



WORLD 5
ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE ON GAZA
SCHOOL KILLS 80 PEOPLE

MONEY 6
DOMESTIC FOOD MARKET
EXPECTED TO GROW BY 47%

SPORT 7
SREEJESH A LEGEND OF
HOCKEY: TEAMMATES

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI
RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD
VIJAYWADA

BHUBANESWAR, SUNDAY AUGUST 11, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹4

sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



Modi vows to rebuild ruined Wayanad

Two jawans martyred in gunfight with terrorists



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with officials during inspection of the landslide-affected areas, in Wayanad, on Saturday. MoS Suresh Gopi is also seen; the PM (R) interacts with a child survivor at AWS Hospital in Wayanad

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

In a heart-touching show of solidarity and camaraderie, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday assured the people and the Government of Kerala that the entire nation and the Union Government stand by the State in its efforts to rebuild the Wayanad areas devastated by the recent landslides and deluge.

Modi. Speaking to the people of Kerala after a whirlwind tour and aerial survey of the regions devastated in the monstrous landslides and flashfloods that claimed more than 400 lives and destroyed hundreds of houses, the Prime Minister asked the State Government to prepare a detailed report about the number of houses destroyed in the nature's fury and what the State Government was planning to do for the construction of a new and safe township in place of the area devastated in the natural calamity. He recalled his experience as

a volunteer in the rescue and rehabilitation team during the 1979 Machchu Morbi dam disaster in which more than 2,000 lives were lost. He asked the medical doctors attending to the survivors to counsel them and those who lost their near and dear ones in the tragedy. All that the State Government has to do is to submit a detailed report about the losses suffered by the people, the scale of fatalities and destruction in the region as also a comprehensive plan by the Kerala Government about the proposed resettlement scheme.

Earlier, the Prime Minister made on-the-spot assessment of the destruction and interacted with the soldiers of the Indian Army and the National Disaster Rescue Team who led the rescue operations in Mundakkal, Punnimattam Churalmala regions which bore the brunt of the nature's fury. He also visited various hospitals in the district where the injured are undergoing treatment, interacted with them and enquired about their wellbeing. "The Prime Minister asked me about my health and assured of all possible help from the Government. His

words were soothing and reassuring," said Arun, a youth who had a miraculous escape from certain death after he was taken out from underneath tonnes of mud, soil and rocks fallen on him during the landslide. Modi was accompanied by Governor Mohammed Arif Khan, Union Minister of State for Tourism Suresh Gopi, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and senior IAS and IPS officers of the State. It was clear from the body language of the Prime Minister that he was moved by the stories recounted by the victims who had lost their loved ones, houses and sources of life. Since Friday evening, the Kerala media was agog with reports that the Centre was likely to offer ₹2,000 crore comprehensive rehabilitation package that includes construction of a safe and secure township. A grim-faced Vijayan, who accompanied the Prime Minister throughout the aerial survey and interaction with the victims, did not speak anything other than reminding Modi that the State was waiting for the ₹2,000 crore which the Centre must allocate. The basis of the ₹2,000-crore package demand has been explained neither by the Chief Minister nor the Chief Secretary Venu.

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

At least two Army personnel, who were critically injured during an encounter with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, succumbed to their injuries late Saturday evening. Three other injured soldiers have been rushed to the hospital. The Indian Army is yet to confirm the fatalities. However, agency reports claimed two soldiers succumbed to their injuries while three others also injured in the ongoing operation are undergoing treatment. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Ahlan Gagarmandu in the Kokernag area of the south Kashmir district following information about the presence of terrorists there. The gunfight broke out after the terrorists opened fire at the search party personnel, who retaliated, the officials said. The site of encounter was located deep inside the forests, around 10 kms from the nearest motorable road. In the exchange of fire, two Army personnel were injured. "Based on specific intelligence input, a Joint Operation was launched by the Indian Army, @JmuKmrPolice & @crpf_srinagar today in the general area Kokernag,



FILE PHOTO

Anantnag. Contact was established and a firefight ensued," Srinagar-based Chinar Corps of the Indian Army said in a post on X. "Two personnel have been injured and evacuated from the area," it said. Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir Police on Saturday released sketches of four dreaded Pakistani terrorists who were last spotted near dhoks (temporary mud houses) in the upper reaches of Malhar, Bani and Seojdhar forests of Kathua district. The sketches were released almost a month after a group of terrorists ambushed two vehicles of the Indian Army in which five soldiers were killed in action and five others received injuries in the Machheddi area of Basohli in Kathua district on July 8. Since then the security forces have launched massive search operations in the area to flush out these terrorists hiding in the area. So far no major success has been achieved in the ongoing operations. On Saturday, the Jammu and Kashmir police also announced a cash reward of ₹20 lakh for credible information about the whereabouts of these terrorists. In a post on X, J-K Police released sketches of four terrorists who were last seen in 'dhoks' of Malhar, Bani and Seojdhar forests in the upper reaches of the district. "...a reward of Rs 5 lakhs (has been announced) on each terrorist for actionable information. Anyone with credible information on terrorists will also be suitably rewarded," Kathua police said in its post.

Bangladesh Chief Justice forced to resign

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh's Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan on Saturday tendered his resignation, five days after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime amid massive street protests and students marching towards the apex court demanding a revamp of the judiciary. The 65-year-old top judge revealed his decision around 1 pm after protesters of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement gathered at the apex court premises. The students had issued an ultimatum to him and the judges of the Appellate Division to resign by 1 pm. "I feel it is necessary to share a special news with you. Our Chief Justice resigned a few minutes back. His resignation letter has already reached the law ministry," law adviser, equivalent to the Minister of the newly-installed interim Government, Prof Asif



Nazrul said in a Facebook video message. Nazrul added that the resignation letter would be sent to President Mohammad Shahabuddin "without delay for taking necessary measures" and he was expecting the process to be completed very soon. "We have received only the resignation letter of the Chief Justice. There is no update

about (resignation) of others," Nazrul added. Chief Justice Hassan earlier on Saturday said he had decided to step down from his position. "I have made a decision to resign after speaking with Dr Asif Nazrul," he said. Earlier, the full court meeting of the Supreme Court got cancelled as students issued a two-hour ultimatum for the

resignation of the Chief Justice and other justices of the apex Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of unitary Bangladesh. In the face of student protest, Chief Justice Hassan postponed the meeting and later said he would step down. Hasnat Abdullah, a coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, issued the ultimatum at 11 am, asking the Chief Justice and other justices to leave their posts within 1 pm today. Bangladesh Army personnel were deployed at the Supreme Court premises as hundreds of protesting students gathered. Around 1 pm, Army personnel were stationed in the main building, annexe building, and other areas around the Supreme Court. They urged the protesters to maintain peace and called on them to avoid damaging property.

6-laning of BBSR-Puri NH approved

NHAI asked to prepare DPR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Government has approved the proposal for development of six lanes along with two-lane service road on both sides of the Bhubaneswar-Puri National Highway-316



and Barbil-Chandikhole Road. Official sources said that the Works Department has informed the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) regarding the approval accorded to the projects for further steps. A communication in this connection has been sent by Works Department Engineer-

in-Chief and Special Secretary Lakshmi Kant Padhi to the NHAI Regional office. The NHAI has been requested to prepare the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the projects and make a presentation before the Chief Secretary for finalisation of the alignment and controlled access locations.

6 new rly projects for Odisha approved

- Total cost Rs 15,004 crore
- CM thanks PM, Railway Minister

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for giving Odisha six new rail-

way projects. "This will definitely strengthen the railway infrastructure in Odisha. This will go a long way in the economic development of Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts," said Majhi.

The six big and medium railway projects in Odisha's southern and western regions have been approved by the Union Cabinet. The new projects are 73-km-long Gunupur-Therubali (new line), 116-km-long Junagarh-Nabarangpur (new line), 82-km-long Badampahar-Kendujhargarh (new line), 85-km-long Bangiriposhi-Gorumohisani, 60-km-long Budhamara-Chakulia and 173-km-long Malkangiri-Pandurangpuram

(via Bhadrachalam). The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister, approved eight projects in total in the country worth Rs 24,657 crore. The total estimated cost of the six projects in Odisha is Rs 15,004 crore. These new projects will increase the existing network of the Indian Railways by 900 km. The approved projects are expected to be completed by 2030-31.



Scan to know Patanjali Stores near you

Potato stocks reach State, but price still high

Govt provides potatoes at Rs 100 per 3 kg
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The rise of price of potatoes is pinching consumers across the State. All efforts and measures of the State Government to combat the crisis have so far failed to curb the prices of tuber in the retail markets. Though some potato-laden trucks have managed to enter Odisha from West Bengal, there are still fluctuations in the prices in the wholesale and retail markets in Odisha. This is creating problems as well as confusion among the consumers.



The price registered a marginal drop on Saturday. However, the rate ranged from Rs 50 to Rs 60 per kilo. A trader at the Aiginia godown said, "Already 20 to 21 trucks have reached today and potato is being sold at Rs 29 to Rs 30. As there is no check on the retail market, traders are selling at high rates. It seems that there is some

politics which has led to a price rise. Several trucks loaded with potatoes from Uttar Pradesh to Assam via West Bengal have also been detained." However, the Odisha Government has decided to provide three kilos of potatoes at Rs 100 a kg to the people in Bhubaneswar. The Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department on the day started

the process to provide 10 packets of potatoes to each dealer. The dealers have been instructed to provide 3 kgs of potatoes to each family at Rs 100 to all ration card holders and other people. The process will continue till the market rates stabilise, said a senior official, adding that an adequate stock has been procured by the government.

In Cuttack Woman, youth who jumped into Kathajodi found alive

Mystery shrouds whole incident
PNS ■ CUTTACK

Mystery shrouded the case of a woman and a youth who allegedly jumped into Kathajodi river from the Trishulia bridge in Cuttack on Friday evening. Both were traced alive on Saturday. It was revealed that both were relatives. The motive behind the incident was

yet to be ascertained. The Aadhaar cards, mobile phones and shoes of both were recovered from the spot. After both voluntarily appeared at the Purighat police station, they were sent to hospital for medical examination. Sources said they have claimed to have been stranded in the river the whole night. A Fire Service officer said, "After getting information that two persons had jumped into the Kathajodi, we had

launched a rescue operation yesterday and even during morning hours today. Even though they claimed that they had been washed to the shore today morning, it is hard to imagine that someone could withstand the present current in the river." The officer said that as floodwater is now flowing in the river and there is a strong current, it is not possible for anyone to be in the river throughout the night.

"If they were stuck on some island or they had fallen from the side of the bridge, it will be ascertained only after speaking with both the persons. Whether they were planning to misguide by placing their Aadhaar cards and other articles will be ascertained only after an investigation," the officer added. Police started an investigation to ascertain the exact motive and truth behind the entire incident.

Covent Garden Assn elects new body



The Covent Garden Duplex Owners Association (CGDOA), one of the leading residential societies in the twin cities, has ushered in a new era of leadership with the recent elections of its managing committee. The newly-elected office-bearers took charge on Friday, promising to steer the society towards greater growth and community welfare. Senior journalist Bhakta Tripathy was elected as the CGDOA president and scientist Dr Sunil Raghav as secretary.

The leadership team also includes Alkananda Swain, vice-president, Srutakirtree Dash, joint secretary, and Isidor Kujur, treasurer. The executive committee comprises Surabhi Swain, Sharmistha Praharaj, CA Sanjib Ginodia and Dr Varesha Khan. Outgoing president Brahmananda Mishra and secretary Mangobind Mishra welcomed the new committee. The new office-bearers will serve a tenure of three years, during which they aim to continue the society's legacy of excellence and community service.

CM urged 'Impose additional royalty on pvt mines as per SC ruling'

State losing Rs 5,400 cr per year as these mines go off the hook
BIJAY MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR

In view of a recent judgment of the Supreme Court dated July 25, several activists, experts and concerned citizens have urged the Government of Odisha for imposition of additional royalty (tax) on private legacy mines.

Government companies like OMC and SAIL are paying additional amount at the rate of 150% of royalty along with royalty, DMF and NMET under Sec 17A (2C), Sec 8A (8) and Sec 8(4) as per Fifth Schedule of the MMDR Act. Thus they are paying 42.5 %

of the ASP. However, contrary to the above two categories, private legacy mines like TATA, Rungta and some other mines are paying only the royalty, DMF and NMET which come around 19.2% of the ASP. These mines are producing more than 60 MT of iron ore in Odisha. Assuming that the average IBM price of iron ore is Rs 4,000 per tonne, the loss to the State exchequer is Rs 5,400 crore annually from the private legacy mines. In a period of 10 years, the total loss would be Rs 54,000 crore. Submitting details about the loss, Jana Adhikari

Parisada president Bijay Parida in a letter to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi told that since the State Government has been empowered to impose taxes by virtue of the recent judgement of the Supreme Court on mines, a reasonable additional amount of 150 % of the royalty payable should be imposed on private legacy mines who are not paying any premium/ additional royalty now. "This would be the best way to boost up the State exchequer and eradicate the serious anomaly in the payment system by different categories of mines," told Parida.

'Bande Odisha' programme held in city



A programme, 'Bande Odisha' was organised by the Mantha Charitable Trust here to honour and pay tributes to those who sacrificed their lives for the honour and dignity of the nation and the soil. The guests included chief guest BJP State president Manmohan Samal; the honourable guests were Language, Literature and Culture and Higher Education Minister Suryasulhi Suraj, Ekamra MLA Babu Singh; former Bargarh MP Prabhas Singh and former Central government

officer Sanjay Kumar Panda, On the occasion, Culture Department Director Dilip Rauthari, released the Odisha audio visual. The programme was conducted under the chairmanship of Lt General Dr Narayan Mohanty. Mantha Charitable Trust founder Nivedita Nayak elaborated on Odisha's perspective in this programme while Gorakhnath Sahu, Shiv Prasad Mishra, Shanta Rath and Suchisvita coordinated the programme. The event was moderated by editor Saroj Kumar Bhuyan.

Govt to scrutinise identity of Bangladeshis

Among the political turmoil and civil unrest in Bangladesh, thousands of Bangladeshis have fled the country and converged on the borders of India to take refuge here. In this scenario, Odisha, which has a sizeable migrant population from Bangladesh in coastal districts, is planning to intensify the verification of the identities of such refugees. Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan on Saturday said, "A thorough verification of identities of the

Bangladeshis living in the State will be conducted. Strict action will be taken against any immigrant who lacks proper documentation." "Arrangements will be made for the deportation of any immigrants living in Odisha illegally," he added further. The Odisha Police have implemented strict border control measures to avoid any infiltration attempts. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has issued directions to both Marine police and Indian Coast Guard to remain vigilant and ensure effective surveillance.

Today Odisha Library Academy to hold Librarian's Day

In celebration of the National Librarian's Day, the Odisha Library Academy (OLA) is set to host its 9th Annual Convention and Librarian's Day on Sunday (August 11) at the ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) here in memory of Prof SR Ranganathan, Father of Library Science in India.



The theme for this year's seminar is "Rejuvenating the Movement: Revive the Commitment for Odisha Library Advancement (RMRCOLA)." The seminar aims to bring together librarians, educators, researchers and policymakers to discuss strategies and innovations for revitalising the library movement in the State. The speakers and experts from the field will share their insights and experiences, providing perspectives on the future of library services in Odisha.

The Odisha Library Academy has been working to enhance library services, promote e-library movement, undertake training and continuing education among li-

brary and information professionals, improvement of status and service condition of library professionals and other related activities. Its 9th Annual Convention and Librarian's Day offer a unique opportunity for networking, learning and sharing best practices in the field of library and information science.

OLA president Dr Bibhuti Busan Sahoo and secretary Bijoy Ketan Panda informed that Ministers Dr Mukesh Mahaling and Suryabansi Suraj are invited as guests in this event.

Blossoms School holds 'Navonmesh 8.0'



The Blossoms School here on Friday held its annual science exhibition 'Navonmesh 8.0', where the students showcased their scientific inquiries, creativities and innovations to the community. The event, inaugurated by chief guest Debasish Dash, Director, Institute of Life Sciences, Bhubaneswar, featured diverse projects in Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Environmental Sciences and Technologies.

The students were divided as Tiny Coders (Kindergarten); Cookie Bytes (STD 1 and 2); Code Crafters (STD 3 and 4); Cyber Centurions (STD 5,6 and 7); and Advanced Techies (STD 8,9 and 10). The budding scientists in each group exhibited immense dedication in demonstrating their experiments and models on a wide array of pre-allotted topics. The judges, management, guests and the visiting parents were incredibly proud of the hard work and creativities of the students.

Five Navy ships spotted off coast near Puri

Rehearsals for Navy Day celebration on Dec 4
PNS ■ PURI



As many as five ships of the Indian Navy were sighted along the coastline in Puri between Digabareni and Light House in front of the Blue Flag beach on Saturday morning. According to sources, this is part of practice sessions and rehearsals for the celebration of Navy Day in Puri on December 4 to commemorate the valiant attack carried out by the Indian Navy on Karachi harbour during the 1971 Indo-Pak War in which it sank two Pakistani ships under "Operation Trident". The ships are said to be evaluating the situation in the sea and how best the day can be celebrated.

Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi has also landed in Puri to discuss the necessary arrangements for the upcoming event with the district administration, the sources added. The spotting of ships along the coast created murmurs as locals gathered to catch a glimpse of them, suspecting that these were part of the

measures to check infiltration in light of the ongoing political instability in Bangladesh. On Friday, the Naval Chief had said that security along the Indian coast remains "strong" while visiting INS Chilka to attend the passing out parade of Agniveers. Meanwhile, the Odisha Government has stepped up vigil along its 480-km coast-

line in Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak and Baleswar amid reports that many criminal elements, who have come out of jails during the unrest in Bangladesh, may try to sneak into India. Eighteen marine police stations have also been put on high alert. The state is located about 200 km away from the Bangladesh coast.

