

**OPINION 6**  
TERRORISM RESURGES  
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**WORLD 8**  
DIPLOMACY INTENSIFIES TO  
HALT ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

**MONEY 10**  
SENSEX JUMPS TO  
TWO-WEEK HIGH

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SMITH EYES IPL  
COMEBACK AFTER  
SHOW IN MLC  
12 SPORTS

## Whither Gender Justice? Asks a Nation in Rage



Doctors medical professionals and students stage a protest march demanding justice for a woman doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered at Kolkata's R G Kar Medical College and Hospital at Kartavya Path, New Delhi, on Friday. Ranjan Dimri

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Nationwide outrage has erupted in support of the trainee doctor who was raped and murdered in a State-run hospital in Kolkata last week. On Friday, healthcare workers took out a massive protest march at India Gate and other parts of the city, seeking justice for the victim and demanding stricter laws for safety of health staff, including doctors, at workplace. The evening march towards India Gate brought back memories of the Nirbhaya case when hundreds of thousands of Delhiites had hit

### CBI cracks the whip in Kolkata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a major development, the former principal of RG Kar Medical College, Dr Sandip Ghosh, was on Friday detained by the Central Bureau of Investigation for questioning. He was picked up by the CBI while returning from the Calcutta High Court

where he had filed a petition seeking police protection on the plea that his life was under threat. Ghosh — currently in the eye of storm — has been identified by the agitating doctors of the RG Kar Medical College as the “fountainhead” of all evils that plague the once best medical college in eastern India

the streets to seek harshest punishment for the perpetrators of the crime. However, the police stopped the protesting doctors from making their way to the India Gate from Safdarjung hospital. Anyhow some managed to arrive at the site carrying placards: “Mahila apna haq mangti, nahi kisi se bheek mangti” and “ek do teen char, band karo ye atyachar.” Healthcare workers, including doctors, resident doctors and lab technicians, were present on India Gate as they marched on the Kartavya Path demanding justice for the victim. They termed the crime as “gut wrenching” and pressed for the Central Protection Act for health workers to be enforced. Meanwhile, the Indian Medical Association, the largest body of private medical practitioners across the country, has announced a 24-hour nationwide withdrawal of non-emergency services from 6 am on Saturday. “Out-patient departments (OPD) will not function and elective surgeries will not be conducted. The withdrawal is across all sectors wherever modern medicine doctors are providing services,” the IMA said.

## Jammu and Kashmir Get final date for tryst with peace from EC

RAJESH KUMAR/MOHIT KANDHARI ■ NEW DELHI/JAMMU

For the first time since the scrapping of Article 370 in 2019, the Election Commission (EC) on Friday announced Assembly elections to Jammu and Kashmir in three phases with the first phase to be held on September 18, second on September 25 and third phase on October 1. Results will be announced on October 4. This will be the shortest elections in at least the last two decades in the region. The phase of the J&K election is significant, given that over the last two decades, due to the region's security concerns, polls have consistently been held in at least four phases or more. J&K has been without an elected House for five years now. The last election was held in undivided J&K in 2014. This marks a big step forward in efforts to meet a Supreme Court order — that democracy return to Jammu and the Kashmir Valley by September 30. Union Home Minister Amit Shah welcomed the announcement of Assembly elections there and said the polls will further strengthen the roots of democracy and open the doors to a new period of development for the region. Shah also appealed to the people of J&K to actively



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar with election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu during a press conference to announce the schedule for 'General Election to Legislative Assemblies 2024', in New Delhi, on Friday. PTI

participate in the elections and vote in large numbers to form a Government that will sustain peace and development, and ensure a brighter future for the youth. “I welcome the announcement of the Assembly elections in J&K made by the Election Commission of India today. In the last 10 years, the Modi Govt through a series of relentless initiatives, has created a new era of peace, development and strengthening democracy in J&K,” he wrote on X. Almost all the parties, including National Conference, Congress, BJP,

CPI(M) and DPAP, thanked the Election Commission and said the poll announcement maintained the supremacy of the Supreme Court which had set the September 30 deadline for the holding of the much awaited Assembly elections in J&K. There are 90 seats in the Assembly of J&K post delimitation, with 43 seats in the Jammu region and 47 in Kashmir. Of these, 74 are general seats, nine are for Scheduled Caste candidates, and seven for Scheduled Tribes. Announcing the schedule for the J&K Assembly polls, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar told a Press conference in New Delhi the

three-phase elections to the 90-member J&K Assembly will be held on September 18, September 25 and October 1. The announcement comes a week after CEC along with Election Commissioners, visited the Union Territory. Kumar said elections will be held in J&K after a long time. “The people want change... they want to script a new future,” Kumar said, as he outlined the poll body's plans to hold a safe and successful election in J&K. “We recently visited J&K to take stock of election preparation. Great enthusiasm was seen... people want to participate in the process. People want elections as early as possible...” he said, recalling the “long queues” at polling booths in J&K and Ladakh during the Lok Sabha election. Asked about the decision to hold polls in just three phases, Kumar said the choice was deliberately made to keep the process short, considering the Commission's experience during the Lok Sabha polls, which were criticised for being inordinately long. “In true spirit of keeping that promise, we present the shorter election period in the best possible and conducive environment,” he said. He added that the Commission will ensure due security for all candidates in J&K as requested by political parties.

## Growing violence 2,000 Bengali wagers flee Keonjhar



Construction sector hit  
RAJENDRA K SAHU ■ KEONJHAR

After the news of torture and harassment to Hindus in Bangladesh, Hindu outfits are targeting the Bengali-speaking daily workers on suspicion of them being Bangladeshis and threatening them to leave the country. On Monday last, at three different places, Bengali labourers were attacked and manhandled in Keonjhar. Af-

ter the news spread, labourers who had migrated from West Bengal started fleeing from the district and as on date, not a single migrant labourer was found in the town. More than 2,000 migrant Bengali labourers from Murshidabad and Howrah districts of West Bengal were engaged in various construction work in the district and after their exit, the construction work has virtually come to a standstill. According to Hasan, who is engaged in colouring work, he has been staying here for

the last 30 years but now is forced to leave for home district Howrah due to the spate of violence. Similarly, Ashraf, another civil mason said that he tried to contact the local police but it was of no result. Many of the Bengali speaking daily workers here narrated their plight saying that action should be taken against the Bangladesh natives who have illegally infiltrated into the country and the Government should see that the Bengali speaking Indians are spared.

## Centre asks for accountability on medical fraternity attacks across the country



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In what is being seen as a damage control move amid nationwide protests by doctors following the rape and murder of a 31-year-old trainee medico at Kolkata's State-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, the Centre on Friday instructed the heads of Government hospitals across the country to file an institutional First Information Report (FIR) within six hours of any incidence of violence. The Union Health Ministry has been facing criticism for its failure to provide a safe environment for the medical fraternity despite several cases of violence against healthcare workers reported in the past within hospital premises. In fact, Friday's directive by the chief of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Dr Atul Goel, to file FIR within six hours of an incident follows a recent circular from the National Medical Commission (NMC), the country's apex medical education regulator, which similarly stated that in the event of any violence, there should be

a prompt investigation by the college management, FIRs should be lodged with the police, and an action-taken-report should be sent to the NMC within 24 hours. In the memorandum issued on Friday, the DGHS stated that “in the event of any violence against any healthcare worker while on duty, the head of that institution shall be responsible for filing an institutional FIR within a maximum of 6 hours of the incident.” “Recently, it has been observed that violence against doctors and other healthcare staff in Government hospitals has become common. A number of health workers suffer physical violence while on duty. Many are threatened or subjected to verbal aggression. Most of this violence is perpetrated by either the patient or the patient's attendants,” the memorandum added. This has been a long-standing demand of resident doctors, as FIRs are not filed in connection with many incidents despite existing mechanisms. The doctors have also been seeking enactment of a Central Protection Act to deter violence against medical personnel on duty. A draft prepared in 2019, following similar outrage over the assault on a doctor in Kolkata, proposed imprisonment for up to 10 years and a fine of up to ₹10 lakh for violence against doctors on duty is still in a limbo. The DGHS advisory also stated that all Central Government hospitals should maintain a registry of such incidents and report them to the Health Ministry.

## INDIA REACHES FOR THE SKIES



ISRO's Small Satellite Launch Vehicle-03 (SSLV-D3) carrying Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-08) leaves a trail of smoke after it lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, on Friday. PTI

## PM Modi thanks world leaders for their support on India's I Day

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday thanked several world leaders for their wishes on India's 78th Independence Day and told French President Emmanuel Macron that their interactions over the years have added great strength to the ties between two countries. He told Macron that they will keep working together to further global good. Modi lauded his UAE counterpart Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum for his personal commitment to strong ties between India and the UAE.

