: eeronds.khr@rediffmail.com No. 3767 Date 08.08.2024

Invitation For Bids

1	The Executive Engineer, Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE only.		
2	Nature of work	Road works (CC Road)	
3	No. of work	01 No.Work	
4	Tender Paper cost	As specified in the notice for the respective Work, to be remit online only.	
5	Class of Contractor	As specified in the notice for the respective Work.	
6	Availability of Bid Documents in the website	10.00 hours of 14.08.2024 to 17.00 Hours of 23.08.2024	
7	Date of opening of Bid	Dt. 27.08.2024 at 11:30 hours	
8	EMD/Bid Security	As specified in the notice to be remitted on line only	
9	The Bidders shall have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in . Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.		

Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar

Letsile makes a case for African sprinters with thrilling victory in 200 metres "I can't be the face of athletics

etsile Tebogo is from Botswana in southern Africa, a continent with a rich history of producing worldclass runners

Just not like the kind Tebogo does for a living. He's hoping 20 seconds of greatness - check 19.46 seconds of greatness might change that. The 21-year-old pulled off a

stunner (sort of) in the men's 200 meters at the Paris Olympics on Thursday night, producing the first-ever Olympic gold by an African runner in the distance.

American Kenneth Bednarek got out to an early lead, but Tebosgo said he was confident he had more than enough to track him down. By the middle of the stretch,

Tebogo was in front and waited

for a challenge from American

came - perhaps in part because Lyles is dealing with COVID-

19 - to win going away.
"When I saw Kenny fade I knew Noah was far, far, far away behind us," Tebogo said. 'So, that means I'm the Olympic champion."
One who is also a three-time

world champion. Lost amid the chaos of Lyles collapsing briefly on the track in the aftermath and his revelation that he tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday was this: Tebogo's time was the fastest by anyone in the world this year. Lyles included.

Heady territory for an athlete who gets himself amped up before a race by playing traditional songs he learned growing up in Kanye, Botswana, not far from the landlocked nation's border with South Africa.

The ritual allows Tebogo to



relentlessly amped Lyles. While Lyles roared onto the purple track at Stade de France preening, Tebogo was one lane to Lyles' right mentally preparing for the race of his

And when Tebogo ran it, he draped the blue, white and black flag of his country over star Noah Lyles that never relax, drawing a stark contrast his shoulders, hung his orange

cleats around his neck presented his right shoe to a nearby camera to reveal a tribute to his mother, Elizabeth Seratiwa, who died in May.

She always dreamed of making it to here," Tebogo said. So did his younger sister, who was somewhere in the sea of seats that roared during the race, a roar that grew louder when it became obvious Lyles wasn't going to track Tebogo down the way he had to just about everyone since Tokyo in

his signature event. Not this time. While there may not be an official rivalry between Tebogo and Lyles, the seeds may have been planted somewhere between Lyles' preening and Tebogo's decisive

Asked afterwards if he envisions himself becoming

one of the standard bearers in

sprinting, Tebogo threw a dash

of shade in his answer.

because I'm not an arrogant or a loud person like Noah (Lyles)," he said. Maybe. Tebogo's biography in the official Olympics media program quotes him as saying he wants "to be remembered as

one of the best athletes who ever lived. He's probably already there back home, a largely rural country of 2.63 million roughly the size of France that serves as a popular destination

for tourists going on African safaris. The pace of life in Kanye isn't typically hectic. Maybe that makes Tebogo's triumph of a young man in a hurry ironic in

Tebogo fought off a balky hamstring to win bronze in the 200 behind Lyles and his US teammate Erriyon Knighton in the 2023 athletics world championship.