Workshop on Basic Life Support held

By IIT BBS, KIMS
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR



People's awareness and practice of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can provide a skilled first responder at the time of exigency. Its knowledge can make any citizen a lifesaver. To spread this awareness, the Sanjeevan Health Centre of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with KAABEEL Simulation & Skill Upgradation Centre, KIMS Hospital, Bhubaneswar, organised a workshop on Basic Life Support (BLS) with CPR on Saturday for the students, residents and security personnel of the institute. It may be mentioned that sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) refers to the sudden cessation of cardiac mechanical activ-

ity with hemodynamic collapse. About 85% of SCA instances have been reported at home or workplace with a survival rate less than 10%. However, the survival can be doubled or tripled if cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is initiated early by a bystander or Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The EMS density, traffic congestion and large population in India are the hin-

drance for early CPR. Victim's brain suffers irreversible damage after six minutes of cardiac arrest precisely. At the workshop, the participants were imparted training on the skills of providing high-quality CPR to victims of cardiac arrest due to heart attack, electrocution, lightning/ thunderstorm injury, fire or chemical inhalation, etc. The participants were also trained in relieving choking victims. The hands-on trainings were imparted by the doctors who are the certified instructors of Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) of American Heart Association (AHA). Around 250 participants took advantage of the workshop.

Dr Ashok Kumar Badamali, Senior Consultant Cardiac Anaesthesia, KIMS Hospital conducted the workshop.

10K youths in State to be trained in drone tech

Under Kaushal Rath drive flagged off by CM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi recently launched the 'Kaushal Rath' initiative under the Skilled-in-Odisha mission. The aim is to extend advanced skill development opportunities to students in Odisha, particularly those in remote and underserved areas.

As part of the drive, IG Drones, a leading drone technology and analytics company based in Odisha, will train over 10,000 youth in advanced drone technology fundamentals through National Skill



Development Corporation (NSDC)-certified courses.

The IG Drones have specially designed a state-of-the-art drone simulator which is India's first indigenously developed drone simulator launched in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Indian drone market is on a trajectory of rapid growth, projected to expand from USD 654 million in 2024 to USD 1,437 million by

2029, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.0%. The surge is largely driven by increasing demand across diverse sectors such as agriculture, defence, and e-commerce. Recognizing the potential, IG Drones, founded by two Odia entrepreneurs Bodhisattwa Sanghapriya and Om Prakash, is committed to positioning Odisha as a pivotal State in India's journey to becoming a global drone hub by 2030.

Expressing his vision for the initiative, Bodhisattwa Sanghapriya of IG Drones, stated, "Odisha has immense potential to become a key player in the drone industry. Through the Kaushal Rath initiative, we aim to equip the youth with advanced skills in drone technology and artificial intelligence, which are crucial for the future. By training a skilled workforce, we are not only supporting India's goal of becoming a global drone hub by 2030 but also making Odisha a central hub for drone technology and innovation. Our unique approach focuses on practical, hands-on experience, ensuring that our trainees are job-ready and able to leverage these skills in various industries."

In Kendrapada BDO alleges abuse, defamation by 2 scribes

Lodges plaint with DM, SP

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Bandana Khatua, the BDO of Kendrapada, on Friday knocked at the doors of the district Collector and SP of Kendrapada demanding stringent action against two reporters of the district for their allegedly abusing her and defaming her on social media.

Khatua in her complaint alleged that reporter Bhimasen Sathy published a news against her in 'Odisha Khabar' and circulated it in social media with objectionable and abusive comments that has caused her a lot of mental harassment.

Similarly, one Chittarajan Das, the district correspondent



of 'Political and Business Daily', also allegedly abused her in filthy language in WhatsApp. It has caused her mental trauma, for which she was unable to discharge her duties at her workplace.

She urged the Collector and the SP to take stringent actions against the two reporters.

"I am going to file a libel case against the two reporters for defaming me in social media," said Khatua.

Kidnapped minor girl rescued in B'swar

2 detained

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The Nilgiri police in Baleswar district rescued a minor girl, who had allegedly been kidnapped by a youth and with whom he was getting married in a temple in the Singla area in the district.

The accused of Sahadasuni village under the Singla police station allegedly kidnapped the

girl following a love affair. The parents of the victim informed the Nilgiri police, who rushed to the spot and rescued the girl.

Subsequently, some of the friends of the accused threatened the parents of the victim with a toy pistol at their house at Nilgiri. However, locals caught hold of two of the culprits and tied them. Police detained the two accused and began interrogating them.

In Bhadrak

Girl torches BF's house, assaults his kin

PNS ■ BHADRAK

An incident of a girl allegedly assaulting the family members of her boyfriend and setting his house at Rukunadeipur village in the Basudevpur area of Bhadrak district has come to the fore.

As per initial reports, the girl and a youth of the village were into a love relationship for a long time. However, their relationship turned bitter following some matter between them.

Later, the girl threatened the boyfriend after the latter demanded to return the money which he had given to her.

The boy's family alleged

that after sending a threatening message, the girl along with her aide came to their place and set the house on fire after assaulting them.

"Our son had given around Rs 20 lakh to the girl. When he demanded the money, the girl came to our house and attacked us. Later, she also torched our house," said the boy's mother, adding that the girl also ransacked their property.

One of the relatives of the youth also alleged that the girl had taken Rs 20 lakh. "I was at my shop when I got information. Earlier, the girl had threatened to set the boy's house on fire," he alleged.

Tribal Future Fest 'Similipal tribes' handicraft designs discussed



By Odia tribal designer

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Shakuntala Marandi, a textile designer from Odisha, participated as a guest speaker on the 8th day of the Tribal Future Fest. The session was moderated by Margret Zinyu from Nagaland.

The month-long online fest is bringing together designers and creative professionals from tribal communities across India to discuss the impact of their work on their communities. This is the first of its kind event in India where designers and creative professionals are discussing their work and creative imagination in relation to the cultural, social, and economic development of tribal communities.

On the eighth day of Tribal Futures, Shakuntala from Santal community gave a presentation on the creation of crafts by the Santal and Birhor tribal communities in the Similipal forest area using natural fibers found there. She spoke about the Lar tree, whose

bark is used by the community to create their own tools. Shakuntala explained how she intervened in the handicraft through design and made some improvements, transforming it into a better, premium product that was well-received by professional textile designers.

In her 30-minute presentation, Shakuntala detailed the methods used in the art and shared her experience of working with her artisans in her village and in Ahmedabad.

After the presentation, the audience had the opportunity to ask questions. In response to a question about the GI tag for Santhal traditional dress, Shakuntala said that she had collaborated with the Odisha Government in this direction. She provided the Odisha Government with a book on her research on Santhal traditional attire, published by NID Ahmedabad. Work is still ongoing in this regard. Participants also asked questions about designs in Santhal traditional attire. During the hour-long discussion, people learned a lot about traditional textiles.

MP Sarangi to Min Vaishnav 'Establish railway division in Baleswar'

Also set up extension centre of proposed Railway Univ

SIBDAS KUNDU ■ BALESWAR

MP Pratap Sarangi urged Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav to establish a new railway division at Baleswar. In his letter to the Minister, he mentioned that earlier he had urged for estab-

lishment of a new railway zone and as it is getting difficult for setting up a zone, then the ministry may consider for a division at Baleswar.

"The northern part of Odisha is deprived of basic amenities and infrastructure. The division with Baleswar as its headquarters will help in resolving long pending development issues pertaining to infrastructure requirements of the region," Sarangi asserted.

He further urged for establishing an extension centre at Baleswar with virtual learning facilities to expand the reach of the proposed Railway University as the area has talented educated youth in large numbers.

Further, he urged to identify the vacant lands of Railways in the area for implementing the futuristic augmentation of the existing railway infrastructure and passenger amenities, besides

housing emerging technology innovations in the related fields of civil aviation, maritime informatics, defence ancillaries and MSME ecosystem. The infrastructure development would go a long way in overall economic development of the region creating sustainable livelihoods for a holistic transformation of the backward areas of Odisha yet very rich with diversity and natural resources, Sarangi added.

Buses to ply between Mahendragiri & Puri

Transport Min discusses plan for development of historical hill to a tourist spot

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ BRAHMAMPUR

The Mahendragiri Mountain of Rayagad block under Gajapati district will get recognised by the State Government as one of the tourist spots, informed Minister for Mines, Steel and Transport Bibhuti Bhusan Jena.

He informed the mountain occupies a special position in the Hindu mythology. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has placed the holy region in the Ramayana Circuit. History of this place is also narrated in our Vedas and Puranas," said the Minister during his visit



to Mahendragiri recently.

He also stated that one can experience all the six seasons in one day on the mountain, which is one of its unique characters. Similarly, the place is very famous for Sri Ram spending a few days during his Vanabas, as per the legend. He emphasized the importance of running buses in between Mahendragiri and Puri.

Mahendragiri with the local administration and public representatives. Finally, the Minister visited Judhithir and Bhima Temple before returning from the mountain.

During this visit of Minister Jena, Mohana MLA Dasarathi Gamanga, Chikiti MLA Manoranjan Dyansamantra, Khandapada MLA Dusmanta Swain, Gajapati Additional Chief Engineer, Irrigation Nagendra Nath Maharana, BDO Sudhir Kumar Singh, Tehsildar Sadashiva Bhotra, senior BJP leader Kahnu Charan Pati, Sisir Mishra, district general secretary of Mohana Constituency Kamadev Badanayak, Rayagad Block Chairperson Purnabasi Nayak, BJD leader Antaryami Gamango, vice chairman Jyoti Prasad Panigrahi, Dhaneswar Bhuyan among others were present.

During the Minister's visit to Mahendragiri, Gajapati Collector Smriti Ranjan Pradhan, DFO S Anand welcomed him with flower bouquets at Burukhata.

Mistaken as Bangladeshi K'pada Madrasa worker assaulted in Pallahara

Grievously injured

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

Sk Abdul Rashid (55), who is working at Kendrapada-based Jamia Ashraf Uloom Madrasa, faced the wrath of some anti-socials at Pallahara in Angul district, after he was mistaken as a Bangladeshi on August 8.

Rashid said that Jamia Ashraf Uloom Madrasa generally functions with the money of some kind-hearted persons for the education of poverty stricken minority community children. As a result, he, on August 8, had gone to collect donation money from the minority community members of Pallahara area.

While he was going to the mosque located at the SBI office lane of Pallahara, some miscreants gheraoed him and asked him to give Jai Sriram slogan and later showed some video footage in which Hin-



du were tortured in the ongoing violence in Bangladesh. Suspecting him as a Bangladeshi, they went on assaulting him with iron rods.

Rashid sustained head injuries and managed to escape by running into the mosque. He was later rushed to a local hospital for treatment.

Later, he lodged an FIR at Pallahara police station, seeking stern action against the accused involved in attacking him. Pallahara police registered a case under Section 126(2), 116(2), 109 and 395) of BNS, 2023 and were conducting an inquiry in the matter, said police sources.

Aug 9 was Indigenous Peoples Day Concerted efforts needed to protect indigenous peoples, their cultures

SILI ROUT

As we observed the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on August 9, it is essential to turn our attention to a particularly vulnerable segment of the population: Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact. This year's theme, "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact," shines a spotlight on the urgent need to safeguard the rights and well-being of these unique and fragile communities.

Understanding the context
Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation are groups who have chosen to live without regular contact with the majority population or even other indigenous groups. These communities often reside in remote, inaccessible regions, such as dense forests or isolated islands, preserving their autonomy and cultural integrity by minimizing interaction with the outside world. Conversely, indigenous peoples in

initial contact have had recent, limited, or intermittent interaction with the broader society, placing them at a precarious juncture where external influences can significantly impact their traditional ways of life and health.

The challenges facing these communities are multifaceted and severe. Health risks are paramount; these groups lack immunity to common diseases, and the introduction of new pathogens can lead to devastating outbreaks. The history of contact between isolated indigenous peoples and the outside world is replete with tragic stories of entire populations being decimated by diseases to which they had no prior exposure.

Encroachment on their lands by external parties seeking resources such as timber, minerals, and agricultural land poses another significant threat. Such incursions not only jeopardize their habitat and way of life but also often lead to violent confrontations, resulting in human rights violations. Moreover, the erosion of their cultures is an ever-present risk, as interactions with outsiders can lead to the dilution of traditional

practices, languages, and beliefs.

The rights of indigenous peoples, including those in voluntary isolation and initial contact, are enshrined in several international agreements and legal frameworks. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 are pivotal in establishing the rights to land, territories, and resources, and protecting these groups' cultural heritage and environmental stewardship.

However, these legal protections are often inadequately enforced, necessitating more robust efforts at both national and international levels. Countries like Brazil, Peru, and Colombia have implemented specific policies aimed at protecting the rights of these groups, such as establishing protected territories and monitoring illegal activities. Yet, enforcement remains a significant challenge.

India's initiatives

India has been proactive in safeguarding its indigenous communities, particularly those in voluntary isolation and initial

contact. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Act of 1956 and subsequent amendments have provided stringent protections for groups such as the Sentinelese, prohibiting unauthorized contact and regulating access to their territories. The Indian Government has also established buffer zones around these areas to prevent encroachment and monitor illegal activities.

In addition to legal measures, India has implemented various healthcare initiatives respecting the choice of these groups to remain isolated. Health workers are trained to handle potential contact situations delicately, ensuring that necessary medical aid, such as vaccination programmes for diseases like measles and influenza is available without forcing interaction.

Empowering indigenous communities to lead conservation and protection efforts is a key strategy. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs works closely with local tribal councils to develop culturally appropriate and effective measures for protecting their land and

resources.

Initiatives making a difference

Several organisations and initiatives are making commendable efforts to protect these vulnerable groups. Survival International campaigns for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and pressures Governments and corporations to respect these rights. The Amazon Conservation Team (ACT) collaborates with indigenous communities in the Amazon Basin to protect their cultures and lands. Additionally, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) addresses indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health, and human rights.

Case studies: Learning from experience

The experiences of the Mashco-Piro of Peru and the Sentinelese of India offer valuable lessons. The Mashco-Piro, who reside in the Peruvian Amazon, face threats from illegal logging and drug trafficking. Efforts by the Peruvian Government and NGOs to establish protected zones and

monitor illegal activities are crucial for their survival. Similarly, the Sentinelese, inhabiting North Sentinel Island in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago, are protected by strict Indian laws prohibiting contact, preserving their isolation and protecting them from diseases.

Strategies for the Future

Strengthening legal protections is paramount. Governments must ensure robust frameworks that recognise and protect the rights of these communities, enforcing existing laws and creating new regulations as necessary. Effective monitoring systems to prevent illegal activities in indigenous territories are crucial, involving collaboration with local communities and the use of technology such as satellite imaging.

Providing healthcare that respects the choice of these groups to remain isolated is essential. Training health workers to handle potential contact situations delicately and ensuring vaccination programmes for diseases like measles and influenza are available without forcing contact is vital.

Empowering indigenous communities to lead conservation and protection efforts ensures that measures are culturally appropriate and effective. International bodies and NGOs must continue to raise awareness about the plight of these groups and advocate for their rights at global forums.

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2024 reminds us of our collective responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us. By focusing on indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact, we acknowledge the unique challenges they face and the urgent need for tailored protections. Through combined efforts of international organisations, Governments and indigenous communities, we can ensure these groups live in dignity, with their rights fully respected and protected.

As we stand on the brink of the Anthropocene, it is not just a matter of justice, but of humanity, to safeguard these communities, preserving the rich diversity of our global heritage for future generations.

Rahul pursuing politics of deception, deceit: BJP

PNS n NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday hit out at Rahul Gandhi, alleging non-fulfillment of his party's poll promises in Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh, and said the Congress leader has become synonymous with politics of deception, lies and deceit.

Addressing a Press conference at the party headquarters here, BJP National spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia claimed the Congress Government in Karnataka has fulfilled just two out of a total of 59 promises that the party made during the State Assembly elections. "People of Karnataka are feeling cheated. Wherever the Congress is in power, people of the State are feeling cheated. People of Himachal Pradesh are feeling cheated. Rahul has become synonymous with politics of deception, propaganda, lies and deceit," he said. Bhatia also hit out at Rahul



while raising the issue of farmers suicide in Karnataka as he accused the Congress leader of pursuing "politics of pretense" to win votes. "He has time to meet the farmers delegation in Delhi but there are media reports that as many as 1,200 farmers have committed suicide in Karnataka. Why couldn't Rahul Gandhi spare even a minute to meet them or direct the Karnataka Chief Minister to

take cognizance of these cases," he said. "It's because Rahul Gandhi's priorities are different. That's why it becomes worrisome when he gives the people of Karnataka a Chief Minister who is himself promoting corruption. We all know about the MUDA scam in which SC and ST community members' land has been allotted to the Chief Minister's wife," he added.

Centre responded quickly to Wayanad tragedy: Officials

PNS n NEW DELHI

The Central Government took immediate measures following the landslide tragedy in Kerala's Wayanad as it deployed more than 1,200 personnel from National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Army, Air Force, Navy, fire services and civil defence among others for rescue and relief operations at the incident site, official sources said on Saturday.

More than 100 ambulances along with doctors and other staff were deployed for medical support and treatment, they added as Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits Wayanad to take stock of the relief and rehabilitation work and meet survivors. The Indian Army, the sources said, erected a 190-foot Bailey bridge in Wayanad which was crucial in facilitating the movement of heavy machinery and ambulances.

The bridge was completed in 71 hours, significantly enhancing rescue operations by allowing



heavy vehicles and machinery to be mobilised to rescue around 200 people who were stranded due to damage to a bridge. Till now, 30 people have been rescued and 520 evacuated, and 112 bodies recovered by National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) rescue teams, they said. The sources added that an Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) has been constituted by the Central Government to visit the affected areas. The Centre has always lent a helping hand to Kerala through timely provision of funds to meet the challenge of disaster, the sources said.

This year, the Kerala's State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) account had around Rs 395 crore on April 1. The first instalment of the central share of SDRF for the ongoing year of over Rs 145.60 crore was released in advance on July 31, they said.

In the last five years, around Rs 1,200 crore has been released by the Modi Government as the Centre's share in SDRF out of the total State Disaster Response Fund of Rs 1,780 crore. In addition to this, the Government has also released Rs 445 crore for the State Disaster Mitigation Fund in the last five years, they added.

Deadline for submission of Ravi-Beas tribunal report extended

PNS n NEW DELHI

The Centre has extended the deadline for the Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal to submit its report by another year, moving the deadline to August 5, 2025.

The extension comes as part of a series of delays in the submission of the tribunal's report, which has been pending since its constitution in April 1986 under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956. The Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal was established to address disputes and verify claims related to the Punjab Settlement, according to an official gazette notification.

Initially, the tribunal submitted its report on January 30, 1987. However, the Central Government sought further clarification and guidance on certain aspects of the report, leading to multiple extensions over the years.