## K'pada Additional CSO in Vig net

2 buildings, plots, Rs 1-cr deposits found  
PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Vigilance police on Friday conducted raids on the properties of Pradeep Kumar Mohapatra, Additional Civil Supplies Officer (ACSO), Kendrapada, on the allegations of possession of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. During the search, two buildings, two plots, deposits of Rs 1 crore and other assets were unearthed by the anti-graft agency. So far, a double-storey building with an area of approximately 5,600

sqft at Lingipur, Bhubaneswar, a single-storey building at Kalani Nagar, Madhupatna, Cuttack, a plot of land at Lingipur, Bhubaneswar, a pplot at Kalyani Nagar, Cuttack, mutual fund deposits of Rs 1 crore, cash of Rs 1.21 lakh, a four-wheeler (Maruti Swift) and two two-wheelers have been detected. The measurement and valuation/assessment of the aforesaid buildings and plots were being carried out by the Vigilance Technical Wing. The other deposits were being ascertained. A locker being operated in the name of his wife at SBI Main Branch, Cuttack, was still to be opened.

## YB Khurania named next DGP of Odisha

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Putting all speculations to rest, the Odisha Government on Friday appointed senior IPS officer Yogesh Bahadur Khurania as the State's next Director General of Police (DGP). A notification regarding the appointment was issued by the Home Department. Khurania, a 1990-batch IPS officer, will take charge from Arun Kumar Sarangi, who has been serving as in-charge head of the State police force since December 2023.



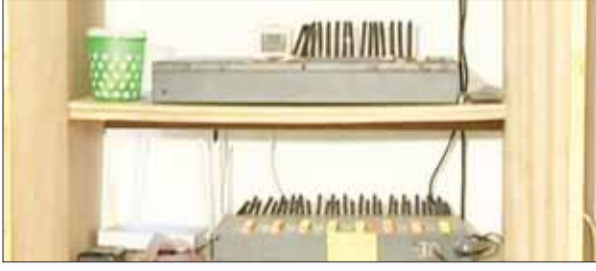
The appointment came a few days after the Central Government approved prema-

ture repatriation of Khurania to his parent cadre Odisha with immediate effect. He was serving as Special Director General, Border Security Force (BSF). His sudden premature repatriation had already fuelled speculation that he was the frontrunner to take over as the next DGP. Odisha did not have a full-fledged DGP since December 2023. Khurania was serving as Additional DGP (Provisioning) in Odisha before proceeding on Central deputation. He had earlier held several impor-

tant posts in Odisha and served as Superintendent of Police of Nayagarh, Jajpur, Rourkela, Mayurbhanj and Ganjam districts. He also served as DIG of Southern Range and Northern Range and Additional Commissioner of Police and Commissioner of Police, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack. He was also the Director, BPSPA-cum-IG Training. The appointment came three days after Khurania met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in New Delhi on Tuesday.

# SIM Box racket busted in city; 1 arrested

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
The Commissionerate Police on Friday conducted a raid and seized seven SIM boxes from a house at Mahadevnagar under the Laxmisagar police station here.



The raid was carried out after getting information regarding suspicious activities of a youth who had taken the house on rent. City DCP Prateek Singh said there was a set-up and SIM boxes which are suspicious.

"The equipment can be used to make international and national calls without the receiver getting scope to know

the source of the call. The device is also used to carry out several crimes including terrorist activities. We have recovered seven SIM boxes and over 500 SIM cards," said Singh.

Singh further said a forensic team has been called and the devices would be seized as

per procedure. A detailed investigation would soon be launched. Police officials said a youth, identified as Raju Mandal, has been detained in this connection.

Salim Khan, the house owner said, "The youth had taken the house on rent some seven months back. He had informed me that his works spread in Kolkata and other parts of the country. Initially, he had informed that his family would stay with him. We had given the house on rent after an agreement and he was paying rent on time. Nobody used to visit him at this location. As the house used to remain locked, we could not sense anything."

# Rape of woman doc In WB 'TMC' gov't providing patronage to criminals'

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
BJP says party is with victim

Intensifying attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, BJP national spokesperson, Guru Prakash Paswan on Friday said that whatever was happening on the streets in Kolkata was paving the way for a nationwide protest.



Medical College and Hospital in West Bengal.

Paswan was addressing mediapersons here over the mounting protests across the nation over the rape and murder of a trainee woman doctor and vandalism at RG Kar

"The West Bengal Government is meeting the family of the victim doctor but the Principal of the college is appointed in another college. Why is the TMC Government providing patronage to criminal elements?" said Paswan.

Paswan said that the BJP workers are standing with the victim's family. It is not the first time that such an incident

has been reported in West Bengal. Several similar incidents have been reported in West Bengal. The recent matter is very sensitive and when the court intervenes, it shows that the Government is not at all serious. The Kolkata High Court has clearly stated that justice cannot be delivered by the West Bengal police and hence, the CBI probe was ordered. The court has observed that there was a delay in reporting the incident and tampering of evidence, he alleged.

"The youths, women and common men in Kolkata are filled with anger. BJP and the people across the nation are

with the victim's family and we will ensure that justice will be done at all cost. The reaction of the West Bengal CM that there has been an alliance of BJP and the Left is shameful," he added.

"Is the West Bengal CM daydreaming? Both parties have different ideologies. The CM further stated that efforts are on to create a Bangladesh-like situation. But we want to say that the CM should not make such baseless statements and fuel fear and panic," Paswan said. No comments could be obtained by TMC over the BJP spokesperson's statements.

# CM felicitates Rohidas for Olympics bronze



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Hailing Rohidas as a source of inspiration for the youth, Majhi said the Odisha Government will continue to support hockey in a big way to enable India to win more medals and accolades in major international events.

Earlier, Rohidas was accorded a rousing welcome after his arrival in Bhubaneswar. Rohidas, who was the only player from Odisha to win bronze as a Indian team member at the Paris Olympics, was felicitated by several organisations.

Rohidas hails from Saunamara village in Sundargarh district.

# Non-resident Odias call on Naveen Patnaik

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Dubai-based Priyadarshie Panigrahi, who hails from Sambalpur, and Canadian citizen of Kendrapada origin living in Toronto Arvind Biswal paid a courtesy call on Naveen Patnaik at the Naveen Niwas and extended greetings of their communities to him. Naveenbabu was happy to meet both.



FMCG company while Arvind is the Regional Head Legal for Americas (North America, Latin America and Caribbean) for the world's largest visa processing company. Priyadarshie also happens to be the son of former Odisha minister Late Sriballav Panigrahi.

Priyadarshie commended Naveen Patnaik on the works done in Odisha particularly in the field of poverty reduction to which Naveenbabu said Odisha had 70% of her people below the poverty line when he took over as Chief Minister. He said today the same figure is only 10%. He also said Kalahandi is now a food-surplus district.

Priyadarshie also thanked Naveenbabu for the direct flight connection between Dubai and Bhubaneswar which has greatly benefited Odias residing in the UAE. He echoed the wishes of the UAE

(United Arab Emirates) based Odias to make this flight a daily service. Patnaik said he would endeavour to make this happen.

Odisha's fiscal health and the government finding ways of adequate financing for its welfare schemes were also discussed.

Arvind spoke about the love and affection the Odia diaspora has for Naveenbabu. India's recent performance in hockey at the Paris Olympics was also a topic of discussion wherein Odisha's contribution to the revival of hockey was lauded.

# Bijay Patnaik quits Congress

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**  
He felt 'neglected' in the party



Senior Congress leader and former Odisha Chief Secretary Bijay Kumar Patnaik resigned from the primary membership of the party alleging that he was not getting recognition and honour in the organisation. He declared that he would not join any other party and keep himself busy in social services.

"I felt that I don't have any place and prestige in the party. I also felt that my services were not useful for the party; and hence, I decided to quit."

The party had initially given importance to him, but gradually he was sidelined. The newly-formed Congress Steering Committee does not have Patnaik's name.

On February 10, 2023, Patnaik had joined the Congress and was appointed as the Campaign Committee chairperson of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC).

Meanwhile, the All India Congress Committee has named four leaders, Rama Chandra Kadam, Santosh Singh Saluja, Srikant Jena and Biswaranjan Mohanty, to make statements to the media on behalf of the OPCC.

# In Mahanga Woman sets herself on fire before PS

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

A woman set herself on fire in front of the Mahanga police station in Cuttack district on Friday. She was rescued by police and shifted to a hospital. The woman was initially admitted to the Salepur Com-

munity Health Centre. Later, she was rushed to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack as her condition deteriorated. According to doctors, the woman has suffered around 54-per cent burn injuries. As per reports, the Mahanga police had nabbed

the woman's husband in a theft case on Thursday. Subsequently, the woman pleaded before the police that her husband was innocent. However, the police didn't pay any attention to her plea. As a result, the woman got frustrated and tried to commit suicide.

She set herself ablaze in front of the police station by pouring kerosene on her body.