The most recent extension, as stated in the Government's notification, acknowledges the "enormous exercise" under-



taken by the tribunal in preparing its report. In consideration of the extensive work required, the Government deemed it necessary to provide additional time for the tribunal to complete its task.

This marks the latest in a long line of extensions, reflecting the complexity of the issues at hand and the ongoing challenges in resolving inter-state water disputes.

The original deadline for the tribunal's report has been extended numerous times, with the latest amendment replacing the previous deadline of August 5, 2024, with the new date in 2025.



NIDM explores use of AI for disaster management

PNS n NEW DELHI

The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) is exploring the use of GIS, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning for improving disaster risk assessment and crop insurance, a Government statement said Saturday.

The institute, operating under the Ministry of Home Affairs, on Friday celebrated the inaugural National Space Day with a workshop focused on 'Space Technology in Disaster Management' where presentations were given on the use of geographic information system (GIS) and AI in handling of disasters, it said. The event which was attended by Vivek Shrivastava, Director General of Fire Services, Civil Defence and Home Guards, and Rajendra Ratnoo, Executive Director of NIDM, had panel discussions on the critical role of Government-private sector collaboration in advancing technological innovations for disaster resilience, it added.

K H V Durga Rao, Group Director of the Department of Space (NRSC), Chandrashekar S, Deputy Director of LBSNAA, and Surya Parkash, Head of the GMR and CRBN Division at NIDM also participated in the national workshop, which drew over 300 attendees.

Addressing the gathering, Shrivastava underscored the importance of risk reduction, citing the zero casualties achieved during Cyclone Biparjoy as a model of success, it said. Ratnoo highlighted the value of learning from past disasters and conducting thorough post-disaster evaluations to enhance future preparedness. "The workshop featured technical sessions on the use of GIS, artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning in disaster risk assessment and crop insurance," the release stated. A discussion chaired by Safi Ahsan Rizvi, Advisor at NDMA, focused on improving data collection and integrating AI/ML tools for more accurate crop yield predictions and insurance assessments. In the valedictory session, Lieutenant General Syed Ata Hasnain, an NDMA member, emphasised the disciplined application of space technology in disaster management.

PM to unveil 109 high-yield, resilient crop varieties today

PNS n NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release 109 high yielding, climate resilient and biofortified varieties of crops at Indian Agricultural Research Institute here on Sunday.

According to an official statement, the Prime Minister will also interact with farmers and scientists during the event. The 109 varieties of 61 crops to be released include 34 field crops and 27 horticultural crops, it added.

Among the field crops, seeds of various cereals, including millet, forage crops, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, fibre and other potential crops will be released, the statement said. Among the horticultural crops, different varieties of fruits, vegetable crops, plantation crops, tuber crops, spices, flowers and medicinal crops will be



released, it added. Prime Minister Modi has always encouraged sustainable farming and adoption of climate resilient methodologies, the release said.

He has also emphasised on promoting biofortified varieties of crops by linking them with the several Government programmes such as mid-day meal

and Anganwadi, to make India free from malnutrition, it said. "The Prime Minister has stressed that these steps will ensure good income for the farmers along with opening new avenues of entrepreneurship for them. This step of release of 109 high yielding varieties is yet another step in this direction," it added.

IAF returns after successful exercise in Malaysia

PNS n NEW DELHI

After successful participation in Exercise Udara Shakti 2024 in Malaysia, the Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent returned on Saturday.

The joint air exercise was conducted in collaboration with the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) from 05 to 09 August at Kuantan, Malaysia. The IAF participated with Su-30MKI fighter jets. During the exercise, IAF's Su-30MKI fighter jets engaged in air combat missions alongside the RMAF's Su-30MKM fighters, enabling the crew of both air forces to familiarise with each other's operational protocols, thereby enhancing interoperability, commonality and overall effectiveness in Su-30 aircraft operations, IAF said here.

Tricolour atop Africa's highest peak unfurled

PNS n NEW DELHI

In run-up to 78th Independence Day, the Divyangjan expedition team of Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), under the aegis of Ministry of Defence, has unfurled 7,800 sq ft Indian national flag atop Uhuru Summit of Kilimanjaro, the highest peak of African continent. It was the first time an amputee climber successfully climbed the summit using crutches.

The team led by Group Captain Jai Kishan, including Divyang Uday Kumar and others undertook Mission Kanchanjanga National Park to Mt Kilimanjaro (Mission K2K) to script another historic achievement, as for the first time an amputee climber successfully completed the endeavor using crutches, defence ministry said here on Saturday.



The team started their journey from the base camp, and reached Kibu Hut, situated at an altitude of 15,500 feet on August 7 where they proudly displayed the national flag, measuring 7,800 square feet, with the aid of ropes, ground nets and anchors. Taking into account the weath-

er conditions and the medical fitness of all members, the team began their ascent to Uhuru Peak at 0300 hours on August 8.

After a grueling 10-hour climbing through treacherous terrain characterised by loose scree, a steep climb of 85 degree gradient and alpine desert, they successfully reached the summit of Uhuru Peak at 1300 hours, standing at an altitude of 5,895 meters (19,341 feet) and unfurled the 7,800 sq ft Indian national flag over the summit of Uhuru Peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

The historic expedition serves as a beacon of hope and a reminder of what can be achieved through perseverance and support. It aims to inspire future generations of Divyangjan and other underprivileged youth to pursue their dreams, no matter how daunting they may seem.



Social bonds key to big cats survival

ARCHANA JYOTI n NEW DELHI

On World Lion Day on Saturday, a study published in the University of Oxford has revealed that better-connected female big cats live longer. Analysing 30 years of data, researchers found that strong female bonds are crucial for protection against threats such as infanticidal males, territory defense, hunting, and cub rearing—all requiring cooperation. The research highlights the importance of social connections for lion survival. The research "Sex-specific social aging in wild African lions" published in Current Biology also sheds light on the complex social lives of African lions, emphasising the significance of social connections for their survival.

Indeed, the insights from the study on African lions can serve as a valuable framework for researchers studying Asiatic lions in the Gir Forest in India. About social connectivity and longevity, the researchers noted for females, strong bonds with other females are crucial. These connections provide essential support for various survival aspects such as defence against threats, hunting, and cub rearing. Females with robust social networks tend to live longer, they said. The study also gives insight into social ageing patterns noting that social connections change with age. Lead author Lauren Rudd from University of Oxford said, "The

importance of close female bonds, particularly in early adulthood, could be because 'friends' can help protect against threats such as infanticidal males. They could also be valuable allies for territory defense, hunting, and cub rearing—all of which require cooperation. Combined these factors potentially explain why better-connected females live longer." Interestingly, for males, the number of social connections is more significant than the strength of individual relationships. They benefit from having a larger number of associates, which correlates with a longer lifespan. Conversely, for females, the quality of social bonds is more critical than the sheer number.

The study also has implications for understanding disease outbreaks. As females age and their social networks shrink, they might be less exposed to pathogens. In contrast, ageing males, with their increasing number of associates, might face higher exposure risks. The research is based on over 150,000 observations of 665 lions over nearly 30 years. Shedding light on the association between females and males, the study pointed out that the strength of females' connections to males tends to be at its highest in midlife, and then declines as they age. In contrast, females' social connection to other females declines linearly with age, being highest in early adulthood.

T V Somanathan appointed Cabinet Secretary

PNS n NEW DELHI

Senior IAS officer TV Somanathan was on Saturday appointed Cabinet Secretary, succeeding Rajiv Gauba. A 1987-batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, Somanathan is currently serving as Union Finance Secretary and Secretary, Expenditure. "The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of T V Somanathan, IAS, as Cabinet Secretary with a tenure of two years from 30.08.2024. "The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has also approved the appointment of T V Somanathan, IAS as Officer on Special Duty in the Cabinet Secretariat from the date he joins the assignment till he takes over as Cabinet Secretary," an official order said. Gauba took over the charge of Cabinet Secretary five years ago on August 30, 2019.

214 women among 1,389 Navy Agniveers graduate from INS Chilka

PNS n NEW DELHI

A significant milestone was achieved as 1,389 Agniveers, including 214 women Agniveers, of the Indian Navy passed out from the portals of INS Chilka, Odisha on Friday, Navy said here on Saturday. Giving details, officials said Passing Out Parade (POP) for the fourth Batch of Agniveers (01/24) marked the culmination of 16 weeks of rigorous naval training in a unique post-sunset ceremony. The post Sunset POP was reviewed by Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi.

The POP signifies not only the successful completion of initial training but also marks commencement of a new chapter for the Agniveers in the Indian Navy. While addressing the parade, Navy chief congratulated the trainees on parade and



exhorted the passing out course to uphold the Navy's core values of Duty, Honour, and Courage in their pursuit of nation-building. He urged them to focus on their subsequent phases of training and become technologically proficient sea warriors. Admiral Tripathi awarded medals and trophies to meritorious Agniveers during the POP.

SC to hear Kavitha's bail plea

PTI n NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on August 12 the pleas filed by BRS leader K Kavitha challenging the Delhi High Court's verdict denying her bail in corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. The high court had on July 1 dismissed Kavitha's bail pleas in both the cases, saying she was prima facie one of the main conspirators in the criminal conspiracy related to the formation and implementation of the now-scrapped Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22.

According to the cause list of August 12 uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan is slated to hear her petitions. While dismissing her bail pleas, the high court had said no case for grant of regular bail was made for now as the investigation is at a crucial stage.



Kharge for legislation to nullify SC's sub-quota order

PNS n NEW DELHI

Asserting that the idea of denying reservation to SCs and STs on account of the creamy layer concept is "condemnable", Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said the Government should have bought a legislation in Parliament to nullify the Supreme Court judgement on the issue. Earlier this month, a seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud ruled in a 6:1 majority judgement that state Governments were permitted to sub-classify communities within the SC list based on empirical data.

Supreme Court judge Justice B R Gavai had said States must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) and deny them the benefit of reservation. "Who do you want to benefit by bringing a creamy layer? By bringing a creamy layer (concept) on one hand you are denying untouchables and giving to those who have enjoyed privileges for thousands of years. I condemn this," Kharge told reporters here. This issue of creamy layer that has been raised by the seven judges shows that they have not thought about SCs and STs in a serious manner, he said. "Till the time untouchability exists, reservation should be there and will be there. We will fight for it," Kharge said.

Wild plant on Gaya hills offers hope for diabetes: Study

PNS n NEW DELHI

A recent study has identified a variety of medicinal plants on Brahmayoni Hill in Gaya, Bihar, with Gymnema sylvestris, commonly known as Gurmar, standing out for its anti-diabetic properties. The researchers also noted that Gurmar is instrumental in the CSIR-developed ayurvedic formulation BGR-34, aimed at managing diabetes which is on the increase in the country due to changing lifestyle and unhealthy diet.

Gurmar's effectiveness in reducing blood sugar is attributed to gymnemic acid, which interferes with sugar absorption in the intestine by blocking receptor sites. This action helps diminish cravings for sweets and lowers blood sugar levels. Additionally, Gurmar contains



flavonoids and saponins. Flavonoids offer antioxidant benefits, while saponins assist in lowering cholesterol and regulating lipid metabolism, according to the study by Magadh University professors. It is published in the International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT). The study highlights Gurmar among three medicinal plants



found on Brahmayoni Hill, which has long been valued by traditional healers for its extensive range of natural remedies. Gurmar is particularly noted for its anti-diabetic effects. "Gurmar is a key ingredient in BGR-34, an ayurvedic formulation developed by CSIR and marketed by Aimpl Pharma," said the researchers in the study "Ethnobotanical research on certain therapeutic plants

found on Gaya's Brahmayoni Hill. In 2022, a study by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, also validated that the herbal formulation BGR-34 is effective in reducing obesity along with blood sugar levels. It also improves the body's metabolic system.

Dr. Sanchit Sharma, Executive Director of Aimpl Pharma, said that the herbal formulation also includes other herbal components like Daruharidra, Giloy, Vijaysar, Manjishtha, and Fenugreek. These have been proven effective in managing diabetes, Sharma said and pointed out the rising popularity of herbal Ayurvedic medicines in response to the increasing incidence of lifestyle-related diseases and a growing emphasis on preventive health.

Israeli airstrike on Gaza school kills at least 80 people

AP n DEIR-AL-BALAH

An Israeli airstrike hit a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City early Saturday, killing at least 80 people, Palestinian health authorities said, in one of the deadliest strikes in the 10-month-old war between Israel and Hamas. The Israeli military acknowledged the strike, claiming it hit a Hamas command centre within the school. Hamas denied that. The strike on the Tabeen school in central Gaza City also wounded 47 people, the Health Ministry said. The facility, like almost all of Gaza's schools, has been used as a shelter for people who have been forced to flee their homes by the war. Video from the scene showed walls blown out on the ground level of a large building.

Concrete chunks and twisted metal lay atop the blood-soaked floor, along with clothing, toppled furniture and other debris. A blackened car with the windows blown out was covered in rubble. Fadel Naeem, director of the al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City, told The Associated Press that the facility received 70 bodies of those killed in the strike and the body parts of at least 10 others. The strike hit without warning in the early morning before sunrise as people were praying at a mosque inside the school, according to Abu Anas, a witness who worked to rescue people. "There were people praying, there were people washing and there were people upstairs sleeping, including children, women and old people," he said. "The missile fell on them without

warning. The first missile, and the second. We recovered them as body parts." Three missiles ripped through the school and the mosque inside, where about 6,000 displaced people were taking shelter from the war, said Mahmoud Bassal, a spokesperson for the Civil Defense first responders who operate under the Hamas-run local government. Many of the dead were unrecognisable, he said, adding that he expected the death toll to rise. Many of the casualties were women and children, he said. According to the United Nations, 477 out of 564 schools in Gaza had been directly hit or damaged in the war as of July 6. In June, an Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced Palestinians in central Gaza killed at least 33 people, including 12 women and children,

according to local health officials. On Thursday Israel's military hit two schools sheltering displaced people in eastern Gaza City, killing at least 15 people, according to hospital officials. Israel has blamed civilian deaths in Gaza on Hamas, saying the group endangers noncombatants by using schools and residential neighbourhoods as bases for operations and attacks. Israeli intelligence indicated about 20 militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, including senior commanders, were using the Tabeen school compound to plan attacks on Israeli forces, Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman said in a statement on the social media platform X. Izzat al-Rishq, a top Hamas official denied there were militants in the school.

Shoshani also questioned the casualty numbers issued by the Palestinian Health Ministry. Israel said the targeted school was located next to a mosque serving as a shelter for Gaza City residents. A cameraman working for The Associated Press said, however, that the mosque and the classrooms were in one building, with the prayer hall on the ground floor and the school above it. A missile appeared to have penetrated through the floor of the classrooms to the mosque below and then exploded, according to the cameraman. The strike came as American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators renewed their push for the two parties to achieve a cease-fire agreement that could help calm soaring tensions in the region following the assassination of

top Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut. Egypt, which borders Gaza and serves as a key mediator, said the strike on the school showed Israel had no intention of reaching a cease-fire deal and ending the war. Neighboring Jordan also condemned the attack, calling it a "blatant violation" of international law. Israel's campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,600 Palestinians and wounded more than 91,700 others, according to the enclave's Health Ministry. The war was triggered by Hamas' Oct 7 attack, in which militants from Gaza stormed into southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people and abducting 250 others.

UN-sanctioned official named head of Iran's nuclear agency

AP n TEHRAN

Iran's newly-elected president reappointed a US-educated official who came under United Nations sanctions 16 years ago as head of the country's nuclear department, state TV reported Saturday.

Mohammad Eslami, 67, will continue his work as chief of Iran's civilian nuclear programme and serve as one of several vice presidents. Eslami's reappointment by President Masoud Pezeshkian comes as Iran remains under heavy sanctions by the West following the collapse of the 2015 deal that curbed Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief. Pezeshkian had said during his presidential campaign that he would try to revive the nuclear deal.

The United Nations sanctioned Eslami in 2008 for "being engaged in, directly associated with or providing support for Iran's proliferation of sensitive nuclear activities or for the development of nuclear weapon delivery systems", when he was the head of Iran's Defense Industries Training and Research Institute. He was appointed as the chief of Iran's nuclear department for the first time by late President Ebrahim Raisi in 2021, before that, from 2018, in moderate former President Hassan Rouhani's era. Eslami served as Transport and Urban Development Minister. He has experience working in Iran's military industries, for years, most recently as deputy defense minister responsible for research and industry. Eslami holds degrees in civil



engineering from Detroit University of Michigan and the University of Toledo, Ohio. The US, France, Britain and Germany accused Iran of escalating its nuclear activities far beyond limits it agreed to in the 2015 deal and of failing to cooperate with the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iran accused the US and its allies of continuing to apply economic sanctions that were supposed to be lifted under the deal, and insisted its nuclear programme is peaceful and geared towards generating electricity and producing radioisotopes to treat cancer patients and remains under constant oversight by the IAEA. Iran is building two nuclear power facilities to supplement its sole operational 1,000-megawatt reactor at the southern port town of Bushehr, which went online with Russia's help in 2011. Under its long-term energy plan, Iran aims to reach 20,000-megawatt nuclear electric capacity. The nation has in recent months faced country-wide power outages.

Russia tightens security in area of Ukraine attacks

AP n KYIV

Russia on Saturday announced what it called a counterterrorism operation to increase security in the border region where an incursion this week by Ukrainian forces caught Russian troops off-guard and exposed its military vulnerabilities in the 2 1/2-year-old war.

The Russian Defence Ministry said fighting was continuing in the Kursk region and that the army has conducted airstrikes against Ukrainian forces, including using a thermobaric bomb that both causes a blast wave and creates a vacuum that suffocates its targets. The measures announced for Kursk and for the neighbouring Belgorod and Bryansk regions that border Ukraine allow the government to relocate residents, control phone communications and requisition vehicles.

The raid that began on Tuesday is the largest cross-border foray of the war and raises concerns about fighting spreading well beyond Ukraine. In neighbouring Belarus, where Russian troops are deployed but which has not sent its own army into Ukraine, President Alexander Lukashenko said Saturday that its air defences shot down unspecified objects launched from Ukraine that were flying over Belarusian territory.

"I do not understand why Ukraine needs this. We need to figure it out. As I said before, we made it clear to them that any provocations will not go unanswered," Lukashenko said, according to state news agency Belta.

A Russian plane-launched missile slammed into a Ukrainian shopping mall on Friday, killing at least 14 people and wounding 44 others, 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 post.

It was the second major strike on the town in almost a year. Last September, a Russian missile hit an outdoor market

there, killing 17. July saw the heaviest civilian casualties in Ukraine since October 2022, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine said Friday. Conflict-related violence killed at least 219 civilians and injured 1,018 over the month, the mission said.

Russia's Defence Ministry said reinforcements are being sent to Kursk to counter Ukraine's raid, with Russia deploying multiple rocket launchers, towed artillery guns, tanks transported on trailers and heavy tracked vehicles.

The ministry reported fighting in the outskirts of Sudzha, about 10 kilometres (6 miles) from the border. The town has an important pipeline transit hub for Russian natural gas exports to Europe.

There has been little reliable information on the daring Ukrainian operation and its strategic aims are unclear. Ukrainian officials have refused to comment on the incursion, which is taking place about 500 kilometres (320 miles) southwest of Moscow.

Asked about Ukraine's incursion, White House national security spokesman John Kirby said Friday the United States was "in touch with our Ukrainian counterparts" but that he would not comment until "those conversations are complete".

"There's been no changes in our policy approaches," Kirby said when asked about US policy on use of weapons. "They're using it in an area where we had said before that they could use US weapons for cross-border strikes. The end goal here is to help Ukraine defend itself."

Mathieu Boulegue, a defence analyst at the Chatham House think tank in London, said the Ukrainians appear to have a clear goal, even if they're not saying what it is.

"Such a coordinated ground force movement responds to a clear military objective," Boulegue told The Associated Press. Also, the raid has spooked the Russian public and delivered a slap in the face to Russian President Vladimir Putin, offering Ukraine "a great PR coup," he said.

The attack "is a massive symbol, a massive display of force (showing) that the war is not frozen," he said.

Bangladesh Chief Justice steps down

AP n DHAKA

The Chief Justice of the Bangladesh Supreme Court Obaidul Hassan on Saturday decided to step down from his post in the face of protests by the students who issued an ultimatum to him and judges of the Appellate Division to resign by 1 pm, according to media reports.

The 65-year-old judge will tender his resignation after consulting President Mohammed Shahabuddin in the evening, The Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported. The chief justice revealed his decision around 1 pm after protesters of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement gathered at the court premises.

Hasnat Abdullah, one of the coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, issued an ultimatum demanding the resignation

of the chief justice and the justices of the Appellate Division.

Abdullah said the protesters threatened to besiege their residences, The Daily Star newspaper said.

Earlier, Chief Justice Hassan called for a full court meeting with all justices from both divisions of the Supreme Court.

However, the protesting students viewed the convening of the full court meeting as a judiciary coup and announced a siege of the High Court premises.

In the face of student protest, Chief Justice Hassan postponed the meeting and later said that he would step down. Bangladesh Army personnel were deployed at the Supreme Court premises as hundreds of protesting students gathered.

Around 1 pm, army personnel were stationed in the main building, annex build-



ing, and other areas around the Supreme Court.

They urged the protesters to maintain peace and called on them to avoid damaging government properties.

Chief Justice Hassan told journalists at the apex court premises that he has decided to resign considering the safety of the judges of Supreme Court, High Court and lower courts across the country amid the emerging situation, The Daily Star reported.

"There are some formalities for the resignation. Completing those, I will send my resignation letter to President Mohammed Shahabuddin by this evening," he added. Asked whether other judges of the Supreme Court will also resign, the Chief Justice said, "It's their decision."

Following the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who resigned and fled to India on Monday following the political turmoil in Bangladesh, 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was sworn in on Thursday as the head of an interim government.

His government is expected to announce fresh elections after bringing the law-and-order situation under control following the deadly anti-government demonstrations against the Hasina government that had led to massive violence, now abating.

Brazilian authorities probing cause of plane crash that killed 61

AP n VINHEDO

Brazilian authorities worked Saturday to piece together what exactly caused the plane crash in Sao Paulo state the prior day that killed all 61 people on board.

Local airline Voepass' plane, an ATR 72 twin-engine turboprop, was headed for Sao Paulo's international airport in Guarulhos with 57 passengers and 4 crew members when it went down in the city of Vinhedo.

Images recorded by witnesses showed the aircraft in a flat spin and plunging vertically before smashing to the ground inside a gated community, and leaving an obliterated fuselage consumed by fire. Residents said there were no injuries on the ground.

Rain drizzled down on rescue workers as they recovered the first bodies from the scene in the chill of the Southern Hemisphere's winter. Some residents of the condominium silently left to spend the night elsewhere.

It was the world's deadliest airline crash since January 2023, when 72 people died on board a Yeti Airlines plane in Nepal that stalled and crashed while



making its landing approach. That plane also was an ATR 72, and the final report blamed pilot error.

A report Friday from Brazilian television network Globo's meteorological center said it "confirmed the possibility of the formation of ice in the region of Vinhedo," and local media cited experts pointing to icing as a potential cause for the crash.

An American Eagle ATR 72-200 crashed on October 31, 1994, and the United States National Transportation Safety Board determined that the

probable cause was ice buildup while the plane was circling in a holding pattern.

The plane rolled at about 8,000 feet and dove into the ground, killing all 68 people on board. The US Federal Aviation Administration issued operating procedures for ATRs and similar planes, telling pilots not to use the autopilot in icing conditions.

But Brazilian aviation expert Lito Sousa cautioned that meteorological conditions alone might not be enough to explain why the plane fell in the manner that it did on Friday.

"Analysing an air crash just with images can lead to wrong conclusions about the causes," Sousa told the AP by phone. "But we can see a plane with loss of support, no horizontal speed. In this flat spin condition, there's no way to reclaim control of the plane."

Speaking to reporters Friday in Vinhedo, Sao Paulo Public Security Secretary Guilherme Derrite said the plane's black box had been recovered, apparently in a preserved state. Marcelo Moura, director of operations for Voepass, told reporters Friday night that, while there were forecasts for ice, they were within acceptable levels for the aircraft.

Likewise, Lt. Col. Carlos Henrique Baldi of the Brazilian air force's centre for the investigation and prevention of air accidents, told reporters in a late afternoon press conference that it was still too early to confirm whether ice caused the crash.

The plane is "certified in several countries to fly in severe icing conditions, including in countries unlike ours, where the impact of ice is more significant," said Baldi, who heads the centre's investigation division.

King Charles praises 'community spirit' after UK's violent riots

PTI n LONDON

Britain's King Charles III has praised the "community spirit" of the peaceful counter-protesters in a call for unity after the "aggression and criminality" of the far-right riots that broke out across different cities in the country and have resulted in over 700 arrests. According to Buckingham Palace, the 75-year-old monarch had several phone calls on Friday evening to express his thoughts, including a call with Prime Minister Keir Starmer and the police chiefs tackling the response to the violent clashes.

A palace spokesperson said the King spoke to Starmer and held a joint call with the chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens, and UK Gold Commander Ben Harrington, Chief Constable of Essex. The disorder initially began in the wake of a mass stabbing attack in Southport that killed three little girls on July 29 and injured several others after misinformation about the immigration status of the sus-

pect spread across social media.

"In these calls, His Majesty was updated on the current situation and expressed his heartfelt thanks to the police and emergency services for all they are doing to restore peace in those areas that have been affected by violent disorder," the spokesperson said.

"Additionally, the King shared how he had been greatly encouraged by the many examples of community spirit that had countered the aggression and criminality from a few with the compassion and resilience of the many." "It remains His Majesty's hope that shared values of mutual respect and understanding will continue to strengthen and unite the nation," the spokesperson added.

It emerged that the monarch has also been holding private calls to be kept updated on the situation and expressed his "heartfelt" gratitude to the police and emergency services for their work to restore peace in the areas that have been affected by violent disorder. It comes as police forces across the UK remain on high alert amid fears of further unrest over the weekend.

Harris makes an immigration pitch : Trump looks to young voters

AP n GLENDALE

Vice President Kamala Harris drew on her prosecutorial background to make her first expansive pitch on immigration to border-state voters as she and her new running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, attracted thousands to a campaign rally in Arizona during their tour of battleground states. Harris, the former attorney general of California, reminded the crowd that she, as a law enforcement official, targeted transnational gangs, drug cartels and smugglers.

"I prosecuted them in case after case, and I won," Harris said in front of a crowd of more than 15,000 in Glendale, a suburb of Phoenix. "So I know what I'm talking about."

Harris promoted a border security bill that a bipartisan group of senators negotiated earlier this year, which Republican lawmakers ultimately opposed en masse at Republican nominee Donald Trump's debate.

"Donald Trump does not want to fix this problem," Harris said. "Be clear about that: He has no interest or desire to actually fix



the problem. He talks a big game about border security, but he does not walk the walk."

Her effort to address immigration — a political liability that has dogged Harris for most of her vice presidency — head-on in the critical battleground state is part of a broader push from her campaign to make gains in Sun Belt states that had become increasingly out of reach with Joe Biden at the top of the ticket.

Trump and his allies, who had long hampered Biden over the influx of migrants

during his term, are now shifting their attacks to Harris. Kari Lake, who is running against Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego for the open Senate seat in Arizona, bashes Gallego in a recent ad for supporting Biden's and Harris' "radical border agenda," featuring repeated clips of the vice president chortling.

"It's very easy for us to segue and switch our sights and focus on her," said Dave Smith, Pima County's Republican party chairman.

But Harris has been courting the state's fast-growing Latino population and released a new ad of her own, highlighting how Harris, the daughter of immigrants from India and Jamaica, rose to the highest echelons of American politics.

And, as she has done in other campaign stops, Harris during the rally infused the theme of "freedom" throughout her remarks, especially as it came to voting rights, gun safety, LGBT rights and access to abortion. "Arizona, ours is a fight for the future and it is a fight for freedom," Harris said, who had walked out on the stage as Beyonce's "Freedom" blared throughout Desert Diamond Arena.

AP n WEST PALM BEACH

As Donald Trump adjusts to the reality of his new race against Kamala Harris, his campaign is counting on younger male voters to give him the edge in November in a presidential contest they insist is his to lose. Trump and his Republican campaign now face a dramatically different race than the one just three weeks ago, before President Joe Biden abandoned his bid. While they acknowledge polls have tightened with Harris as the Democratic nominee, they maintain that the fundamentals of the race have not changed, with voters deeply sour over the direction of the country, and particularly the economy.

"What has happened is we are witnessing a kind of out-of-body experience where we have suspended reality for a couple of weeks," Trump campaign pollster Tony Fabrizio told reporters during a briefing in West Palm Beach on Thursday of the current state of the race.

It was a message echoed by Trump during a news conference at his Mar-a-Lago club. "The honeymoon period's gonna end," he insisted while minimising the size of the



crowds Harris has been drawing and lashing out at his new opponent. "Let me tell you: We have the enthusiasm."

Campaign officials acknowledge that Harris had energised the Democratic base and that her team has taken the lead on fundraising. But they insist they have more than enough to do what they need to win. Trump's campaign and its affiliates reported raising USD 138.7 million in July — far less than the eye-popping USD 310 million sum reported by Harris. Her campaign began August with more cash on hand.

With less than three months to go, senior campaign officials are focused on a group of persuadable voters that they believe is key to victory. The targets, which they say comprise about 11 per cent of the electorate in key battleground states, skew younger and are disproportionately male and moderate. While more than half are white, they include more nonwhites, especially Asians and Hispanics, than the broader electorate. They are especially frustrated by the economy, including their personal finances, and are pessimistic things will improve.

"It's a very narrow band of people that we are trying to move," Fabrizio said of the efforts. Since these voters don't engage with traditional news outlets and have traded cable for streaming services, the campaign has been working to reach them in novel ways. "There is a reason why we're doing podcasts. There is a reason why we're doing Adin Ross," Fabrizio said, referring to the controversial internet personality who ended his interview with the former president earlier this week by giving him a Tesla Cybertruck wrapped in images of Trump raising his fist after his assassination attempt.

Garment sector facing uncertainty due to Bangladesh crisis: Sitharaman

Normalcy may return soon, says FM

PTI n NEW DELHI

The Indian garment and knitted fabric sector is witnessing a bit of uncertainty due to the Bangladesh crisis, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday, expressing hope that the interim government there will settle things 'sooner rather than later.'

Interacting with the media on the sidelines of customary post Budget address to the central board of Reserve Bank of India, she said efforts are being taken to ensure that borders with the neighbouring country are safe.

With regard to Indian investments, she said, the textile industry particularly from Tamil Nadu has made investments there in good faith and they have done well having gone there.

"The exports from Bangladesh also increased because of the duty and quota



liberal approach that we have towards low-income countries. They (Indian garment industry based in Bangladesh) could even export to India."

Particularly, she said, the garment and knitted fabric sector is seeing a bit of uncertainty because of the crisis in the neighbouring country.

"I hope that the investments are all safe... It's too early for me to see what kind of an impact this situation in

government. The 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus 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.

On Friday, Bangladesh's interim leader Yunus announced the portfolios of his 16-member council of advisors and named a former top diplomat to head the foreign ministry.

The Nobel laureate's first task is to bring stability to Bangladesh after he responded to a call by student protesters for him to temporarily lead the country following weeks of deadly anti-government demonstrations against the government led by Sheikh Hasina.

Bangladesh will have on our economy. I hope that the interim government will settle things sooner rather than later so that both the people of Bangladesh and India can get back to normalcy," she said.

Earlier this week, Bangladesh plunged into a political crisis when Sheikh Hasina resigned as the Prime Minister and fled the country. Soon after Parliament was dissolved leading to the creation of an i n t e r i m

Sovereign green bonds trading at IFSC to begin in 2nd half of this fiscal: RBI Guv

PTI n NEW DELHI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Saturday said trading of sovereign green bonds can commence at the International Financial Services Centre in Gujarat during the second half of the current fiscal.

"We are in discussion with the IFSC, it will be operationalised very soon. I think in the second half (of the current financial year), it will be possible," Das said. In April, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had announced that it will issue a framework to enable the trading of sovereign green bonds in GIFT City.

The government has been raising funds through green bonds since 2022-23 and has raised a total of Rs 36,000 crore in the last two years.

So far in the current financial year, the government has raised only Rs 1,697 crore out of the stipulated Rs 12,000 crore scheduled to be raised in the first half ending in September through green bonds as it did not find favourable bids.

Asked about the tepid



response from investors to such bond issuance, Das said, "as the debt manager of the government, we are watchful of what exactly is happening and if something needs to be done we will interact with the government and deal with it."

He further said, one major announcement in this year's budget about developing a climate taxonomy.

"I think that will have a significant long-term impact on mobilisation of funds for the green sector, not only through green bonds but also overall

financing of the green sector," he said.

"We will develop a taxonomy for climate finance for enhancing the availability of capital for climate adaptation and mitigation. This will support achievement of the country's climate commitments and green transition," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said in her Budget speech for 2024-25.

Earlier in the day, Sitharaman addressed the board members in the post-budget 609th RBI's Central Board Meeting held here.

VA Tech WABAG Ltd secures repeat order from CMWSSB

PTI n CHENNAI

Water treatment player VA Tech WABAG Ltd has secured a repeat order of Rs 415 crore from the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, the company said on Saturday.

The order is towards the Operation and Maintenance of 110 million litres per day Sea Water Reverse Osmosis (SWRO) Desalination Plant at Nemmeli in Chennai for a period of 7 years, city-based VA Tech WABAG Ltd said.

VA Tech WABAG had bagged an Operation and Maintenance contract from the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) and it was completed in 2021.

In a BSE filing today, the company said, "CMWSSB floated a public tender for the Operation and Maintenance of the plant and WABAG secured this repeat order for Operating and Maintaining the plant for another 7 years."



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das during the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India in the customary post-Budget meeting, at Reserve Bank of India in New Delhi, on Saturday

Domestic food market expected to grow by over 47% to touch USD 1,274 bn: Report

PTI n CHENNAI

The domestic food market is expected to grow by over 47 per cent to reach USD 1,274 billion by 2027, a report released by the Confederation of Indian Industry and supported by Danfoss India said.

India's food processing industry sees innovative startups emerging with cutting-edge technology, the report titled 'Food Processing Sector in India - Potential for Southern States. And released by CII, CII FACE (Confederation of Indian Industry -- Food and Agriculture Centre of Excellence) and Danfoss India, said.

Danfoss India is a leader in heating, ventilation and air-conditioning and is the



subsidiary of Denmark-headquartered engineering major Danfoss.

Some of the key highlights of the report, which was released at the CII-FoodPro 2024 include the potential that southern states hold for food processing industry.

"Tamil Nadu leads India's export of processing fruits, juices and nuts, with a 33 per cent share by quantity and 27 per cent by value, exporting

2,08,370 metric tonnes worth USD 220.81 million in 2023-24," the report said.

The food processing industry in India sees innovative startups emerging with cutting-edge technology, the report said.

The study carries insights on emerging trends, technologies and export opportunities enabling businesses to make informed decisions and tap into the sector's potential

South India's food processing sector is on the cusp of a revolution, with innovative segments like millets, ready-to-eat and plant-based dairy alternatives unlocking a treasure trove of economic opportunities for farmers. The newly launched report reveals, technology holds the key to supercharging this growth, ensuring the highest standards of safety and quality and propelling India's exports onto the global stage," CII National Council for Cold Chain and Agri Logistics Chairman Ravichandran Purushothaman said.

"At Danfoss India, we are excited to be a part of this transformative journey, driving sustainable food processing solutions that will shape the future of Indian agriculture and food sector," he said in a statement on Saturday.

Banks should focus on their core business, bring innovative products to mobilise deposits: FM

PTI n NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday exhorted banks to focus on their core business and explore new ways to attract deposits, as household savings are increasingly shifting towards alternate investment products.

"Both RBI and the government have been asking banks to focus on their business activity... They should be aggressive in deposit mobilisation and then lend. That is the core activity of banks," she said.

Interacting with the media after her customary post Budget address to the central board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), she said there is mismatch between credit and deposit

growth presently. Stressing that banks should give emphasis on collecting deposits, she said, "RBI has given them some liberty in managing the interest rates. Using that liberty, they should make deposits attractive... Bring innovative products and mobilise deposits."

She also urged bankers to shun lazy banking and focus on small savers rather than big or bulk deposits.

"Trickles (small savings) are going to be your bread and butter, money to bank on... That trickle which was the emphasis long back, which kept nothing for the other side (big deposits). Now we've (banks) gone to the other side completely. Now they are chasing bulk deposits to meet their targets," she said.