Police said an investigation into the incident was underway. "More information can be divulged after completion of the investigation," said Salepur IIC BR Mallick.

# Women employees to get menstrual leave

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida has announced one-day paid menstrual leave for State Government and private sector women employees in the State.

Parida, who is in charge of Women and Child Development Department, stated this while attending the district-level Independence Day celebration in Cuttack.

The women employees can avail the leave on the first or second day of the menstrual cycle. "It will be optional," she said.

Odisha becomes the third State after Kerala and Bihar to announce such a leave for the women employees. The Kerala Government has also granted menstrual leave for female students in all State universities under the Department of Higher Education.



eral lakh women are employed. An Odia girl had raised her

voice seeking paid leave during periods at the United Nations Civil Society Conference 2024 held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Ranjita Priyadarshini had drawn the attention of all the delegates at the international conference regarding paid leave for women during menstruation.

She argued that women across the world suffer due to the physical pain during their menstruation at workplace.

This decision of the Odisha Government has been welcomed and lauded by working women across the State.

# At 70th National Film Awards 'Daman' adjudged as Best Odia Film

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Babushana Mohanty-starrer movie 'Daman' was adjudged as the Best Odia Film at the 70th National Film Awards on Friday.

The award comprises a Rajat Kamal and a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh. Written-directed by Vishal Mourya and Debi Prasad Lenka, the film had been released on November 4, 2022. The film portrays a doctor's efforts to fight superstitions to educate tribals on malaria in Odisha's Malkangiri district. 'Daman' is the high-



est-grossing Odia film till date.

The Odisha Government had declared the film tax-free. The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting revealed the film winners at New Delhi on Friday. The winners, including recipient of the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke award, will be awarded by President Droupadi Murmu in October.

# Crab culture: Contemporary workplace epidemic

In the heart of a vibrant workplace lies a silent, destructive force that erodes the very essence of teamwork and productivity. It's not a technological glitch or economic downturn, it is a phenomenon more insidious - "Crab Culture".



**ANANYA DAS**

This term, inspired by an age-old observation of crab behaviour, reveals a troubling truth about human interactions, especially in professional settings.

As a child, I learned a profound life lesson from my grandfather while fishing in our village pond. He would catch crabs and place them in a bamboo basket without a lid. Concerned that the crabs might escape and pinch me, I asked him to cover the basket. He responded with a wisdom that only now, in adulthood, I fully comprehend: "Don't worry, crabs are always each other's enemy. When one tries to escape the basket, another will latch onto its leg to pull it back down, attempting to climb over it to escape. In this way, neither manages

to escape."

What seemed like an innocent fishing episode at the time turned out to be a profound metaphor for human behaviour. Just as crabs in a basket hinder each other's escape, many people in today's workplaces engage in behaviours that drag their colleagues down rather than lifting them up. This "Crab Culture" manifests through envy, backstabbing, and an unwillingness to see others succeed. In the competitive environment of modern workplaces, it's

not uncommon to encounter individuals who, rather than supporting their peers, work against them. Holding back crucial information, undermining others' efforts, being jealous, gossiping, spreading rumours or negativity are all hallmarks of this toxic culture. Some people try to make themselves look good by unnecessarily portraying others in a negative light. These actions, often subtle and disguised as concern or helpfulness, can severely impact morale and productivity.

I recently decided to shake things up at a lunch with friends after a long 11-month break. We were all chatting away, everyone talking over each other and trying to grab their turn. Suddenly, I tossed out a wild trend: "Whoever talks about someone else instead of their own life has to pay the entire bill." At first, everyone laughed and agreed, but things quickly took a turn for the awkward. Starters being served...then main-course...till desert...the room was buzzing with forced smiles and half-hearted com-

pliments about the food only, only till one of my friends, knowing I'm an architect, started going on about his new duplex plans. That's it! It was like everyone realized we had nothing left to talk about except gossip. It was a hilarious moment but also a wake-up call about how obsessed people are with other people's lives instead of focusing on their own. But then, I'm pretty sure this means I won't be getting any more invites to our get-togethers.

At workplaces, this crab culture has many faces- the "Office politicians" - who consistently undermine their colleagues by spreading rumours about their performance or downplaying their contributions. The "Withholding colleagues" - who withhold new creative ideas of others with the fear of being overshadowed. The "credit thieves" - who takes credits of others' work or ideas and present as their own. "The Saboteur" - who feels threatened, insecure and drive individuals to undermine others. At last, the "Reluctant Mentor" - who

fears their stand at their position or good books and don't provide any guidance and support to newcomer who is potentially more creative.

Well, it can be said that leadership can play a crucial role in setting the tone, but in the context of Crab Culture, a boss can exacerbate the problem by embodying or enabling negative behaviours. A boss might perpetuate favouritism and bias, which fuels office politics and undermines trust. They could inadvertently encourage "Office Politicians" by rewarding manipulative behaviour or failing to address gossip, thus creating a toxic environment. If a boss overlooks or dismisses the contributions of "Withholding Colleagues" and "Credit Thieves," it reinforces the idea that such behaviour is acceptable, further discouraging transparency and collaboration. Additionally, a boss who is insecure or feels threatened may become a "Saboteur," undermining employees to protect their own position rather than fostering growth and innovation. Finally, by

failing to support and mentor promising newcomers, a boss might embody the "Reluctant Mentor" role, perpetuating a cycle of insecurity and competition rather than nurturing talent and teamwork.

The consequences of Crab Culture are profound. Rather than fostering a collaborative spirit, Crab Culture breeds a cut-throat attitude where everyone prioritizes personal gain over collective success. This not only hampers productivity but also erodes trust and morale within the workplace. At work places people suffer from diminished trust and cooperation, leading to reduced efficiency and innovation. Individuals affected by such negative behaviour often experience increased stress, job dissatisfaction, and mental health issues. The workplace, instead of being a collaborative space for growth and achievement, becomes a battleground of competing interests.

Life coaches often say, "Walk with the confidence of an elephant,

let others beside bark seeing you...Nothing should affect you! Bloom like a lotus even in a muddy pond....." But it's easier said than done. Many people are affected by obstacles and setbacks. Do we really want to become the villains in other's life story? At least if not hero, we can mind our own business and never bother to exist in anyone's life. Good for them, good for us.

While the instinct to compete may be deeply ingrained, it is crucial to rise above these base tendencies. Only by confronting the roots of Crab Culture and fostering a collaborative and supportive atmosphere can workplaces hope to overcome this contemporary epidemic and thrive in the modern business landscape. Can we truly escape the grip of Crab Culture, or will we forever be trapped in a cycle where lifting ourselves up means pulling others down?

(Das is an architect, founder, AURA Architecture & Sustainability Consultancy, Bhubaneswar; ar.ananya12@gmail.com)

# Organ donation pledges keep rising in MKCG

**Anatomy Dept houses 29 cadavers, 95 persons pledge to donate organs after death**  
**RAJEEV RATHAN ■**  
**BRAHMAPUR**

The practice of body and organ donation is gradually gaining traction among the people of Odisha. In recent years, following the official recognition of body donation, numerous conscientious citizens have been stepping forward to submit posthumous body and organ donation declarations. The significant act of generosity is aimed at advancing the education of medical students and providing life-saving opportunities for those in need of organ transplants.

The World Organ Donation Day was observed at Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati (MKCG) Medical College on Tuesday. It was an opportune moment to reflect on the progress made in the field. The Anatomy Department of MKCG currently houses 29 cadavers, all donated for research purposes. Additionally, 95 individuals have declared their intent to donate their organs after death, further contributing to the medical community. These vital contributions have been encouraged since the passage of the Odisha Anatomy Bill in 2012, which officially recognises and promotes body and organ donation within the State.

In February 2013, the Government of Odisha made a historic advancement in medical science and research by unanimously passing the Odisha

Anatomy Bill-2012 in the Assembly. The legislation provided the legal framework for body and organ donation, allowing individuals to make written declarations, with the consent of their families, to donate their bodies and organs to Government medical institutions for research and transplant purposes after their death.

Since the bill's enactment, the MKCG Department of Anatomy has received 95 declarations for organ donation. The college has received a total of 29 cadavers between 2013 and 2023. The annual intake has varied, with one cadaver received each in 2013, 2017 and 2020, two each in 2018, 2019 and 2021, seven in 2022, and an impressive thirteen in 2023. Of these, 22 were men, and seven were women, Anatomy Professor Dr Sagar Ranjan said.

In 2010, a proposal was made to the State Government to establish an embalming center within the Anatomy Department of MKCG. The facility would include separate freezers for mortuary storage, 24-hour mortuary staff, and air-conditioned ambulances. Such a center would allow for the preservation of a deceased person's body for several days, a service particularly beneficial for families living abroad, providing them with time to arrive before performing final rites.