But the requisite small deposit mobilisation is one of the very critical jobs of a bank, she said, adding "it might be grinding monotony, but that's where your bread and butter lies." Echoing a similar view, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said "we have been witnessing about 300 to 400 basis points gap between deposits and credit growth, deposits are lower.

"So at the moment, our effort is to highlight this point. It is kind of a proactive caution for the banks' management that going forward, this may create structural issues with regard to liquidity management. As it stands today, we don't see a crisis. But it has to be attended to."

Banks should leverage their



vast branch network to mobilise deposits through innovative means and products, he emphasised.

He further said interest rates are deregulated and often banks raise deposit rates to attract funds.

market."

RBI Governor while unveiling the bi-monthly monetary policy earlier in the week, also had expressed concern of deposit-lending mismatch in the banking sector.

He had said that banks were taking greater recourse to short-term non-retail deposits and other instruments of liability to meet the incremental credit demand.

This, he had warned, "may potentially expose the banking system to structural liquidity issues. Banks may, therefore, focus more on mobilisation of household financial savings through innovative products and service offerings and by leveraging fully on their vast branch

network."

Earlier in the day, Sitharaman addressed the central board of RBI on the sidelines of the 609th meeting of the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India here. She interacted with the directors in the Central Board, outlined the vision of the Union Budget 2024-25, its focus areas and the expectations from the financial sector.

The Finance Minister also underlined the priorities for 'Viksit Bharat'.

Sitharaman was accompanied by Minister of State Pankaj Chaudhary, T V Somanathan, Finance Secretary and Secretary, Department of Expenditure; Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary, Department of Investment

and Public Asset Management and other senior officials.

The Board also reviewed the global and domestic economic situation and outlook, including the challenges posed by geopolitical developments and global financial market volatility.

Deputy Governors Michael Debrabatra Patra, M Rajeshwar Rao, T Rabi Sankar, Swaminathan J and other Directors of the Central Board - Satish K Marathe, S Gurumurthy, Revathy Iyer, Sachin Chaturvedi, Anand Gopal Mahindra and Pankaj Ramanbhai Patel - attended the meeting.

Ajay Seth, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, also attended the meeting.

REC CMD honoured

PNS n GURUGRAM

Vivek Kumar Dewangan, IAS, CMD, REC Limited received 'Distinguished Fellow' Award at the 2024 Director's Conclave & 34th IOD Annual Day.

The Institute of Directors organised this event to recognise and honour the leadership and contribution of individuals in the corporate sector.

The 'Distinguished Fellow' Award was presented to Dewangan by the Union Minister of State (I/C) for Law & Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal, acknowledging his outstanding dedication and innovative approach towards leading REC Limited to new heights of success.

The award recognises Dewangan's visionary leadership towards fostering infrastructure growth and innovation, and promoting all round prosperity.



His contributions have further strengthened India's global position in the energy sector, it said.

Dewangan said, "I am humbled and honoured to receive the award. This accolade is a reflection of our collective ambition at REC to innovate and lead in the energy sector. It is a moment of pride for all of us, as it acknowledges our unwavering commitment to excellence and sustainability. I accept this award with a promise to continue our journey towards empowering a brighter, greener future for our nation."

Diversify ethanol production, Shah urges sugar mills

PTI n NEW DELHI

Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday called on sugar mills to explore alternatives to sugarcane for ethanol production, pushing for a multi-dimensional approach to biofuel manufacturing.

Speaking at an event organized by the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCFSF), Shah said India would achieve its 20 per cent ethanol blending target by 2025-26, ahead of the original 2030 deadline.

The minister highlighted that the government's ethanol blending programme has helped reduce the country's crude oil import bill and address environmental concerns.

"You need to be futuristic and



look at opportunities and expand. Ethanol can be made from multiple sources," Shah said, urging cooperative sugar mills to shed their "orthodox" approach and explore alternative feedstocks such as maize and bamboo.

Shah said about 1,000 crore litres of ethanol is required for blending, and the necessary infrastructure to achieve this target is in place.

He emphasised the need for

sugar mills to modernise and adopt new technologies, citing potential export opportunities once the Global Biofuels Alliance is established.

The minister challenged NFCFSF to expand its operations, suggesting the federation to set up one cooperative sugar mill for every three districts in four states within a year.

Shah also advised NFCFSF to hire professionals to guide loss-making cooperatives and set a target of increasing mills' annual turnover by 25 per cent in two years.

"We have a habit of working inefficiently and seeking help from the government. The government will be willing to help more if you work efficiently.Make a dynamic Federation, not a demand-

driven Federation," he added.

The push for diversification comes as India seeks to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and promote sustainable energy alternatives.

Shah also gave away the NFCFSF awards for best performing cooperative mills under different categories.

NFCFSF President Harshvardhan Patil said the sector faces several challenges and demanded an increase in the minimum selling price of sugar, the rates of B-Heavy molasses and sugar syrup used for ethanol making, and export of 10-20 lakh tonnes of sugar.

The federation is in the process of preparing a roadmap for the sector for the next ten years and is likely to be ready by September 5.

Amara Raja Group opens battery pack plant, lays foundation stone for cell manufacturing in T'gana

PTI n HYDERABAD

The Amara Raja Group on Saturday held a groundbreaking ceremony for their Customer Qualification Plant for cell manufacturing and inaugurated Phase 1 of the battery pack plant with a current capacity of 1.5 GWh in Mahabubnagar district of Telangana.

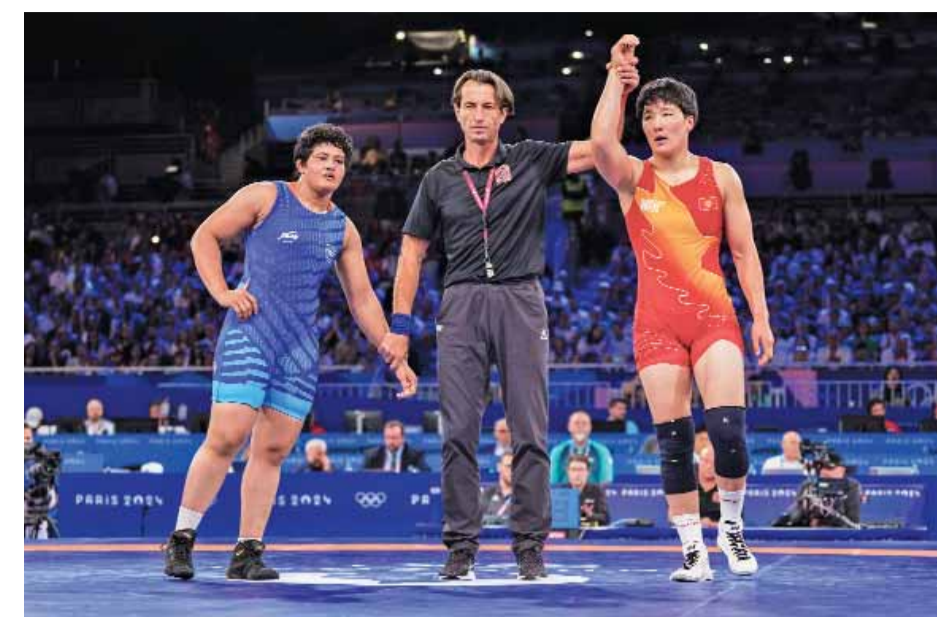
Amara Raja Advanced Cell Technologies (ARACT), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Amara Raja Energy & Mobility Limited (ARE&M), one of industrial and automotive battery majors, held the ceremony.

Along with the battery pack plant inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of the Customer Qualification Plant (CQP), Amara Raja signed a

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Piaggio.

The battery maker had earlier signed an MoU with the state government for setting up research and development and a greenfield manufacturing facility for Lithium-Ion battery-making in the state with an ultimate capacity up to 16 GWh and a Battery Pack Assembly unit up to 5 GWh with an investment of Rs 9,500 crore.

"The first phase of it (16 MWh), when we are getting to 8 to 10 GWh, we are planning to do it with our own internal accruals and borrowings. But to go beyond that, we need to raise money through equity," Jayadev Galla, Chairman and MD of ARE&M, told reporters in a press conference.



REETIKA LOSES QUARTER-FINAL BOUT AGAINST MEDET

PTI n PARIS

Indian wrestler Reetika Hooda lost a close quarter-final bout against Aiperi Medet Kyzy of Kyrgyzstan in the women's 76 kg freestyle category at the Paris Olympics here on Saturday. The wrestlers were locked 1-1 after six minutes of top-

quality defensive wrestling but the Kyrgyz won having logged home the last equalising point as per rules. Both wrestlers played a defensive game and the solitary point each was scored through passivity across the two periods. Reetika will now wait for Kyzy to enter the final which will

give her a shot at competing in the repechage round. If she doesn't then India's Paris Games campaign will end with six medals and without a gold. Earlier, Reetika displayed power and skill in equal measure while outclassing Bernadett Nagy of Hungary 12-2 in the pre-quarterfinals.

Chopra, Nadeem look to popularise javelin throw

PTI n PARIS

With their "healthy competition" on the field and "strong friendship" off it, javelin superstars Neeraj Chopra and Arshad Nadeem have set out to fulfil their common mission of inspiring youngsters of India and Pakistan and getting them hooked on the sport.

Nadeem won the men's javelin gold in the ongoing Paris Olympics with a stunning 92.97m throw — which was also an Olympic record — while Chopra, who was defending his title, took the silver with a season's best effort of 89.45m.

"It's already grown a lot. We're already seeing more talented javelin throwers in India. The same is happening in Pakistan," Chopra said when asked whether their success will lead to a boom in athletics in both India and Pakistan. "When we went to the Asian Games and Arshad couldn't compete due to a knee injury, his replacement, Yasir Sultan, threw very well. The medal Arshad just won will inspire more kids to follow, which is great," Chopra said on Jio Cinema. He was referring to last year's Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, where he had won a gold.

Asked whether the India-Pakistan rivalry will switch from cricket to javelin, Chopra said, "That'll be possible if we had more competitions like in cricket. We have two major competitions: the Olympics every four years and the World Championships every two years. "If we had more competitions, more



people would watch, like the Diamond League and some others," said the 26-year-old from Khandra village near Panipat.

The 27-year-old Nadeem also spoke about the significance of Pakistan and India winning gold and silver in Paris Olympics.

"I'm really happy. Out of the hundreds of countries participating, Pakistan and India have performed really well. Neeraj won gold at the (2023) World Championships in Budapest, and this is a golden moment for me," he said.

"Our friendship is really strong, and I wish it continues for a long time." Asked how many times he's watched the clip of his Olympic record throw that fetched him the gold, he said, "I've watched it a few times, and I feel I have the capacity to do even better. One day I hope I can showcase this capacity."

Chopra hoped that the competition with Nadeem would continue to grow. "It was a very healthy competition, with Arshad doing a great job and breaking the Olympic record. Big congratulations to him. I wish our

competition continues to be this strong. "We will keep working hard and give javelin support in our countries while motivating kids who may want to take up the sport."

On his efforts to breach the elusive 90m mark, Chopra said, "I've wanted to cross that mark since the 2018 Asian Games where I threw 88m. I feel like I'll cross 90m, but there are technical and injury reasons behind why I'm struggling to hit my maximum reach. "I have to work harder for that and keep myself fit."



Sreejesh a legend of hockey, will inspire next generation of players: Teammates

PTI n NEW DELHI

Just-retired India goalkeeper JPR Sreejesh is a legend of the game and will inspire the next generation of hockey players in the country, said his teammates on Saturday, after returning from Paris Olympics with a second successive bronze medal.

Olympic champions India clinched a bronze medal in Paris, beating Spain 2-1 in the play-off match. The last of India's Olympic hockey golds came in 1980.

"Sreejesh is the best person, a legend, and India calls him the 'Great Wall', amazing, that is all I can say he played his best hockey, and he has contributed to the country by playing hockey, and the standard he has set as a goalkeeper, it will inspire the next generation," forward Lalit Upadhyay said during a felicitation ceremony here. "I would like to thank the entire country because of the overwhelming support you have given to hockey, like the last time but even more so now, hockey is still in the hearts of people, they continue to love the sport and continue to support."

Lalit was also full of praise for inspirational skipper Harmanpreet Singh, who scored 10 goals to emerge as the highest scorer of the tournament.

"The country has given him (Harmanpreet) a new nickname (Sarpanch). I am glad that the country gave him this nickname, the ones who love hockey, as a great captain, he has shown his character and to be the top scorer of the Olympics is a big achievement. "He is a legend, there is much more to do now, and our vision is that we move forward and we can change the colour of the medal and achieve our dream." Lalit recollected the fighting spirit shown by the side against Great Britain in the quarterfinal when they were down to 10 men for more than 40 minutes of the match but eventually came out winners. "I would like to thank the coaching staff and all the players, we played like a cohesive unit and showed the character of the team, we had to give it our all, because in that moment we had no option to back down. That was the match and I cannot say more," he said.

Defender Jarmanpreet Singh wished Sreejesh luck following his retirement from hockey. "I do not need to say anything about Sreejesh, the entire country praises him and has seen him play, they all call him the 'Wall', he is a legend and a great player. I had a lot of fun playing hockey with him, and I wish Sreejesh continues to do good work for hockey," he said. He also praised skipper Harmanpreet's effort in the tournament.

"Harmanpreet is a goal machine of the team and we receive a lot of help from him he is the 'Sarpanch'." Jarmanpreet was happy with his own performance in his maiden Olympics. "I enjoyed myself at this year's Olympics, this was my first Olympics, and my target was to perform well for my team and the country.

Nadia breaks Africa's stranglehold on 10,000-metre podium

AP n SAINT-DENIS (FRANCE)

For three straight Olympics, nobody born outside of Africa had even come close to finishing on the podium in the women's 10,000 meters.

Italy's Nadia Battocletti ended that streak Friday night at the Paris Games, claiming silver in an event that had come to be dominated by Kenyans, Ethiopians and runners from those countries representing other nations.

Battocletti first served notice of her potential when she swept the 5,000 and the 10,000 at a home European Championships in June. But, there were no Africans in Rome.

During the 5,000 at these Games, when Battocletti finished fourth, the Africans realized how competitive she was.

Battocletti crossed fourth in that race, then was upgraded to

bronze when Kenya's Faith Kipyegon was disqualified for trading elbows with Gudaf Tsegay before Kipyegon had her bronze restored on appeal. "After the 5,000, they started greeting me, appreciating me. I received lots of compliments from the Kenyan and Ethiopian girls," Battocletti said. "I imagine they had a little bit of fear... I heard them talking in the last laps about who amongst them was about to sprint."

When Beatrice Chebet of Kenya burst ahead in the final 100 meters of the 25-lap race, Battocletti was the only one who could follow her. Chebet won in 30 minutes, 43.25 seconds to complete a sweep of the 5,000 and 10,000; Battocletti crossed second a mere 0.10 behind, and Ethiopian-born Dutch runner and defending champion Sifan Hassan was third, nearly a full



second back. "In the last 500-600 meters, I kept my eyes wide open and I told myself, 'Don't let them run away,'" Battocletti said. "I tried to be as smart as possible, like a fox." And to think, this was only the fourth time in her career that Battocletti has run a 10,000. She's only 24 and distance runners tend to mature later in their careers.

Battocletti's parents were both runners. Her father, Giuliano, competed for Italy at eight world cross-country championships. Her Moroccan mother, Jawhara Saddougui, specialized in the 800. Battocletti is from the mountainous region of Trentino amid the Dolomites Range, an area better known for snow sports and near some of the venues for the 2026

Milan-Cortina Winter Games. "The event that changed my life was the historic Ciaspolada della Val di Non, a snowshoe race that my father won for the third time in 2007," Battocletti said, thinking back to when she was six years old.

"The organizers told me that if I wanted to, I could symbolically run the final stretch with him. That allowed me to cross the first finish line of my life."

Beyond running, Battocletti also studies architecture, building and construction engineering at the University of Trento. Before the 10,000, Battocletti taped up one of her ankles due to an Achilles tendon issue. But, the tape peeled off as the race wore on and was dragging around her spikes. "At a certain point, I felt like I was skating," she said. "Then at the end, I heard the stadium exploding in celebration."

Tamirat wins men's marathon to end Kenya dominance

AP n PARIS

Ethiopian runner Tamirat Tola won the men's marathon at the Paris Olympics to end Kenya's dominance of the race.

Tola finished in an Olympic record time of 2 hours, 6 minutes, 26 seconds, with Belgium's Bashir Abdi finishing 21 seconds behind and Benson Kipruto taking bronze for Kenya, 34 seconds back.

Tola looked back as he neared the line and had time to soak up the applause. Two-time defending champion Eliud Kipchoge struggled throughout was more than eight minutes behind Tola. The last non-Kenyan to win was Ugandan Stephen Kiprotich at the London Games in 2012.

Brazil beats Canada in tense three-set women's beach volleyball

AP n PARIS

Not even a tense tête-à-tête in the gold medal game could spoil the vibe at Paris' biggest beach party.

Canada's Brandie Wilkerson and Brazil's Ana Patricia got into a finger-pointing shouting match across the net in the tiebreaking third set of the beach volleyball final of the Paris Olympics on Friday night. The referee tried to keep the peace, but it was the Eiffel Tower Stadium DJ who cooled tempers on the sand by playing John Lennon's "Imagine" over the PA system.

The players laughed and clapped. The crowd applauded and sang along. Wilkerson was shown a yellow card.

The top-ranked Brazilians left with the gold medal. "Were competitors and we are fighting for the same thing: There's only one gold medal," Wilkerson said during a post-match news conference in which the two laughed and jokingly put up their fists as if



they were going to brawl it out. "Immediately after the game, it's all love and respect," she said. "We bring out the best in each other, and I'm honored to play against this team." Ana Patricia and Duda rallied from an 11-5 deficit to take the first-to-21, win-by-two first set 26-24, and Canada won the second 21-12. Brazil opened up a 12-7 lead in the first-to-15 tiebreaker when, after a joust at the net, Wilkerson and Ana Patricia began pointing fingers at each other.

The second referee, the one at

sand level, moved out to separate the two players, but Wilkerson continued to argue and picked up a yellow card. As the Brazilians got into position to serve for the next point, the DJ began playing "Imagine," the late Beatle's song calling for unity and peace. The message resonated with the players. "What a beautiful opportunity we have to play the finals under the Eiffel Tower against the best in the world," Wilkerson said. "Like, that, in of itself, is a win."

Wilkerson told reporters afterward that it was all a misunderstanding: She was responding to her family, cheering in the crowd behind the Brazilians, and Ana Patricia thought Wilkerson was taunting her.

"We're pretty amped up, partners are coming in, refs are coming in. So it was a bit of a mess," Wilkerson said. "But after the game, and even right when they came to shake our hands, still on the court, there was an immediate hug and just kind of like, Hey, it's all good."

When play resumed, it took Brazil only five more points to finish off Wilkerson and Melissa Humana-Paredes, kicking off a party the sport's spiritual home hadn't seen since hosting the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games at Copacabana. In Tokyo, the country was shut out at the Summer Games for the first time since beach volleyball was added to the program in 1996.

Three years later, Brazil not only returned to the podium but climbed to its top step.



Boxer Imane wins gold

AP n PARIS

Algerian boxer Imane Khelif has won a gold medal Friday at the Paris Olympics, emerging a champion from a tumultuous run at the Games where she endured intense scrutiny in the ring and online abuse from around the world over misconceptions about her womanhood. Khelif beat Yang Liu of China 5:0 in the final of the women's welterweight division, wrapping up the best series of fights of her boxing career with a victory at Roland Garros, where crowds chanted her name, waved Algerian flags and roared every time she landed a punch.

After her unanimous win, Khelif jumped into her coaches' arms, one of them putting her on his shoulders and carrying her in a victory lap as she pumped her fists and grabbed an Algerian flag from the crowd.

"For eight years, this has been my dream, and I'm now the Olympic champion and gold medalist," Khelif said through an interpreter. Asked about the scrutiny, she told reporters: "That also gives my success a special taste because of those attacks."

"We are in the Olympics to perform as athletes, and I hope that we will not see any similar attacks in future Olympics,"

she said. Fans have embraced Khelif in Paris even as she faced an extraordinary amount of scrutiny from world leaders, major celebrities and others who have questioned her eligibility or falsely claimed she was a man. It has thrust her into a larger divide over changing attitudes toward gender identity and regulations in sports.

It stems from the Russian-dominated International Boxing Association's decision to disqualify Khelif and fellow two-time Olympian Li Yu-ting of Taiwan from last year's world championships, claiming both failed an eligibility test for women's competition that IBA officials have declined to answer basic questions about.

"I'm fully qualified to take part in this competition," Khelif said Friday. "I'm a woman like any other woman. I was born as a woman, I live as a woman, and I am qualified." The International Olympic Committee took the unprecedented step last year of permanently banning the IBA from the Olympics following years of concerns about its governance, competitive fairness and financial transparency. The IOC has called the arbitrary sex tests that the sport's governing body imposed on the two boxers irretrievably flawed.

Netherlands defends women's hockey title

AP n COLOMBES (FRANCE)

The Netherlands defended its title in Olympic women's field hockey, rallying from an early deficit to beat China 2-1 in a shootout in the final at the Paris Games on Friday night.

The victory followed the Dutch men's team taking gold a day earlier. The Netherlands became the first country to sweep the field hockey medals at the Games since the women's tournament was added in 1980.

Much like the men, the women did so surrounded by a sea of orange, with Dutch fans filling Yves-du-Manoir Stadium and making for a festive atmosphere. Also like the men, it did not happen easily. The Netherlands fell behind 5:54 in when a defensive lapse in front



allowed Chen Yi to redirect Dan Wen's setup past goalkeeper Anne Veenendaal. After trailing for just six minutes all tournament until the final, the Dutch generated plenty of quality chances through three quarters, including Frederique Malta ringing one penalty corner shot off the left post and missing wide right on another.

Yibbi Jansen tied it with 9:11 left in regulation by scoring on a penalty corner, setting off cheering, flag-waving and jumping in the stands. Pien Sanders, Maria Verschoor and Marijn Veen scored in the shootout to spark what could be an all-night party for the Dutch players and their fans. The second of back-to-back Olympic titles came with former coach Alyson Annan on the other side with China.

Annan, an Australian native who guided the Netherlands to gold in Tokyo in 2021, abruptly stepped down in early 2022 after a Royal Dutch Hockey Association investigation into team culture under her watch following complaints from players.

The Netherlands improved to 21-0 against China over the past decade, with 15 of those wins being by multiple goals. Argentina took home women's field hockey bronze after beating Belgium in a penalty shootout. Argentina medaled for a second consecutive Games, taking silver in Tokyo for losing to the Netherlands in the final. "It's crazy," Argentina goalkeeper Cristina Cosentino said. "We're very happy."

WRESTLER AMAN SEHRAWAT BECOMES INDIA'S YOUNGEST OLYMPIC MEDALLIST

PTI n PARIS

Grappler Aman Sehrawat became India's youngest ever Olympic medallist by clinching the 57kg free-style category bronze less than a month after his 21st birthday to complete a memorable Games debut and lift the sagging spirits of the controversy-hit national wrestling contingent here on Friday.

Sehrawat, who turned 21 on July 16, notched up a commanding 13-5 win over Puerto Rico's Darian Cruz in a high-intensity third-place contest.

Before him, the celebrated P V Sindhu held the title of being India's youngest Olympic podium finisher after she claimed a silver in the 2016 Games at the age of 21 years, one month and 14 days.

Sehrawat has not even completed a month since turning 21. His effort helped India win its sixth medal and move closer to the Tokyo Games tally of seven. The country has so far secured one silver and five bronze, including today's medal.

"It's been a long time since I won a medal for my country. I had to do something about it.

I would like to say to the people of India that I will definitely win a gold for you in 2028," the youngster, who was raised by his grandfather after losing his parents as a child, said after his triumph.

"The target was gold but I had to be content with bronze this time. I had to forget the semifinal defeat. I told myself, let it go and focus on next. Sushil pahlawan ji won two medals, I will win in 2028 and then in 2032 also," he added enthusiastically.

The U-23 world champion was the lone Indian male wrestler to qualify for the Paris Games and he did not disappoint. Wrestling has not missed a medal at the Olympics since 2008 and Sehrawat's effort ensured the streak remained unbroken.

Sushil Kumar broke the glass ceiling by winning the bronze in Beijing (2008), and since then Yogeshwar Dutt (2012), Sakshi Malik (2016), Ravi Dahiya and Bajrang Punia (2021) have kept the tradition intact.

Coach Jagmender Singh and Virender Dahiya said they spent a sleepless night to monitor Sehrawat's weight.

"We took special precautions to reduce his weight. We kept checking his weight every

WINS 57KG FREE-STYLE BRONZE IN PARIS



hour. We didn't sleep the whole night," Dahiya said.

LIFTS SPIRITS OF WRESTLING CONTINGENT: A lot was expected from women wrestlers but Antim Panghal (53kg), Anshu Malik (57kg), and Nisha Dahiya (68kg) could not reach the medal rounds in their respective categories.

On the other hand, Vinesh Phogat (50kg) lost despite entering the final as she was disqualified from the gold-medal bout for being 100gm overweight.

The disqualification led to a huge uproar in the country and Vinesh has challenged her ouster in the ad-hoc division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). The hearing concluded on Friday and a decision is expected by Sunday evening.

Teenager Panghal also landed herself in trouble for sending her sister to the Games Village on her accreditation card. She was deported along with her entourage on Thursday after a first-round loss.

SHOWS OFF AGGRESSIVE MOVES: It was a fast-paced bout with quick moves from the two rival wrestlers.

Once Sehrawat got a measure of his opponent, he did not give much of a chance to the

Puerto Rican. He built a healthy 6-3 lead by the end of first period with consecutive takedown moves. As is usually the case, Sehrawat, who thrives on a high-endurance game, first tried to wear down his opponent and then went for the kill.

With dominating technical-superiority wins over Vladimir Egorov and Zelimkhan Abakarov, the Indian wrestler stormed into the semifinals without conceding a single point but was no match for Japan's Rei Higuchi in the semifinals.

TOUGH BEGINNING: Having lost his parents at a tender age of 12, the famed Chhatrasal stadium — where his father had enrolled him in 2013 — became Sehrawat's second home.

The stadium that became his shelter was the one gave India four Olympic medallists — Sushil Kumar, Yogeshwar Dutt, Bajrang Punia and Ravi Dahiya.

And Sehrawat ensured that he joined the roll of honour as the youngest among the giants who did it before him.

Reetika Hooda (76kg) will be in action on Saturday, and if she wins a medal, India will match its Tokyo tally.



Upton and boot camp with Mike toughened us mentally before Olympics: Harmanpreet

PTI n NEW DELHI

From conceding goals under pressure to becoming mentality monsters, who pulled off clutch moments in the Olympics for a second successive bronze.

The Indian men's hockey team has come a long way and captain Harmanpreet Singh credits mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton and a three-day boot camp with Swiss adventurer Mike Horn for the fortitude that his players displayed during the campaign in Paris.

"Yes, definitely, the mental toughness of this side is totally different. We are a united bunch and we backed each other and motivated each other when chips were down," Harmanpreet told PTI after returning to the country on Saturday.

"From first to last (game), we played as a unit and backed each other in search of the gold medal. Definitely Paddy Upton has a big role to play in this. Even the three-day camp with Mike Horn before the Olympics made our bond more strong. So mentally we were in a good space," he added.

Upton, who has previously also worked with the 2011 World Cup-winning Indian cricket team, came on board in June last year.

It was his idea to have a camp with Horn before the team made its way to Paris. The three-day stay in Switzerland included activities like walking on a glacier with harnesses, cycling, climbing and rappelling down waterfalls.

The exercises were meant to foster team spirit and build a strong bond of trust among players.

Harmanpreet said all of it helped when the team was faced with nervous situations like the quarterfinal against Britain in which it played with 10 men for more than 40 minutes after Amit Rohidas was red-carded for dangerous

Women's Olympic marathon in Paris records a 1st by running last instead of men's race

AP n PARIS

There was a time, not that long ago, when those in charge of the Olympics thought it was too dangerous for women to run a marathon.

On Sunday, in a break with tradition that stamps an exclamation point on how much has changed over the last 40 years, the women, not the men, will have the honour of closing out the Olympic track meet with the traditional 26.2-mile run.

Organizers of the Paris Games are using the Sunday women's marathon as another way to highlight the conquering of a long-sought benchmark at the Olympics; these are the first Summer Games to have an equal number of men and women competing.

In another nod to the historical significance of the moment, the marathon route traces the steps of the Women's March on Versailles.

That was a seminal moment during the French Revolution when women in a Paris marketplace organized a march to Versailles to bring their complaints to King Louis XVI over the high price of bread.

Joan Benoit won the 1st Olympic marathon Watching all this with interest will be Joan Benoit Samuelson, who won the first Olympic marathon, which wasn't run until the Los Angeles Games in 1984.

"All these years later, all these centuries later, women are again tracing routes that changed the course of history, and in this case, certainly for the positive," Samuelson said in an interview with The Associated Press.

For years, before Samuelson's history-making marathon, women were restricted to races of 800 meters or less. The 1,500 was added in 1972.

Some of the arguments against women running longer distances included the idea that they couldn't handle the psychological stress of long races, and also that the taxing runs could cause infertility.

In 1966, Roberta Gibb, after being denied entry into the Boston Marathon, hid behind a bush near the start line and ran the course.

Not until 1972 were women officially allowed in Boston, and it was another



12 years before the Olympics joined in. Carey Pinkowski, the executive race director for the Chicago Marathon, said that when he began working with the race in 1990, around 5% of participants were women. He said that now, 50% of the field for Chicago's race is made up of women.

JOAN BENOIT RAN THE HIGHWAYS OF LA FOR THE FIRST MARATHON GOLD: In 1984, the women's marathon took place on the first Sunday of the Olympic track meet, not the last. The route ran from Santa Monica and went mostly along freeway routes before ending at the LA Coliseum.

Samuelson, then known as Joan Benoit, was the world record holder, but not a favourite because she was coming off knee surgery.

Her main competition was the reigning world champion, Grete Waitz. Benoit started fast, finished strong, ran the distance in two hours, 24 minutes, 52

seconds and secured her mark in history as the first women's Olympic marathon winner.

"I sort of lived by the adage, Run your own race" since that time," Samuelson said. "You can't run anybody else's race in life but your own."

BILES AND LEDECKY SHINED, AND NOW A WOMAN MARATHONER GETS CENTER STAGE: In an Olympics, in which Simone Biles, Sha'Carri Richardson and Katie Ledecky dominated the headlines, and where a toxic debate over gender in women's sports drove a good portion of the hard news, women will own the spotlight to close out the track meet, the traditional centrepiece of the Games.

"That means most of the people will be watching as they wait for closing ceremonies," said two-time Olympic 5,000-meter silver medalist Hellen Obiri, the Kenyan standout who is the favourite and is drawing her own new

audience as the subject of a documentary titled "The Heart to Race" that's produced by the sportswear company "On."

"It's a great opportunity for millions of people to watch you. That's on your mind. I want to work extra hard to make these people happy."

Obiri and the other 91 women, who entered the race, will find this journey through Parisian history to be far from an easy stroll.

The course is a bruising run, filled with winding inclines that reach grades as steep as 13.5% and is viewed as the most difficult the Olympics has seen. There were times on Saturday when the men, struggling to negotiate the hills, looked like they were jogging.

"It is simply the toughest course that's ever been for a major championship, and we believe that makes it the most interesting of tactical races," said Jon Ridgeon, the former sprinter who is CEO of World Athletics. "I think for the athletes, it makes it more unpredictable. It's going to be a fascinating mindset."

FOR SIFAN HASSAN, THE MARATHON WILL BE HER THIRD RACE OF THE OLYMPICS: If only the decision-makers from a generation ago — the leaders who thought women were too fragile to run long distances — could see what Sifan Hassan is doing this week.

Not 48 hours after winning the bronze medal in the 10,000 meters for her second distance bronze of the Paris Games, Hassan, the Ethiopian-born runner who competes for the Netherlands, will trade the track at the Stade de France for the brutal marathon course.

She also ran two 5,000-meter races and finished third in the final there. If Hassan can wind her way through this hilly tour of French history, then finally past the Esplanade des Invalides and across the finish line, she will have run more than 62 kilometres over nine days — more than any person, man or woman, at the Paris Games.

If she wins a medal, she will duplicate her feat from the Tokyo Games, when she won three medals in three distance events. That time, she ran the 1,500, not the marathon.

"Endurance on Sunday, that's not a joke," Hassan said.

Refugee breaker Manizha Talash, or "b-girl Talash," was disqualified from the first-ever Olympic breaking competition on Friday, after she wore a cape that said "Free Afghan Women" during her pre-qualifier battle against India Sardjoe — known as "b-girl India."

The 21-year-old, originally from Afghanistan and representing the Olympic Refugee, team lost in the pre-qualifier battle against Sardjoe, and would not have advanced even if she hadn't been disqualified.

Political statements and slogans are banned on the field of play and on podiums at the Olympics. World DanceSport Federation, the governing body for breaking at the Olympics, issued a statement afterward that said she "was disqualified for displaying a political slogan on her attire during the Pre-Qualifier battle."

Talash sought asylum in Spain after fleeing Taliban rule in her home country in 2021.

"I'm here because I want to reach my dream. Not because I'm scared," she told The Associated Press before the Olympics from Spain, where she was granted asylum.

The one-off pre-qualifier battle between Talash and Sardjoe was added in May, when Talash was included in the Olympic roster after the b-girl from Afghanistan missed registration for qualifying events. The International Olympic Committee's executive board invited her to participate after learning of her efforts to defy the strict rule of the Taliban in her home country.

Afghan refugee breaker disqualified for wearing 'Free Afghan Women' cape at Paris Olympics

AP n PARIS

India batter Mandeep moves to Tripura from Punjab ahead of upcoming domestic season

PTI n NEW DELHI

Indian batter Mandeep Singh on Saturday announced that he will play for Tripura in the upcoming domestic season, ending his 14-year stint with Punjab.

Mandeep played three T20 Internationals for India in 2016 against Zimbabwe.

"I have had the most amazing journey at PCA from junior level all the way to senior level whilst also having the best fortune of being the Winning Captain of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy for 2023-2024," Mandeep wrote in Instagram.

"However, after a lot of deliberation, I think it's time for me to open a new chapter in my career. I have decided that now is the right time to go ahead and play cricket for Tripura in the upcoming domestic season," he added in the social media post.



The 32-year-old thanked Punjab association and former cricketers Yuvraj Singh and Harbhajan Singh for the "constant support."

"I want to extend my appreciation to Dilsher Khanna, secretary of PCA, Yuvraj Singh and Harbhajan Singh, for their constant support

throughout the years. I would also like to thank the members of PCA Management and to the staff that have been by my side over the years," he said.

Mandeep said he wanted to achieve many more milestones with Tripura. "I am excited for the new beginnings at Tripura and to celebrate the many milestones and achievements that are yet to come," he added.

Mandeep made his debut for Punjab in 2010, and the experienced batter's presence will come handy for Tripura after wicketkeeper batter Wriddhiman Saha moved back to Bengal prior to the upcoming season.

Mandeep has made 6448 runs from 99 matches at an average of 47.76, including 15 centuries with a top score of 235.

Besides Mandeep, Tripura will also have the services of former Punjab batter Jiwanjot Singh this season.

LOST

It is an information of all concern that the sale deed bearing No -1122, dt -06.05.1996, which was executed by Kanhu charan Samal & Surendra nath Baral in the office of the Sub Registrar, Dharmasala in favour during my taransit from Pandua to Jaraka bazar on dt - 25.06.2024 the above R S D was missing on the way after thorough search the sale deed is not traceable. If any body found the said sale deed, please contact to Ambuja Kumar Sahu, At-Pandua, P/o- Jaraka, Dist -Jajpur. Mob- 7008073500.

"There are so many roads you can take that will lead you the wrong way, that nobody will hear your name"
— Maria Sharapova



DELHI-DEHRADUN EXPRESSWAY DEVELOPMENT ALONG WITH DAMAGE?