Despite the clear need for such a facility, the State Government has not yet granted permission for its establishment. The medical community remains hopeful that the critical infrastructure will soon be realized, further supporting the growing movement towards body and organ donation in Odisha.

# In Kendrapada 2 siblings charred to death in LPG cylinder blast

**RAJESH BEHERA ■**  
**KENDRAPADA**

Two minor siblings were charred to death on Thursday morning when a major fire engulfed their thatched house at Balarampur village in Kurunti gram panchayat under the Rajnagar police station in Kendrapada district.

The deceased were identified as Anupama Sahani (11) and her younger brother Rishi (8). Anupama and Rishi were studying in Class-V and Class-III, respectively.



Both the siblings had returned from celebrating the Independence Day at their school. When their mother was preparing food for them, the LPG cylinder in their kitchen accidentally caught fire and exploded. But as their mother had gone outside, both the children could not come out of their house and were charred to death.

Getting information, Fire Service personnel reached the spot and doused the flames. Later, a police team seized the bodies and sent them for post-mortem.

Kendrapada Collector Smruti Ranjan Pradhan and SP Siddhartha Kataria rushed to the village and provided Rs 60,000 from the Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF) to the mother of the deceased.

Notably, the deceased's father Sumant Sahani is working in Surat.

Besides, Rs 6,000 was provided by the local Sarpanch under Harishchandra Yojana and also the BDO provided Rs 5,000 to the deceased's family.

# In Nabarangpur BDO carries superstitious villagers to hosp

**NALINI SAHU ■**  
**BHUBANESWAR**

A bureaucrat posted as Block Development Officer (BDO) at Nandahandi in Nabarangpur district has set an example for others as he himself carried some diarrhoea-affected patients to the hospital after convincing them about the benefits of medicine.

Sahoo reached the village and managed to convince the patients and carried them to the hospital in a vehicle for treatment.

"Some patients were not willing to go to hospital due to superstition. I tried my best along with the medical team to convince them. Somehow, they agreed and we sent them for medical treatment," said Sahoo, adding that conditions of some of the patients were serious.

Reports said at least three persons lost their lives after suffering from diarrhoea in the village in the last four days. Water samples from various places in the village have been sent for examination.

# Gopalpur College holds talk on NEP-2020

**Experts from domain presented viewpoints**  
**PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR**

A State level seminar on 'National Education Policy-2020 and Enhancement of Quality Education' was organised here at Gopalpur College by IQAC here on Sunday.

Principal of the college Dr Ram Prasad Panda presided over the meeting, while the Transport, Commerce, Steel and Mines Minister and local MLA Bibhuti Bhusan Jena graced the event as chief guest. Jena in his brief inaugural address emphasized on the significance and implications of NEP-2020 implemented in the country.



Regional Director, Higher Education (Brahmapur) Dr Siddhartha Sankar Padhy, who graced the event as the chief speaker, spoke on some of the follies and foibles of the present education system, its basic motto and merits of the NEP-2020.

CDC Director, Berhampur University, Dr Sukanta Tripathy, who graced the event as guest of honour, delivered a thought provoking speech on technical aspects of NEP-2020. IQAC coordinator, Dr Manoj Patnaik offered the vote of thanks.

The guests for technical sessions were Prof Aditya Prasad Patra, former Professor of Economics, North Odisha University; Prof Sudhakar Patra, Department of Economics, Berhampur University and Prof Manas Behera, Department of Political Science, Ramadevi University, Bhubaneswar. They shared with the audience some of the most

# In Sundargarh Headmaster axed for sexual misconduct

**PNS ■ SUNDARGARH**

Headmaster of Balishankara Higher Secondary School in Sundargarh district Pramod Nayak was on Friday suspended over sexual harassment allegations levelled against him by students.

The students alleged that the headmaster used to make objectionable gestures and remarks.irate girl students of the school staged a road blockade protesting against the alleged immoral activities of Nayak.

Getting information, District Welfare Officer Pabitra Mohan Pradhan arrived at the spot and ordered Nayak's suspension following discussions with students and other officials, sources said.

According to students, earlier, teachers and officials had been informed about the matter, but no action was taken, after which they resorted to the demonstration.

The students sat on the main road demanding action against Nayak. Sources added that an inquiry has been initiated in connection with the case.

# After Chinese ship Egyptian vessel 'arrested' at Paradip Port

**PNS ■ PARADIP**

A bulk carrier, sailing under the Egyptian flag, has been 'arrested' at the Paradip Port following an order of the Orissa High Court over a monetary dispute.



The Paradip Port Authority (PPA) has detained the ship in the presence of local police on the High Court's directive.

The seizure of the vessel, which arrived from Bangladesh, was made close on the heels of the detention of a Chinese ship at Paradip. The HC has ordered the vessel's arrest until further direction.

The detention was the outcome of a dispute between a German company and the owner of the ship over the delivery of low-sulphur marine gas oil.

# BU holds talk on Union Budget, Odisha Budget

**60 papers presented**  
**PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR**

A one-day national seminar on "Viksit Bharat 2047: Implications of Union Budget and Odisha State Budget 2024" was jointly organised by the PG Department of Economics and PG Department of Commerce, Berhampur University, here on Saturday.

Vice Chancellor Prof Geetanjali Dash, former Finance Minister Panchanan Kanungo and other dignitaries inaugurated the seminar.



The welcome address was delivered by Prof Sudhakar Patra, conference convener and Head of the Department of Economics. Organising secretary Dr Mrutyunjay Swain, Professor and Head of the Department of Economics addressed the delegates and introduced the guests and themes of the seminar.

Many eminent speakers and guests including the Patron Prof Sukanta Kumar Tripathy, Chairman, PG Council; Prof Dash, the chief patron and Vice Chancellor of the university addressed the delegates. Prof Prafulla Dhal, Member Board of Director, Jagadguru Kripalu University, Odisha graced the event as the

# AIIMS BBS ranked 15th in India by NIRF

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The AIIMS Bhubaneswar has secured the 15th position in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings for 2024. This marks a significant rise from its 26th position in 2022 and 17th position last year.

The NIRF rankings, released by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, have recognised the AIIMS Bhubaneswar as the best medical college in Odisha. Under the leadership of Executive Director and CEO Dr Ashutosh Biswas, the AIIMS Bhubaneswar has excelled in

various domains, including infrastructure development, education, treatment and research.

Dr Biswas emphasised that the institution would continue its pursuit of excellence in patient care, research and the overall development of medical students.

The NIRF ranking is based on five key parameters: Teaching, Learning & Resources (TLR), Research and Professional Practice (RP), Graduation Outcomes (GO), Outreach and Inclusivity (OI) and Peer Perception (PP). AIIMS Bhubaneswar has scored an impressive 62.97 out of 100 this year.

# In Koraput Pangolin rescued; 3 held by STF

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

The Special Task Force of the Crime Branch rescued a pangolin in Koraput district and arrested three persons in this connection on Wednesday night.

The arrested were identified as Sada Disari (48) of Pukalimaliguda, Moses Khara (47) of Pukalimaliguda and Landu Tadingi (31) of Chindiri.

A team of STF had conducted a raid with the help of forest officials and Koraput police on Nandapur-Bodigoan road under the Semiliguda police station on receiving a tipoff on wildlife trade.

During the search, the pangolin, a car and other in-



criminating materials were recovered from the trio's possession.

The accused could not produce any authority in support of the possession of the pangolin, for which they were apprehended and forwarded to the JMFC Court in Semiliguda.

The pangolin was handed over to the Koraput DFO for safe custody and rehabilitation.

# 'Act against B'deshi immigrants in Odisha'

**Hindu Samaj holds demo in Brahmapur**  
**PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR**

In response to the ongoing violence and atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh following a political turmoil and recent change in Government in the neighbouring country, the Hindu Samaj organised a protest at Khallikote College Square here on Wednesday.

The event saw participation from both members of the Hindu Samaj and concerned



citizens, who gathered to express their solidarity with the affected Hindus in Bangladesh.

The demonstrators carried placards and participated in a flag march to demand immediate action from the authorities. They called for the protection of Hindus and the safety of temples in

Bangladesh, urging the Indian Government to take swift measures to ensure their security.

Among the demands raised during the protest was the identification and legal action against illegal Bangladeshi immigrants residing in Odisha. The protesters emphasized the need for the Government to

act in accordance with the law to address the issue.

Prominent figures such as Narasingha Patra, Prahallad Panigrahi, Bhagaban Choudhury, Madhab Nayak, Ranjit Patra, Arun Panda, Kedarnath Mahapatra, Sukanta Gouda, Pintu Sahu and Ajit Mahapatra were present.

# Finally Khallikote Varsity gets UGC status

**RAJEEV RATHAN ■**  
**BRAHMAPUR**

The Khallikote Unitary University here was granted University Grants Commission (UGC) status, a much-awaited recognition that marks a significant milestone for the institution, on Wednesday.