The Delhi-Dehradun Expressway project, nearing completion, is expected to be an example for the world with the longest wildlife corridor in Asia. It will cut the travel time between the two cities to 2.5 hours but apprehensions remain about its impact, writes **PARITOSH KIMOTHI**

Uttarakhand has for long been a popular destination for pilgrims and tourists. While Haridwar is a major pilgrimage centre in the plains, the provisional State capital Dehradun hosts a number of prominent national-level institutions including the Survey of India and Indian Military Academy along with famous educational institutions, apart from being the gateway to the popular hill station of Mussoorie and other tourism activities especially in the mountainous regions of Garhwal in the State. Apart from long weekends and special occasions, the summer months frequently witness a large number of people arriving here especially from Delhi-NCR. Similarly, snowfall in the nearby hills also attracts a number of tourists from neighbouring regions. At present, people travel between Delhi and Dehradun/Haridwar by road, train or by air. The time taken to travel between Doon and the national Capital by road ranges from five to seven hours depending on the time when one travels and the location one is going to. Similarly, it takes about five to six hours by train and though the flight takes 40 minutes to one hour, one may spend more than an additional hour to get to the destination from the airport. This scenario is expected to be changed drastically in the near future with the completion of the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway project of the National Highways Authority of India. The completion of this 212-kilometre six-lane access controlled expressway with a project cost of Rs 14,000 crore, which is in its final stage of construction, will drastically cut down the travel time between Delhi and Dehradun/Haridwar to 2.5 hours. This expressway is also expected to be an example for the world as it also features a 13.8 kilometre elevated road, making it Asia's longest wildlife corridor. The authorities involved in the project state that the

“THE DEHRADUN-BASED WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA (WII) SET UP 80 CAMERA TRAPS ON THIS STRETCH AND STUDIED WILDLIFE MOVEMENT HERE FOR THREE MONTHS. THE MOVEMENT OF ABOUT 40 TO 50 DIFFERENT WILDLIFE SPECIES RANGING FROM DEER AND WILD BOAR TO LEOPARDS AND ELEPHANTS WAS ASCERTAINED HERE IN THIS DURATION. AS PART OF THE EXPRESSWAY PROJECT, THE AUTHORITIES WILL ALSO WORK ON AN ECO-RESTORATION PLAN.”



stretch where the elevated road has been built has Rajaji National Park on the one side and the Shivalik Wildlife Reserve on the other. An average of 35,000 vehicles pass daily through this stretch. Widening the existing stretch of the highway between Ganeshpur in the Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh and Asharodi in Dehradun would have been cheaper but might have ended causing more environmental damage and exacerbating human-wildlife conflict. Widening the existing highway would have entailed the cutting of about 1.5 lakh trees while about 11,000 trees had to be cut for building the elevated road. The Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII) set up 80 camera traps on this stretch and studied wildlife movement here for three months. The movement of about 40 to 50 different wildlife species ranging from deer and wild boar to leopards and elephants was ascertained here in this duration. As part of the expressway project, the authorities will also work on an eco-restoration plan. Further, budget

has been allocated for the WII to place cameras on the 550 pillars to study wildlife movement on this corridor for a period of five years. Similarly, the Forest Research Institute (FRI) in Dehradun will undertake a three-year Sal tree regeneration project in this area to enhance the environment. According to officials involved in the project, the elevated stretch is expected to mitigate human-wildlife conflict and also prove beneficial for the wildlife and environment. At present, the longest such wildlife corridor in India is about eight kilometres long and is located in Pench, connecting Madhya Pradesh with Maharashtra. While this project promises to bring about drastic changes not just in Dehradun and Haridwar but also in Delhi, there are many who have apprehensions about the impacts of this major development. Dehradun-based anthropologist and heritage expert Lokesh Ohri says that the project will certainly have benefits but questioned whether Dehradun and Mussoorie are prepared for what is to come. “The opening of

this expressway will practically turn Dehradun into a part of the NCR like Ghaziabad or Faridabad. The flood of visitors has already converted Rishikesh into a trap for the locals who struggle to move around the city through traffic congestion resulting from the rush of tourists, who in turn also face the problem. The pressure on the forest wealth of this region and real estate will also increase after the expressway becomes functional. Though such projects do benefit all, the focus should also have been on ensuring that the locals benefit more. Apart from this, the authorities here do not seem to have taken any measures to prevent the negative impacts the project will have on Dehradun and Mussoorie,” he said.

Human rights lawyer Reenu Paul who had also challenged the Ganeshpur-Asharodi stretch of the project in the Uttarakhand High Court for conservation of the Shivalik ecosystem, opined that damage to the Shivalik range will cause considerable damage to the

environment and climate of the Doon Valley. She points out, “The Shivaliks play a vital role in insulating the Doon Valley against high winds, heat, dust and pollutants from the plains on the south western side of the valley. In the Gazetteers of Dehradun published in 1910, HG Walton had remarked that the climate of Dehradun differs from the plains owing to its elevation, while the wooded range of the Shivalik partly suppress and partly moisten the scorching winds that blow during the hot weather in the plains. Apart from this, the project doesn't appear to be sustainable as the hillocks of the Shivalik are highly eroding. The tributaries of the Ganga river including Mohan Rao, Sukh Rao, Saloni and Chilla Rao have also been disturbed and obstructed, disturbing the hydrology of the area. The wildlife corridor has also been fragmented,” she opined. The authorities are confident that the opening of the Delhi-Dehradun expressway will not only enhance public convenience by drastically cutting down the travel time, but also boost economic activities further in the region. Infrastructural development is a major focus of the Union government and is a vital requirement for achieving the desired level of economic progress and public welfare. On the other hand, many in Dehradun remain sceptical about the impacts this project will have. The once green and serene Doon Valley has witnessed a considerable drop in greenery and rise in congestion and pollution in recent years. The city's existing infrastructure struggles to meet the requirements of the locals and visitors as factors like congestion and inadequate parking space have impacted the very character of Doon and life here. Expected to be completed in the next couple of months, the opening of the expressway for traffic is sure to bring about drastic changes. However, only time will tell the real cost of this major development.

CHARMING COONNOOR PROMISES A TRANQUIL RETREAT!

Inhaling the scents of fresh blooms, sipping freshly brewed tea, I witnessed sunrise magic from the folds of Nilgiris, sitting in the garden of the charming villa, The Xanadu in Coonnoor. Here I sealed every moment as the celebration of Nature

BY SHARMILA CHAND

Tucked at the edge of a cliff, the villa is my home for three days with a magnificent view of the rolling Nilgiri hills, tea plantations and the plains below. I tell my friend, Aparna Bharathan, the humble owner of this pretty home, that I have 'checked in and breathing out'. She bursts into laughter as that exactly is the tagline she has chosen for her Xanadu chain of premium, fully serviced vacation rental villas. For me, a trip to Coonnoor is essentially to relish slow travel without ticking off 'must do' list. Hence, a game of Jenga or Monopoly in the plush living room while watching the pitter patter of raindrops, is luxury. There is a whiff of pleasant aroma in the room, I can't resist and peep into the kitchen where Ganga Ram is busy making rasam and lemon rice. He is little more generous in using curry leaves in tadka, and that makes me impatient to have the meal. By now, Ganga has spoilt me thoroughly with several glasses of cutting chai and delicious food.



plains shimmering below. This is luxury for me. The weather throughout the day plays its own hide and seek, the clouds enveloping the hills in a stroke of misty white and next moment letting the hills magically appear in the famous 'Nilgiri' blue haze.

NILGIRIS ENDOWED WITH UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY

The Nilgiri mountains stretch over the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, connecting Western Ghats with the Eastern Ghats. Located at the convergence of both Ghats, lends Nilgiris vibrant flora and fauna. From Evergreen forests

and lowland Savannas to lush Shola grassland, enchanting flora encompasses the region. Various endangered species including Nilgiri Langur thrive here. What I love is the heady fragrance of cypress, eucalyptus and pine. The soft purple haze of my favourite jacaranda trees keeps my eyes longing for more. I can't get over seeing magnificent trees of Pont Setia, the same festive plant with bold red leaves we have in small pots during Christmas time. And then the lush mosanda in white and pink, another favourite of mine that seems to be calling me back soon!

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY - THE TODAS

It is said that Toda community settled here around 3500 years ago, thus the oldest inhabitants of the region. Known for their pastoral way of life and vegetarian lifestyle, the Todas have a distinct identity. Every aspect of their life, including their artistic skills, are inspired by nature. The traditions they follow further prove how nature is significant in their lifestyle. I was told by locals that during an infant's naming ceremony, the grandfather uncovers the child's face out in the open air for the first time, showing various elements of nature - the rising sun, the birds, the cows, buffaloes etc. I visited one Toda

village and saw women busy at their art work. Their embroidery represents an ancient art form and has been granted a GI patent by The Government.

A CUP THAT CHEERS!

Visiting Nilgiris and not taking a trip to a tea plantation, is unfair. Though you see the sweeping vistas of carpets of tea all around, blooming on the slopes as far as eye can see, but experiencing a walk through the plantation and completing it with tea tasting, is a beautiful outstanding experience. And who can do this better than Sandeep Subramani, a fourth generation tea planter and founder of Tranquillitea which runs a chain of experiential boutique holidays in the Nilgiris and conducts a highly acclaimed gourmet tea tasting experience in their estate in Coonnoor called the 'Cups That Cheer'.

Sandeep takes one and half hour glorious session on tea which is full of stories, facts and secrets. One secret he tells with great pride and a smile - "The Nilgiris has the world's highest tea estates. At around 8000 feet there is simply no other place on earth that grows tea as a plantation crop as high as in the Nilgiris. Darjeeling, the region that makes the other famous Indian tea has its highest tea estates at just over



6000 feet. Let me explain why tea doesn't grow at such heights anywhere else. The weather is generally too cold for tea to grow at these elevations. However, the geographical location of the Nilgiris provides the perfect temperature band through the winter months, for tea to grow even at these heights. Talking about temperature, tea thrives between 13° C and 30° C and we are always within that range. Though night-time temperatures in winter can drop below 13° C, day temperatures are always within the optimum range. This results in a tea that is intensely flavourful and typically floral in nature," he concludes.

INTERESTING ATTRACTIONS TO VISIT

Though I am contented to luxuriate in the comfort of home Xanadu, but for those discerning travelers who might like to have a sightseeing plan, here are few top things to do in Coonnoor.

Dolphin's Nose Point — Located at an altitude of 1,500, it is set amidst the rolling hills, the tip of the peak of the enormous rock resembles the nose of a dolphin hence the name Dolphin's Nose. Gigantic ravines are on both sides of the place offering a view of inspiring Catherine Falls.

Lamb's Rock - enjoy fascinating



views of the valley at this vantage point with jagged rock that drops down several hundred feet to bury itself in the luxuriant jungle below. The place got its name after Captain Lamb who attempted to open a path to this place.

Droog Fort — The historical Droog Fort at an altitude of about 6000 feet above the lush plains, is said to be used by Tipu Sultan as an outpost. To reach this place, one has to go up to Nonsuch Estate and trek down for about 4 kms. According to locals' tales, the fort is linked with the legend of a local demon, Bakasura. Due to this, it is also called Bakasura Malai by the natives.

Sim's Park — Spend sometime in the park which was developed around the natural contours of the land by JD Sims and Major Murray in the year of 1874. Spread over 30 acres of land, the park was started as a pleasure resort for the residents and visitors, and later developed into garden. It has wonderful landscaped gardens & walkways lined up with beautiful flowers spread across, also a lake inside the park that offers boating facility as well.

KETTI VALLEY

Embark on the toy train to enjoy this beautiful valley. It is also famous for bird watching and trekking. You can also visit the famous Shiva Lingam temple here.

GOURMET CHEESE

Coonnoor is now also famous for selling gourmet cheese. You can take a tour of cheese farms or simply visit a popular old store Nilgiris Store or 'Baker's Junction' just 100 m from Bedford circle.

SHOPPING

Shopping in Coonnoor is pretty good. From pretty embroidered shawls, apparels, Toda jewellery and handicrafts items to natural oils, fruit jams, homemade chocolates and of course, the huge variety of tea, shopping here is really good. Spend at least a week, soak in fresh crisp mountain air and come back rejuvenated till you return to the spectacular queen of hills.

Sharmila Chand is an author and journalist who writes on Travel, Food, Culture and Lifestyle.



EXPLORING PARADISE

A journey through the pristine beauty of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Nestled in the azure waters of the Bay of Bengal, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a tropical haven that offers a perfect blend of natural beauty, vibrant marine life, and rich cultural heritage, writes SANTANU GANGULY

Every Indian should visit the Andaman Islands at least once in their lifetime to complete their journey. The Andaman Islands offer an incredible blend of natural beauty, historical significance, wildlife, and adventure sports. The Andaman Islands are well-connected by regular flights from Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Kolkata, and one can also reach them by ship from Kolkata, Chennai, and Visakhapatnam. However, traveling by flight is recommended to witness breathtaking aerial views that resemble slices of heaven. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands comprise a total of 836 islands, of which only 31 are inhabited. Visitors are not allowed on all the islands, and even the non-tribal Andamanese people cannot visit the restricted islands.

Only government officials from departments such as the Army, Navy, Air Force, Forest Department, and Police are permitted to access these islands for official purposes. As a general tourist, the only chance to see some of these islands is from the sky before landing or after takeoff at Veer Savarkar Airport in Port Blair, the capital of the union territory. While the Andaman Islands are open to tourists year-round, the best time to visit is from October to May. Monsoon tourism runs from June to October.

There are numerous hotels and guest houses available for online booking, and package tours are also offered to suit various budgets. The local businesses are known for their honesty, adhering to strict rules and regulations throughout the islands. For



example, if the local authority sets the price of coconut water at forty rupees, the rate will be consistent everywhere. In Port Blair, the major attractions include the Cellular Jail, Chatham Saw Mill, Forest Museum, Samudrika Naval Museum,

Anthropological Museum, Fisheries Aquarium, Science Center, and Corbyn's Cove. The historic Cellular Jail will not only enrich your knowledge of history but also evoke a deep emotional connection as you learn about the struggles of lesser-known

freedom fighters and the inhumane torture they endured under British rule. To reach Shaheed Dweep (formerly known as Neil Island) and Swaraj Dweep (formerly known as Havelock Island) from Port Blair, you must travel by small ships,



following a process similar to airport check-in. Plan to stay at least one night on each of these islands to explore them fully. Must-visit beaches on Shaheed Dweep include Bharatpur, Lakshmanpur, and Sitapur, while Elephant and Radhanagar beaches on Swaraj

Dweep are not to be missed. Scuba diving at Shaheed Dweep offers an unforgettable experience. Other popular attractions include Hudi Tikri, Red, Bird and Bat islands, Amkunj Beach near Rangat; Dhaninallah Mangroves and Karmatang Beach near Mayabunder; limestone caves and mud volcanoes near Diglipur; Craggy Island; Ross & Smith Islands, and various national parks and protected sanctuaries. The indigenous tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are divided into two groups: the Onge, Sentinelese, Jarawa, and Andamanese of Negroid descent living in the Andaman Islands, and the Shompen and Nicobarese of Mongoloid descent living in the Nicobar Islands. It is strictly prohibited by law to enter tribal reserves,

meet, or photograph these tribes. Respect their peaceful haven and adhere to the law. During my visits to the Andaman Islands, I was fortunate enough to encounter the Jarwa people. However, last year, I had an incredible experience while traveling by local public bus from Diglipur to Port Blair. As we entered the Jarwa forest after crossing a river, four Jarwa boys waved at our bus driver for a lift. The bus stopped, and they quickly got on board. One of them sat beside me, admiring my bracelet made of beads, which they seem to have a fascination for. Though I wanted to give it to him, I had to refuse due to the law prohibiting the exchange of items with the tribes. Their innocent laughter, however, was priceless.

Photos: Santanu Ganguly

As a dedicated disciple of Padma Bhushan Drs. Raja Radha Reddy and Kaushalya Reddy, Adiva Agarwal have beautifully embodied the spirit of Kuchipudi. Her recent performance was a heartfelt expression of her growth and the profound influence of her esteemed gurus, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**



A DANCE OF DREAMS

EXPLORING THE BEAUTY OF KUCHIPUDI

In the vibrant world of classical dance, few traditions are as richly expressive and historically significant as Kuchipudi. Originating from the Andhra Pradesh region of India, this classical dance form is renowned for its intricate footwork, elaborate gestures and profound storytelling. It embodies a fusion of dance, drama and music, bringing ancient narratives to life with remarkable grace.

Adiva Agarwal's recent Kuchipudi performance, marking her Rangapravesham, was a stunning demonstration of this art form's enduring allure. From the moment she stepped onto the stage, it was clear that her recital was more than just a display of technical skill; it was a heartfelt journey into the essence of Kuchipudi. Under the guidance of her esteemed guru, Padma Bhushan Drs. Raja Radha Reddy and Kaushalya Reddy, Adiva has honed her craft with dedication and precision, resulting in a performance that both honoured tradition and showcased her personal artistry.

The evening commenced with "Ganapati Vandana," a customary invocation to Lord Ganesha, setting a tone of reverence and anticipation. This opening act seamlessly transitioned into "Dashavatara," where Adiva's portrayal of Lord Vishnu's ten avatars was nothing short of mesmerising. Each avatar was brought to life with a delicate balance of intricate footwork and expressive storytelling,



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

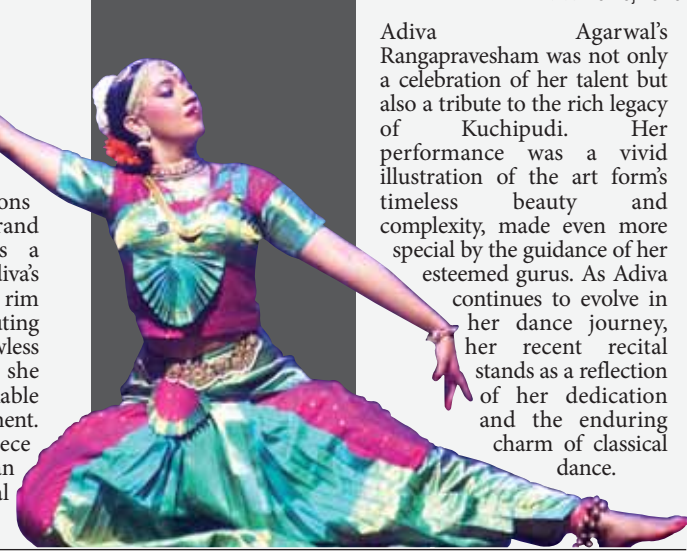
demonstrating Adiva's deep understanding of the form and its narratives.