Established by the Government of Odisha in August 2021, the university's journey to this achievement has followed persistent student agitations over the past three years demanding this crucial status.

The recognition by the UGC now allows the university to award degrees as per the

provisions of the UGC Act, 1956. Additionally, the university is eligible to receive Central assistance under Section 12(B) of the UGC Act, and it has been included in the list of State (Public) Universities maintained by the UGC.

This development is seen as a victory for the students and the local community, who have actively campaigned for the status. The UGC letter to the university has emphasised the university's adherence to strict regulations, including operating within its territorial jurisdiction and the timely appointment of an ombudsman for student grievance redressal.

# No-budget allocations for 2 major rly lines decried

**Manch threatens stir in Ganjam**  
**RAJEEV RATHAN ■**  
**BRAHMAPUR**

Growing dissatisfaction in Ganjam district has sparked plans for a large-scale protest against the Union Government's perceived discriminatory attitude towards the region.

Recent discussions within the Ganjam Zilla Bikash Manch have criticized the lack of budgetary allocation for crucial projects in the district.

At a meeting held at the Naveen Bhavan, Manch president Rajendra Kumar Panda

expressed strong concerns over the omission of funds for the proposed Brahmapur-Sambalpur railway line. The forum noted that while the Brahmapur-Sambalpur line, which would pass through Bhanjanagar, Phulbani, Boudh, and Redhakhol, was previously included in the Prime Minister's Gati Shakti initiative, the Union Budget 2024-25 has failed to allocate the necessary resources to advance the project.

Similarly, a survey was conducted for the Gopalpur-Rayagada new project in 2013, which proposed a new 180 km railway line connecting Gopalpur via Brahmapur,



Digapahandi and Taptapani in Ganjam district; Mohana and Antaraba in Gajapati district; and Padmapur and Therubali in Rayagada district to connect Rayagada.

Senior journalist and convener of Manch Rabi Rath said that the exclusion of funding for the railway line is a direct affront on the people of Ganjam district. He pointed out that the project had made significant

progress, including the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) and the commencement of a survey for the 241km stretch. However, the absence of financial support in the recent budget has raised serious concerns about the Union Government's commitment to the development of the region.

Prominent voices in the meeting, including senior teacher leader Kamaraju

Maharana, advocate Dr Siba Prasad Mishra, Teachers' Association secretary Ashok Kumar Dalai, Engineer Manas Ranjan Tripathy, Ranjan Kumar Sahu and Sushant Kar echoed these sentiments. They argued that the integration of the Brahmapur-Sambalpur and Gopalpur-Rayagada railway line would provide significant benefits to the tribal populations in the area, enhancing connectivity and fostering economic development.

The forum also criticised the recent exclusion of Gopalpur from the Sagarmala project, which is designed to develop coastal infrastructure across India. The exclusion, they ar-

gued, neglects the potential benefits to the local economy, including boosts to trade, tourism and the livelihoods of fishermen and farmers. The forum urged the Government to reconsider this decision and make alternative arrangements to include Gopalpur in the project.

In a strong message to the State Government and the Union Railway Minister, who represents Odisha, the forum demanded an urgent reassessment of the budget allocations. The leaders warned that if the grievances of the Ganjam district are not addressed, the local population is prepared to launch a massive protest movement.

# Hindenburg allegations: Dhankhar takes jibe at Rahul

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n**  
NEW DELHI

In an apparent attack on Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday expressed concern that a person holding a constitutional position is asking the Supreme Court to take suo-moto cognisance to give wings to a 'narrative aimed at destroying our economy'.

Dhankhar's remarks came after the Congress on Sunday slammed the Modi Government over the Hindenburg Research's allegations against SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Buch, with Rahul saying the integrity of the market regulator has been 'gravely compromised' and demanded a JPC probe into the matter.

Addressing the first batch of



Joint Masters/LLM degree in IP Law and Management at National Law University, Delhi, the Vice President without naming anyone said, "Last week, I got extremely worried when a person holding a constitutional position beseeched the Supreme Court to suo-moto invoke jurisdiction to give wings to a narrative aimed at destroying our economy."

Addressing the students, Dhankhar said, "Our youth must equally rebuff and neutralise forces that keep

partisan or self-interest above that of our nation. We cannot allow it. If it happens, it is at the cost of our rise. You are law students, I will leave two thoughts with you. One, scratch your brains and find out. Jurisdiction of institution is defined by the Indian Constitution, be it legislature, be it executive, be it judiciary. Jurisdiction of courts is decided." "Look around the globe, look at the Supreme Court in the US, the highest court in the UK, or other formats. Has there been suo-

moto cognisance even once? Has a remedy been created beyond what is provided in the Constitution? The Constitution provides original jurisdiction, appellate jurisdiction. It provides review also. But we have curative! If you do not focus on these nuances, I wonder who shall do it. Think about it," he said.

Rahul Gandhi had also attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue, saying it is now abundantly clear why he is so afraid" of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe.

The Congress had said the Supreme Court should take suo-moto cognisance of the "entire scam" and investigate it under its aegis because here the investigating agency SEBI itself is accused of being involved in it.

# ISRO's successful launch of SSLV lauded

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday lauded the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s successful launch of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) and described it as a matter of immense joy.

"A remarkable milestone! Congratulations to our scientists and industry for this feat. It is a matter of immense joy that India now has a new launch vehicle. The cost-effective SSLV will play an important role in space missions and will also encourage private industry. My best wishes to @isro, @INSPACeIND, @NSIL\_India and the entire space industry," Modi said in a social media post.

The ISRO successfully launched its third and final developmental flight of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle here on Friday whose payloads can be used in applications like satellite-based surveillance, disaster and environmental monitoring, fire detection, volcanic activity among others.

The flight-LV-D3- would also pave the way for the industry to collaborate with ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd for taking up launches using the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle.



Home Minister Amit Shah congratulated the ISRO saying this will enhance the sustainability of the earth by facilitating environmental monitoring and disaster management. "Congratulations to @isro on the launch of SSLV-D3.

This will enhance the sustainability of the Earth by facilitating environmental monitoring and disaster management. It is a testament to Bharat's commitment to humanity under the leadership of PM Shri @narendramodi ji," Shah said in a social media post.

# Naqvi bats for Uniform Civil Code

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n**  
NEW DELHI

Batting for a uniform civil code, former Minister for Minority Affairs and BJP Leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Friday said there is a need to remain "cautious" about the "conspiracy of communal confusion" on a 'secular civil code'.

Naqvi said for the last 75 years, India has been waiting for the constitutional guidelines of uniform secular civil code to become a reality but every time this "inclusive reform has been a victim of communal castigation".

Asked about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strong pitch for a 'secular civil code', Naqvi said stalwart Leaders in the Constituent Assembly, including BR Ambedkar, were in favour of a uniform secular civil code but "communal confusion" by some people, with a "prejudiced mindset, hijacked the constitutional commitment" and the uniform civil code remained a part of the directive principles of state policy.

Naqvi said the nation's mood is "for making secular uniform civil code free from "communal confinement." The secular civil code is the need of the hour for betterment of 'mulk, mazhab and manavta' (country, religion and humanity)", he said.

Asked about the row over Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's seat at the Independence Day celebrations at the Red Fort, Naqvi said the Congress should come out of feudal arrogance and stop their "ruckus over row". "The Congress should avoid political commotion on national celebration," he said.

# 8 years after demonetisation, counterfeit notes have become rife again: Cong



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday claimed the counterfeit notes have become rife once again and termed as an "eye-wash" the Government's assertion that the overall number of counterfeit notes detected has fallen, this is an eyewash. Counterfeiting has just moved rapidly to higher-value notes, including those that were introduced specifically in the aftermath of demonetisation, Ramesh said in a social media post.

"This admission of increased counterfeiting comes shortly after the non-biological PM himself made a stunning admission of the widespread prevalence of black money during the election campaign, accusing his favourites A1 and A2 of bearing tempos and sacks full of black money," he said.

If neither black money nor counterfeiting has been curbed, what has demonetisation achieved, Ramesh asked.

The Congress Leader posted a screenshot of a Rajya Sabha question reply by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary which stated that measures have resulted in a decrease in the number of pieces of denomination-wise counterfeit notes detected / reported in the banking system from 3,17,384 in the year 2018-19 to 2,22,639 in the year 2023-24.

Ramesh also posted a media report, which cited data submitted to Parliament by the Government to point out that the new series of the Rs 500 note and the Rs 2,000 note -- both introduced after demonetisation in 2016 -- together account for just over 50 per cent of the number of counterfeit currency notes that have been detected.

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# Tech, social media bad for kids; arts, crafts good for mental health: Research

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n**  
NEW DELHI

If excessive time spent on Technology and social media can hinder children from forming meaningful connections, engaging in arts and crafts may be crucial in combating mental health problems affecting millions globally. These findings, from two recent studies, underscore the importance of protecting tender minds from the negative health impacts of technology while highlighting the benefits of creative activities for mental well-being.

Dr Helen Keyes of Anglia Ruskin University in the UK, the lead author of the study highlighted that crafting's positive effects on well-being were more significant than those of employment.

The study delved into the meaningful impact of crafting, noting that its positive effects on well-being were more significant than those of employment.

The research found that participation in creative activities significantly enhances life satisfaction, happiness, and the belief that life is worthwhile, suggesting that arts and crafts could play a key role in promoting public mental health.

"Crafting provides a sense of

achievement and a meaningful route to self-expression, which is not always the case with employment," she explained.

The study evaluated public engagement with various cultural, digital, and sporting activities, controlling for variables such as gender, age, health, employment status, and deprivation levels to assess the general impact of creative arts on well-being. Participants reported higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction, as well as a stronger sense that life is worthwhile, comparable to the benefits of being employed.

However, the study did not find a link between crafting and reduced loneliness, potentially due to the solitary nature of some crafts.

Dr Keyes emphasised the potential for governments and health services to fund and promote crafting as part of a broader approach to enhancing public well-being.

Another study based on a survey of 1,146 parents, revealed concerns over children's technology use, with 50 per cent worried about excessive screen time, 30 per cent about bullying, and 22 per cent about the social impact of the pandemic.

# President, PM pay tributes to Vajpayee on death anniversary

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n**  
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to former Prime Minister and BJP stalwart Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary on Friday.

They were joined by other dignitaries, including Union Ministers, and Leaders from different parties in paying homage to Vajpayee at his memorial 'Sadaiv Atal' here.

In his tribute, on social media Modi said, "He is remembered by countless people for his unparalleled contribution to nation-building. He devoted his entire life towards ensuring



that our fellow citizens lead a better quality of life. We will keep working to fulfill his vision for India."

A widely-respected politician acknowledged as among the finest orators, Vajpayee played a crucial role in drawing allies for his party in the coalition era of the '90s and became the first Prime Minister from the BJP. His stewardship of the country between 1998-2004 is known for reforms and boost to infrastructure sectors. He passed away in 2018 at the age of 93 years.

# Army Chief felicitates Army sportspersons for Olympics feat

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n**  
NEW DELHI

Army Chief General Anupendra Dwidedi on Friday here felicitated Indian Army sportspersons for their remarkable accomplishments at the Paris Olympics 2024. The ceremony was held at South Block and was not just an occasion to celebrate the achievements but also to acknowledge the pivotal role the Indian Army has played in nurturing sporting talent in the nation.

The Indian contingent clinched a total of six medals (one silver and five bronze) at the Paris Olympics, with Subedar Major Neeraj Chopra of the Indian Army winning the only silver medal in Javelin for India. This exemplary performance has



etched itself as one of the most remarkable displays of the Indian Army at the Olympic Games.

Major highlights of the performance by Indian Army Personnel include Neeraj Chopra - Silver Medal, Subedar Bommandevara Dhiraj in Archery (Recurve)- 4th Position. As India

sporting talent. To further empower the youth and propel them towards global excellence, the Indian Army has set up two Girls Sports Companies and 18 Boys Sports Companies. These initiatives aim to provide a platform for young athletes to hone their skills, build their confidence, and compete at the highest level.

Army Chief expressed profound pride in the incredible achievements of the Army's sportspersons. Their discipline, perseverance, and dedication symbolise the core values of the Indian Army. He expressed confidence that the Indian Army sportspersons would continue their quest for excellence and achieve greater heights in the coming days.

# Malayalam movie Aattam bags best feature film award

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n**  
NEW DELHI

Regional cinema dominated the National Film Awards announced on Friday with best feature film going to Malayalam movie "Aattam: The Play" and Rishabh Shetty bagging best actor for the Kannada hit "Kantara".

The best actress prize was shared by Nithya Menen, for the Tamil film "Thiruchitrambalam", and Manasi Parekh for the Gujarati movie "Kutch Express".

The lone Bollywood presence in the top categories for the 70th edition of the national awards was "Uunchai" with Sooraj R Barjatya named best director.

The adventure film, centred on four aging friends readying to scale Mt Everest, also won Neena Gupta a best supporting actress prize. "It is yet to sink in. I've got two National Awards in the past and I'm getting another National award after many many years, it's a big thing for me," Gupta, who bagged awards for the non-feature "Bazar Sitaram" in 1993 and for "Woh Chokri" in 1994, told PTI.

A big winner in the awards for 2022 was the Haryanvi film



"Fouja", which got Pavan Malhotra a best supporting actor and won two other awards -- best debut film of a director for Pramod Kumar and best lyrics to Naushad Sadar Khan.

The awards were announced by Rahul Rawail, head of the jury for the feature film category.

"Aattam: The Play", directed by Anand Ekarshi, revolves around a theatre troupe and the changing dynamics after its only woman member



alleges she has been groped by one of the men. The Kannada blockbuster "Kantara", which explores the intricate connection between humanity and nature through its folklore-based storytelling, was also named in the category for best popular film providing wholesome entertainment. Best actor Shetty plays the dual roles of a father and son.

Sharmila Tagore and Manoj Bajpayee starrer "Gulmohar", a family drama exploring the meaning of family and home, was judged best Hindi film



with its director Rahul V Chittela taking home the award for best dialogue writer

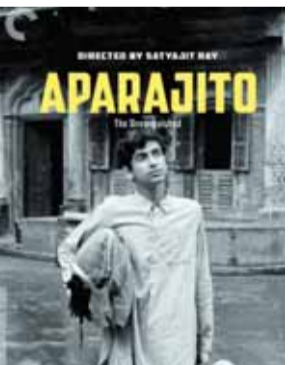
with Arpita Mukherjee. Bajpayee also got a special mention along with music director Sanjoy Salil Chowdhury for Malayalam title "Kadhikan". AR Rahman won the National Film Award for best music director (background music) for his work in Mani Ratnam's "Ponniyin Selvan-Part 1",



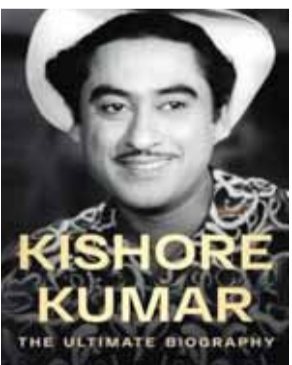
which was also named the best Tamil film. Pritam got the award for best music director

(songs) for "Brahmastra-Part 1". Arijit Singh was named the best male playback singer for the song "Kesariya" from Ayan Mukerji's "Brahmastra Part One: Shiva".

The Ranbir Kapoor-Alia Bhatt starrer also bagged the award for best film in AVGC (animation, visual effects, gaming and comic) category.



Padma Shri awardee Bombay Jayashri won the award for best female playback singer for the track "Chaayum Veyil" for "Saadi Vellaka CC 225/2009", which also won the best Malayalam film award. Besides the best actress honour for Menen, "Thiruchitrambalam", a comedy also starring Dhanush, earned the honour for best choreography for Jani Master and Sathish Krishnan. Niki Joshi won the trophy for best costume designer for "Kutch Express". Seasoned cinematographer Ravi Varman bagged the best



cinematography for Ratnam's "Ponniyin Selvan", which also took the honour for best sound design for Anand Krishnamoorthi.

"Aattam" won two more awards -- best screenplay (original) for Anand Ekarshi and best editing for Mahesh Bhuvanendri. The award for best animation direction (stunt choreography) went to Anbumani and Arivumani, jointly known as Anbariv. The best child artist award went to Sreepath for "Malikapuram" in Malayalam. From Bengali

cinema, "Aparajito" won the award for best make-up and best production design for Anand Adhya, while best Bengali film went to Kaushik Ganguly's "Kaberi Antardhan". The other regional films that won awards include "Kartikeya 2" (Telugu), "Baaghi Di Dhee" (Punjabi), "Daman" (Odia), "Vaalvi" (Marathi) and "KGF: Chapter 2" (Kannada).

The best Tiwa film award was won by "Sikaisal". From the non-feature category, the top honour went to "Ayna" by director Siddhant Sarin. Filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj won the best music director for his short film "Fursat". "Just heard about the national award for Fursat. I am deeply happy to get my 9th national award. It's the biggest award of our country.

The only one that truly matters. And winning this is the greatest validation of my work! Thank you jury for this. Now I need to strive for a double digit," the director, who had earlier won the same honour for short film "1232 KMS", said in a statement.

The best film critic award went to Deepak Dua. Anirudha Bhattacharjee and Parthiv Dhar won the best book on cinema for "Kishore Kumar: The Ultimate Biography".

## 70th National Film Awards

# 'Arbitrary and suspicious': BJP MP on K'taka Govt's decision to snap dealings with SBI, PNB

PTI n BENGALURU



BJP Rajya Sabha member Friday said the Karnataka government's decision to close its accounts with the State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank looked "arbitrary and suspicious" in view of a Rs 187 crore scam in a state-owned corporation through the Union Bank of India.