The highlight of the performance was the "Tillana," a vibrant piece characterised by its rhythmic complexity and energetic movements. Adiva's ability to navigate the intricate patterns and maintain dynamic engagement with the audience was a showcase of her exceptional skill and stage presence. Her performance was a beautiful embodiment of Kuchipudi's essence, blending technical brilliance with artistic flair.

Adding emotional depth to the evening was "Chhaap Tilak Sab Cheeni," a devotional poem by

Amir Khusro.

Adiva's interpretation of this piece was imbued with spiritual reverence, showcasing her ability to convey profound emotions through dance. The grand finale, "Tarangam," was a breathtaking display of Adiva's virtuosity. Dancing on the rim of a brass plate while executing intricate footwork with flawless synchronisation, she demonstrated a remarkable level of skill and commitment. This climactic piece beautifully capped off an evening of exceptional performances.



Adiva Agarwal's Rangapravesham was not only a celebration of her talent but also a tribute to the rich legacy of Kuchipudi. Her performance was a vivid illustration of the art form's timeless beauty and complexity, made even more special by the guidance of her esteemed gurus. As Adiva continues to evolve in her dance journey, her recent recital stands as a reflection of her dedication and the enduring charm of classical dance.

Discovering Absence Through Visual Expression

Antra Srivastava's latest exhibition challenges us to delve into the unseen, revealing the hidden depths of absence in our lives, says **TEAM AGENDA**



The allure of absence is a peculiar paradox; it quietly demands attention, shaping our perceptions and provoking our thoughts. Artist Antra Srivastava's exhibition, *The Inescapable Presence of Absence*, invites viewers on a profound journey of reflection. This solo exhibition captivates audiences with its surreal yet deeply philosophical exploration of what lies beyond the visible.

Antra Srivastava, a Dehradun-based artist, her experiences as an avid traveler deeply influence her work, resulting in paintings that capture the vibrancy and diversity of the world. Through her art, she blends surrealism with poetic expression, drawing inspiration from the vitality of nature and the profound energy that flows through her creative process. She describes herself as both a participant and a witness in this artistic journey, immersing herself in the boundless realm of creative energy.

The theme of *The Inescapable Presence of Absence* delves into the paradox where absence becomes a palpable presence. This theme challenges viewers to rethink their perceptions, urging them to reflect on the significant impact of what is not present. It invites an exploration of the unseen and the unheard, asking profound



questions about the nature of existence. Srivastava's artistic journey is profoundly influenced by ancient Indian scriptures and the wisdom of sages, providing a foundation for her introspective quest. Her collection is a philosophical interpretation of the 18 chapters of the Gita, reflections on Sant Kabir's dohe and saakhees and a portrayal of six elements: air, water, earth, fire, space and consciousness. This unique

perspective allows her to seamlessly blend multiple layers of colours, creating harmony and rhythm, blurring the lines between abstraction and realism and evoking a surreal effect. In the Kabir series, Srivastava resonates with Kabir's ability to express complex ideas with simplicity. She emphasises that life's intricacies are self-created and that true knowledge emerges from inner silence rather than

external teachings. This series, inspired by Kabir's dohe and saakhees, underscores the experiential aspect of wisdom, offering a fresh perspective on life's fundamental truths. Srivastava's art invites a profound connection with the self, urging us to explore the deeper implications of absence alongside presence. Her work is a reflection of our existence, challenging us to look beyond what is visible and consider the unseen forces that shape our lives. The exhibition's title itself, *The Inescapable Presence of Absence* suggests a haunting elegance. It forces us to contemplate the spaces in between, the silence between words and the pauses in conversation that often carry more weight than the spoken. In these gaps, Srivastava finds beauty and complexity, offering her audience a mirror to their inner worlds. This exhibition stands as an attestation to art's power to transcend the ordinary, provoke thought and inspire change. Her exploration of absence is not merely an artistic endeavor; it is a call to acknowledge and embrace the unseen, the unheard and the unfelt aspects of our existence. Through her work, Srivastava offers a profound reminder that art is not just a reflection of the world but a gateway to understanding the intricacies of our inner selves. By the time visitors exit,

A CANVAS OF WONDERS

Experience the magic of watercolor through a captivating exhibition that celebrates the beauty of nature, architecture and human expression, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

At the Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, a captivating solo exhibition showcases the evocative power of watercolor art. The exhibition "This Beautiful World," featuring the watercolor works of Dr. Sushma Mahajan and curated by Dr. Alka Pande, offers a captivating glimpse into the world through the eyes of a talented and passionate artist. The collection of 35 watercolor paintings is a vivid celebration of beauty, nature and the intricate details of everyday life.

The exhibition successfully highlights Mahajan's extraordinary skill with watercolors, showcasing her ability to create vibrant and realistic images that evoke emotion and wonder. Her unique perspective as both an artist and a medical professional adds depth to her work, and it is evident that she views the world with a keen sense of appreciation for its many facets.

One of the standout pieces is *Spotted Charm*, a painting of a leopard that captures the animal's grace and mystery with stunning accuracy. The richness of the colors and the attention to detail make this piece particularly memorable. Similarly, *Magic of Night Glow* is a beautiful depiction of vintage cars on cobblestone streets, bathed in soft, atmospheric light. This piece resonates with a sense of nostalgia and transports viewers to a timeless scene that feels both familiar and enchanting.

The Sun Chariot is a fascinating work that pays homage to the Nalanda temple art. Artist meticulous rendering of the astronomical sundial, with its eight spokes representing the "prahars" of the day, is both educational and visually captivating. The painting serves as a reminder of the rich cultural heritage and architectural marvels that continue to inspire artists today. Her ability to capture both natural and architectural beauty with precision invites



viewers to appreciate the power of art and the beauty that surrounds us.

In *Anchored in Serenity* the artist depicts a tranquil boat scene that encourages reflection and peace. The painting's serene composition invites viewers to pause and consider the importance of finding calm amid the chaos of modern life. *The Bridge* similarly highlights the significance of connections and relationships, celebrating the beauty of bridges as symbols of unity and continuity. *The Power of Music*, celebrates music as a universal language of the spirit, while *Sunflowers*, presents a spiritual perspective on these bright blooms. These



artworks reflect the artist's thoughtful approach and emotional depth, conveyed through vibrant colors and delicate detail. The curation of the exhibition by Dr. Alka Pande further enhances the experience, providing context and insight into the themes and techniques that define Mahajan's work. Pande's expertise in Indian arts and

aesthetics brings an added layer of understanding, making the exhibition not only visually engaging but also intellectually stimulating. *This Beautiful World* is an exhibition that beautifully captures the essence of the world around us. Mahajan's paintings are a tribute to her talent and dedication and the exhibition as a whole serves as a reminder of the power of art to inspire, uplift and connect us to the world. The blend of nature, culture and emotion in her work offers a refreshing perspective and an opportunity to appreciate the extraordinary beauty that exists in the ordinary moments of life.

Photos: Pankaj Kumar



YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week, you'll find yourself managing an influx of activities or responsibilities, which calls for strategic balance in your life. You are currently handling multiple projects or commitments, making adaptability and effective time management crucial to your success. While you possess a natural drive that propels you forward, it's important to prioritize tasks and delegate when necessary. It's important to keep a balanced approach to prevent exhaustion. Consider revisiting your strategies around work or financial planning to secure long-term benefits. Being flexible and open to making adjustments will serve you well. Remember, it's okay to seek assistance when overwhelmed. This period is ripe for refining your methods, which will boost both your efficiency and overall well-being.

Lucky number 5 | Lucky colour teal
Lucky day Monday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week heralds a period of emotional refreshment and the opportunity for new ventures in personal and creative spheres. There's a sense of promise for beginning anew in emotional or creative pursuits. The current cosmic atmosphere supports embracing novel experiences and connections, encouraging an optimistic and welcoming approach. Whether you find yourself drawn to a new passion, embarking on a project that stirs your soul, or achieving a personal revelation, you are well-placed to nurture profound emotional ties. Let your intuition lead, and do not hesitate to share your innermost thoughts and desires. This period is ripe for achieving emotional satisfaction and stirring creativity. Engage wholeheartedly in pursuits that deliver happiness and fulfillment, as your positive energy is likely to draw equally uplifting situations and enhance your relational bonds.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Sunday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

This week promises a period of intellectual curiosity and a heightened drive to pursue new knowledge. It's an opportune time to delve into unfamiliar subjects or tackle intricate challenges. Your environment supports a deeper engagement with learning and effective communication, enhancing your ability to analyze and assimilate complex information. Embrace your natural propensity for exploration and stay open to adopting fresh viewpoints. However, exercise caution to avoid miscommunication or premature conclusions. Focus on refining your communicative abilities and remain vigilant for new learning opportunities. Your keen insight and analytical prowess are key to overcoming obstacles and discovering meaningful revelations during this period. Maintain a balanced approach to ensure that your quest for knowledge is both thorough and thoughtful.

Lucky number 20 | Lucky colour Mint
Lucky day Wednesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week heralds a time for fair judgment, urging you to seek balance and uphold integrity in all dealings. The universal energies prompt a focus on addressing any imbalances or unresolved issues with a clear, honest approach. Expect a period where matters of agreements or legality come into play, emphasizing the necessity for straightforward communication and a strict adherence to ethical standards. Now is the moment to consider your choices and actions, making sure they align with your core principles. The celestial influences highlight the significance of accountability and making choices based on righteousness over convenience. It's a favorable moment to pursue resolutions in disputes or conflicts and to reestablish harmony in both personal and professional spheres. Maintaining fidelity to your principles ensures that fairness will triumph.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Coral
Lucky day Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week brims with vigor and an eagerness for exploration, making it an ideal time to pursue your ambitions with zest. You'll find yourself fueled by an intense desire to act decisively and with conviction, moving swiftly toward your objectives. The current influences encourage a spirited approach to new ventures and ideas, igniting your creativity. However, it's crucial to temper this rapid momentum with thoughtful planning and strategic foresight. While enthusiasm can propel you forward, careful consideration will ensure your actions are both effective and sustainable. Embrace this period of high energy to overcome obstacles and advance significantly, but keep your foundational goals well in focus to steer your efforts toward success.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Thursday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week heralds a period of deep reflection and the necessity to release aspects of your life that no longer contribute positively to your personal growth. It's a time to critically evaluate your engagements and relationships, discerning which of these no longer align with your deeper desires and values. Embracing change may be essential now, possibly by choosing a new direction that better serves your quest for fulfillment and alignment with your true self. Trust in your intuitive guidance as you navigate through this phase of transformation. This is an opportunity to grow, to shift away from the familiar yet unfulfilling, and to move towards experiences that genuinely enrich your life. Focus on what brings you a sense of purpose and joy as you make these significant shifts.

Lucky number 18 | Lucky colour Plum
Lucky day Tuesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week heralds a period of positive outcomes and successful endeavors for you. Expect a surge in clarity and joy, enhancing your overall sense of achievement. It's an excellent time to engage in creative pursuits or personal projects, as your vigor is peaking and your efforts are likely to meet with success. Your interactions and communications are set to thrive, paving the way for new partnerships and connections. Seize the opportunities for personal growth and development that present themselves. Allow your radiant energy to be your guide, celebrating your victories, no matter the scale. This infectious enthusiasm not only uplifts you but also serves to inspire those around you, aiding in the realization of your aspirations with relative ease. Revel in this prosperous phase and let your passion lead you to even grander achievements.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Lavender
Lucky day Wednesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week marks a time of festivity and community unity. Emphasizing the value of community, friendship, and happiness, this period is marked by a sense of fulfillment through connection with others and the enjoyment of shared experiences. The cosmic influences favor collaborative efforts and social gatherings, presenting a prime opportunity for attending social events, engaging in parties, or participating in group activities. This is a time to strengthen bonds, relish in the support and fellowship of peers, and focus on crafting enduring, positive memories. Leverage your innate ability to manage social interactions with ease, allowing the happiness and encouragement from your social circle to uplift and invigorate you. Enjoy this harmonious phase by fully immersing yourself in the joy and unity it brings.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Amber
Lucky day Monday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week, you find yourself in a particularly potent phase for creating and achieving. Your innate flair for innovative thinking is heightened, setting the stage for you to craft ambitious objectives and actively pursue your aspirations. You possess a unique knack for transforming your visions into tangible outcomes, so have confidence in your abilities and instincts. The current environment favors novel and original approaches, allowing you to tackle any hurdles in unique ways. This period also favors effective communication; expressing your ideas with clarity and conviction can draw in the support you need. However, take care to avoid overcommitment or a narrow focus on a single project, as maintaining a balanced approach is crucial. Embrace your role as a driver of change and actively seek out opportunities.

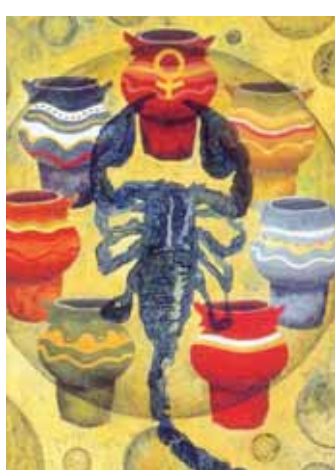
Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Mauve
Lucky day Friday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week marks a period of financial solidity and practical achievements. You may find yourself taking on roles that demand authority or responsibility, especially in areas related to your career or financial management. It's a prime time to concentrate on fortifying your economic or work-related stability. The current influences favor wise management of resources and strategic planning. Balancing your nurturing tendencies with a practical approach will enable you to support both yourself and others effectively. Consider this a favorable moment to establish long-term objectives, make sound investments, or explore career advancement opportunities. Embrace the leadership skills you possess and apply your practical knowledge to strengthen your position and achieve greater success.

Lucky number 13 | Lucky colour Olive
Lucky day Tuesday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week calls for continued resilience as you navigate through persistent challenges. You may feel a sense of fatigue as if you've been in a long battle, yet it's crucial to remain steadfast and determined. The current influences hint that you are nearing the fruition of your efforts, emphasizing the importance of staying alert and proactive. Reflect on the lessons learned from previous trials to strengthen your stance. Concentrate on safeguarding your interests and maintaining a solid front against difficulties. Leveraging your past experiences and inner resilience will be vital in overcoming these hurdles and moving forward. Trust in your own resourcefulness and do not shy away from seeking assistance when necessary. Your perseverance will soon be rewarded with a fulfilling sense of achievement and triumph.

Lucky number 16 | Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week invites you to embrace new beginnings and a spirit of adventure. It marks a period ripe for fresh starts, encouraging you to approach the unknown with optimism and trust. This is an ideal time to dive into new ventures or explore opportunities that ignite your curiosity. Allow yourself to step out of your usual boundaries and discover new horizons. Whether it's initiating new projects, chasing dreams, or innovating on traditional challenges, your guiding force should be your inner voice. Trust in your instincts and open your heart to the unfolding path before you. This period is about shedding past reservations and meeting life's adventures with awe and openness. Embrace this phase of spontaneity and transformative potential, letting your adventurous spirit lead the way.

Lucky number 17 | Lucky colour Charcoal
Lucky day Monday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



Shakti trinity influences thought trends

It comes out from the previous issue that the primal source - the root of all creations - is beyond all limitations of creativity, knowledge, time, space, and laws of causation. Ordinary mortals, on the contrary, are in the first place, armed with limited creative ability. Second, the primal source is all-knowing, as it lends intelligence to all levels of creation, and also to all creations at the levels respectively due to each. But all manifest creatures, including human beings, lack all-knowingness. Consequently, one's scope of vision and thereby awareness level gets narrowed down, offering us a fractioned view of the world process. Third, for the above reasons, human beings are born with an inherent 'sense of want', which excites the urge to make up for the void. Thus, comes into play the sense of craving, desire, lust, possession and such other related tendencies. Fourth, unlike the creator, we are bound by the limitation of time, in the sense that we measure happenings in the frame of past, present, and future. As we are aware, all live existences

have a limited stay in this world, and so their stay could be measured in time frame. Because of this limitation, ordinarily, our attention keeps shifting from past, which is nothing but history; to future, which is uncertain. Consequently, our level of focus on the callings of the present gets compromised. We, thus, fail to remain riveted to the present, which sets the premise of the future. So, because of attention deficiency, we fail to put in our whole. We are thus, often left behind in the run of time, and with obvious consequences. Fifth, one remains bound by the laws of causation. It keeps all human actions bound to cause and effect chain. In this scheme of things there has to be a cause behind any effect, which in turn, sets the premise for fresh happening. And there is no scope for having a free lunch in this world. So, we have to bear with the consequences, for all our deeds, good or bad, depending on the intent and character of our actions. We, thus, get trapped into an unending chain of cause and effect - Karmic cycle. It is something like the seed of mango will



bear mango tree only, and that of neem, a neem tree. But then the primal source is self-caused, inexhaustible and eternal, and therefore is beyond the binds of the laws of causation.

Finally, human beings are bound by the limitation of space. Here it needs to be appreciated that the primal source being a unified energy-field, its constituents can't be differentiated by any measure of space, and so free from

any such limitation. On the contrary, all form-existences including human beings are bound by space. We, therefore, identify ourselves with our gross body, differentiated from all others, and belonging to a particular place. With such an individualised sense of identity, the sense of essential unity underlying all diverse existences takes a back seat. The sense of all-inclusiveness thus getting lost, one gets tempted to differentiate one from the other, and begin to compare each other in relative terms. Consequently, a sense of divide comes into play. It is in this sense that out of many, one meaning ascribed to the word 'Maya' is the sense of measure. It is important to note here that the way a human being perceives, is how s/he would react, respond, or act upon in day-to-day life. And since human minds have limited perceptive and comprehensive abilities, an ordinary mortal is not able to have holistic understanding of the world process. Naturally, with a fractioned vision, one fails to perceive things in right perspective, and with obvious consequences

Owing to the above limitations of mind, the essential unity of the Shakti-trinity, vital to our dynamic existence does not ordinarily remain live in our minds. We rather look at them in apparent terms. So, invariably we remain under the influence of the particular shakti variant that would be prominently displayed. It needs to be appreciated here that there would be no existence, live or inert, but for any of the three. Their mix would, however, vary from person-to-person, with one or the other attribute playing heavy over the other two. That distinguishes a being from the other in terms of one's thought process, which defines a person's unique character and thereby one's usual conduct. Now, according as which particular aspect of the Shakti-trinity is prominently displayed defines individual specific mind-trends, which sets the terms of how one views life.

The issue continues.....

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-981803723/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com