Siroya wondered whether a state government could take such a unilateral decision against two nationalised banks and whether or not all the banks are governed by the rules and regulations of the RBI. "If the state government has problems with the banks, should they not have reached out to the RBI? Can some nationalised banks be more acceptable and some less to the state government? What is the nature of misappropriation that the state government is talking about? Have they probed it? What really is happening within the Government of Karnataka?" the BJP asked.

# ISRO targets first Gaganyaan mission launch by December, says chairman

PTI n SRIHARIKOTA (ANDHRA PRADESH)



ISRO has targeted to launch the first mission of the ambitious Gaganyaan project by December, a top official said here on Friday. Currently, some of the rocket hardware for the human space programme has reached the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here and the integration of the crew module was going on at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Trivandrum, ISRO Chairman S Somnath said.

Today's successful mission of LV allows industry to forge a partnership with ISRO for placing satellites into Low Earth Orbit. Besides, it would also allow a company to gain knowledge on rockets, launch vehicles, and satellites in the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle missions.

expectations from ISRO and how to qualify for such missions," he said. From the interactions held with the industry it emerged there was a huge amount of interest for them to learn about space, he added.

# Tension in Maha cities during protest over anti-Hindu violence in Bangladesh

PTI n MUMBAI

Tension erupted in Jalgaon and Nashik cities in north Maharashtra on Friday during a bandh called by a Hindu organisation to condemn the atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh, officials said.

Mumbai. The police resorted to a mild lathi charge after two groups clashed during a bike rally of the Hindu outfit in Nashik, an official said. Stones were pelted, and some vehicles were damaged in the clash that erupted after some shops were found open in the Bhadrakali area.

# BRS on course-correction, wants to learn from other Opp parties in country

PTI n HYDERABAD

After a humiliating defeat in the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, the BRS is now planning to reinvent itself and also plans to study from other opposition parties in the country to possibly emulate them, the party's working president KT Rama Rao said on Friday.



concluded Lok Sabha polls. Bharat Rashtira Samithi (then Telangana Rashtira Samithi) had won nine seats and secured a vote share of 41.71 per cent in the 2019 Parliamentary elections.

of this is important for us to learn from other political parties," he further said. To a query on the Congress Party's allegation that BRS has a "tacit" understanding with BJP, Rao dismissed them saying they are baseless.



# Downpour in Rajasthan, Bundi's Hindoli records 220 mm rain

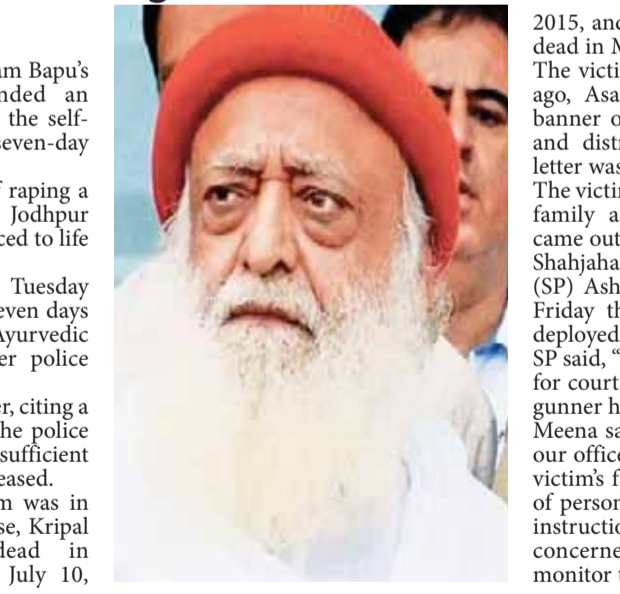
PTI n JAIPUR

Heavy rain lashed parts of Rajasthan, including Bundi district where the rainfall levels exceeded the 200-mm mark. Some places in Jaipur, Dausa, Baran, Nagaur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Pali and Sawai Madhopur districts witnessed heavy rainfall.

# Parole of Asaram Bapu: Rape victim's family seeks more security

PTI n SHAHJAHANPUR (UP)

The family members of Asaram Bapu's rape victim have demanded an increase in their security after the self-styled godman was granted a seven-day parole.



2015, and another witness was also shot dead in Muzaffarnagar.

The victim's father said that "Four years ago, Asaram's followers had put up a banner of Asaram in Shahjahanpur jail and distributed blankets and a threat letter was also sent to my house."

# Renukaswamy murder case: Final report will be submitted to court soon, says top cop

PTI n BENGALURU

Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda on Friday said the final report in connection with the Renukaswamy murder case in which Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and others are accused will be submitted to the court by the police at the earliest after getting remaining forensic reports.

The evidence gathered has been sent to Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), Bengaluru, and some electronic devices were sent to Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) in Hyderabad, Dayananda said.

# Sad it happened in State where a woman is CM: U'khand Speaker

PTI n DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Assembly Speaker Ritu Khanduri on Friday condemned the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in West Bengal and said it is "even sadder" that the incident happened in a state governed by a woman chief minister.

allegedly raped and murdered while on duty at a state-run medical college and hospital in Kolkata on August 9. While a civic volunteer was arrested in connection with the crime the next day, the Calcutta High Court ordered the immediate transfer of the probe into the crime to the CBI from the Kolkata Police.

# KOLKATA RAPE-MURDER



"We ask girls many questions, like where do you keep roaming around? Why do you speak so loudly? Why do you laugh so much? Boys are not asked such questions."

About reports of atrocities against the Hindu minority in Bangladesh, the Uttarakhand Assembly speaker said it is not right to persecute people because they are in the minority or are weak.

taken into account," she said. Underlining the need for population control, which she claimed would solve many things, Khanduri said, "Population control will be not only for Muslims but for the whole country and it will benefit everyone."

Heavy rainfall is likely in the state from 17 August and clear skies and sunshine will be in most parts during August 17 to 22, the official said.

## PM roots for women safety

PM calls for strictest punishment for crimes against women amidst protests over rape and murder of resident doctor

The streets of Kolkata have erupted in widespread protests following the heinous rape and murder of a young resident doctor, a crime that has left the entire nation in shock and sorrow. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has expressed his firm stance on the issue, calling for the strictest possible punishment for those involved in crimes against women. The victim, a 28-year-old resident doctor at a prominent Kolkata hospital, was found murdered under gruesome circumstances after being raped. The brutal crime has triggered widespread anger, as doctors, students, and activists have taken to the streets to demand swift and severe action against the perpetrators. Placards reading "Justice for our sister" and "Stop violence against women" are being carried by hundreds of protesters across the city, while candlelight vigils continue to spread across the nation. The medical community, in particular, has expressed its fury, with many health professionals going on strike, calling for stronger

protection and justice for female healthcare workers, who often face threats and harassment in the course of their duties.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in response to the national outrage, has unequivocally condemned the horrific crime. In his address to the nation on Independence Day, he emphasised the government's commitment to ensuring the safety of women in the country. Modi reiterated his stance that there must be zero tolerance for crimes against women, and perpetrators should face the most stringent punishment under the law. But it is not that we do not have strict laws for crime against women but the problem is

their execution. The new amendments to criminal laws have additional features to expedite such cases. The new provisions include the death penalty for rape, video recording of crime scenes, and a witness protection program, etc. All of which could prove to help resolve such cases. However, only time will reveal how effectively these measures will be implemented on the ground and the guilty punished speedily. Women's safety has been a recurring concern in India, and incidents like this continue to raise questions about the effectiveness of existing laws and preventive measures. The Prime Minister's call for the strictest punishment has been widely welcomed, but it remains to be seen how these words will translate into concrete legal reforms. However, having laws is one thing and reforming the society is quite another. The attitude of society towards women must change. Most cases go unreported as the victims are often blamed by society; questions like 'why were you there?', 'what were you wearing?' and so on are posed to her to hold her responsible. The process becomes punishment and the victim has to live with the stigma for the rest of her life. The nation now awaits justice—not just for one young doctor, but for all the women who have suffered in silence.

### PICTALK



Artists perform at Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Independence Day in Jaipur

# Terrorism resurges amid shifts in strategy



SUDHIR HINDWAN

With militants shifting their focus to Jammu and adopting more aggressive strategies, concerns over national security are once again at the forefront

The recent terrorist attack on Army Captain Deepak Singh, tragically killed a day before India's 78th Independence Day, must be condemned unequivocally. This act of violence, along with the discovery that at least three terrorists were hiding in the Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), underscores the persistence of militant activities in the region. Unfortunately, this incident is not an isolated one but a continuation of the long-standing saga of terrorism in J&K. Recent attacks in Jammu indicate a significant shift in terrorist activities due to several factors.

Firstly, terrorists want to send a message that despite the abrogation of Article 370 and the central government's commendable efforts, the situation in J&K remains unstable. Secondly, Jammu's vast forest areas provide an ideal base for militants to launch guerrilla attacks and evade security forces. Thirdly, the improved law and order situation in Kashmir has led to a shift in insurgent focus toward Jammu. Lastly, while terrorism in the region had been suppressed for a time, it has not been eradicated, and militants are now re-emerging with increased vigor. J&K has long been a target of insurgents. Over the years, numerous terrorist attacks in areas like Sopore, Budgam, and Dooru Shahbad have raised serious concerns for security agencies. What is particularly alarming about the recent upsurge is the shift in strategy. Terrorists are no longer just targeting the military and police but are also attacking civilians, indicating their desperation to gain attention. Additionally, there has been no respite between these attacks, as militants seem relentless in their mission of destruction. Unlike in the past, Jammu has now become the epicenter of this terror onslaught due to its proximity to the border. Religion has once again resurfaced as a significant motivating factor for terrorists. The primary goal of these terrorists is to destabilize the region and create a vulnerable atmosphere. The involvement of a neighboring



country with a hidden agenda cannot be ruled out. For many militants, terrorism provides a livelihood, with individuals willing to sacrifice their lives for monetary compensation. Ajmal Kasab, the infamous terrorist involved in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, is one such example of someone misled into committing heinous acts in exchange for money.

Despite efforts by the central government to address the issue through dialogues with Pakistan and engaging with separatists, insurgent activities continue unabated. Policymakers must recognize that terrorism directly impacts the nation's well-being. Anti-terrorism policies must be flexible and responsive to changing threats, utilizing the latest recommendations and technologies to ensure security. Today's terrorists are far more organized and professional than those from a decade ago. Although new security measures have been implemented, the threat remains unpredictable. The region's geography provides an ideal base for guerrilla activities, and the militants have become more sophisticated in their strategies, acquiring advanced weapons from across the border. Their use of automatic weapons, grenades, and low-intensity bombs demonstrates meticulous planning and execution. This modern breed of terrorists no longer hides in the



THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF TERRORISM IS PSYCHOLOGICAL. TERRORISTS SEEK TO ALTER BEHAVIOR AND BRING ABOUT SOCIETAL OR GOVERNMENTAL CHANGES THROUGH FEAR

shadows. They openly attack, targeting financial hubs and other vital locations, as seen in recent global terror incidents. Terrorists exploit advances in transportation and weaponry to expand their networks. Suicide squads, in particular, have shocked the security apparatus with their boldness and brutality. Terrorists meticulously plan their attacks, aiming to inspire fear and manipulate the public to achieve their objectives.

In his famous work, "Why Men Rebel," Ted Robert Gurr argues that people driven by intense motivation toward a goal often resort to violence. This is evident in modern terrorism, where militants see their acts as justified sacrifices for a cause. William Henry also noted that some political movements are so deeply rooted in commitment that no sanctions can deter them. International experts like Professor Yonah Alexander have analyzed the evolution of terrorism. Modern terrorists differ from their predecessors in their use of technology and tactics. Small, sophisticated groups now employ increasingly violent methods to create a psychological impact, aiming to instill fear in the public and force governments to react.

The ultimate goal of terrorism is psychological, not practical. Terrorists seek to alter behavior and bring about societal or

governmental changes through fear. There is an urgent need for preventive measures to address the grievances fueling terrorism, improved security strategies, and an understanding of the social and cultural factors driving people to insurgency. Effective counter-terrorism efforts require not just governmental action but also community involvement. Citizens can play a critical role in improving security by cooperating with law enforcement agencies. Beyond strict anti-terrorism laws, programs aimed at addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty and lack of education, are essential. Several nations have taken steps to combat state-sponsored terrorism, including economic sanctions, but consensus remains elusive at both the national and international levels. The nexus between drug smuggling and terrorism further complicates matters. To address this, judicial procedures must be streamlined to ensure speedy trials for those involved in drug trafficking and terrorism. India, in particular, can learn valuable lessons from the counter-terrorism efforts of other nations, such as the United States, which has effectively prevented major terrorist attacks since 9/11. (The author, a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav award, is a professor and expert on strategic affairs; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TUNGABHADRA DAM BREACHED

Madam — Tungabhadra dam crest gate has swept away in the water after its chain link snapped. The ancient name of the river Tungabhadra was Pampa. In the epic Ramayana also, this river was called by name Pampa. Construction of the dam started in 1949 and completed in 1953 is said to be irrigating 12 lakh acres of land. It is more than 70 years since the dam was dedicated to the nation. The fall of 19th crest gate has led to the release of over 1 lakh cusecs of water into the river. By the time the new gate is fixed, much more water will be lost to the river. It is said that the water level has to be brought down to 60 cmft for installing new gate. This incident must open the eyes of all the riparian states to inspect the dams which have been built decades ago. It goes without saying that like any other national asset, the dams have also their own life. Dams always face water pressure and it would be too high during the rainy season when the rivers carry unprecedented quantity of water. Any laxity shown in the proper maintenance of dams reduces the life of dams. It is said that the crest gate swept away during midnight. Had it happened during day time, there would have been the possibility of people and animals falling victims to the sudden gushing of water. Former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has blamed the state government for ignoring the recommendations of the dam committee that came from centre. If it is true that the state government has not taken seriously the recommendations of the committee, the state government must accept the blame.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

DISAPPOINTING VERDICT Madam — It is both sad and disappointing that the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has dismissed Vinesh Phogat's appeal to be declared a joint silver medalist, despite her convincing vic-

### Independence Day pledge



The editorial, 'Happy independence day' (15-8-24) presents a positive note and it is welcome. India has marched ahead from a scrap level to the level of this day. Right from the day the country got freedom a lot of committed efforts have been put in by successive governments. There is no scope for any individual or a particular party to claim credit. However, independence day is a day to identify the important tasks and

commit to achieve them with all sincerity and nationalist spirit. The crucial task before the country is not owning a space station but providing employment to the educated youth who are longing for a job, providing a viable livelihood for the 81.35 crore poor who are depending on free rations, provide easy access to the poor avail quality education and healthcare. If these tasks are attended to the rest of the developments will happen on their own.

The development we are trying to glorify now is creating billionaires on one hand and forcing the poor mass and the middle class sections to keep on tightening their belts. Continuing this trend carries the potential of landing the country in a social and economic crisis. On this day we should also take pledge to improve the country's ranking in global indexes like hunger index, malnutrition, freedom of expression etc.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

After winning three bouts against top athletes from Ukraine, Japan, and Cuba, Phogat's weight increased slightly after taking refreshments to recover. Despite her efforts to reduce her weight through exercise and even trimming her hair, she missed the limit by just 100 grams.

According to Rule 11 of the United World Wrestling (UWW), athletes must weigh in daily, and failure to meet the weight results in disqualification and forfeiture of previous wins. This rule, however, contradicts the Olympic Charter, which encourages the support of women athletes (Bylaws 2.8 and 2.10) and promotes their health and well-being (Bylaw 2.18). The back-to-back scheduling of bouts, without adequate recovery time, led to Phogat's physical exhaustion, violating these principles. If the UWW rule were consistent with the Olympic Charter, her disqualification would not have occurred. Phogat's plea to be recognized as a joint silver medalist is justified, given her previous

performance and the fact that her disqualification was a result of an unfair rule.

Gopalswamy J | Chennai

### RESPECT THE NATIONAL FLAG

Madam — On August 15, all Indians celebrate by singing patriotic songs, posting quotations on social media, and staging emotional plays to instill patriotism in young minds. However, the enthusiasm often wanes the next day. Selling flags made of paper and plastic, only to have them treated disrespectfully, is wrong. This disrespect must cease. Our focus should shift to the country's needs beyond just one-day celebrations and songs. Though an individual can't change the entire system, collective efforts can. After so many sacrifices by our great leaders, we must question if we're truly an independent nation or only in name.

Md Imadullah | Muzaffarpur

## How to make disaster relief truly effective

While people across the nation have come together to help, challenge remains in ensuring that assistance truly reaches those in need

The jury is still out on whether the recent landslides in Wayanad is a result of human callousness or nature's own waywardness. Two weeks after the deluge, there is still no confirmed count of lives lost. Survivors and search teams are continuing to sift through the debris to find remains of those swept away. With everything lost, scores are staring at the challenge of finding some means to take life forward. Monsoon doesn't evoke tender sentiments of love and romance any longer. It now denotes death and destruction. It shows how hapless man is before fate and it also bears testimony to human resilience in the face of catastrophe.

Like it happened once in 2018, when the whole of Kerala stood up and held hands to rescue and rebuild those caught in the floods, people came together in the aftermath of the recent landslides too. Helping hands were extended from far and wide and relief materials dispatched at short notice. And from hordes of donors came loads of unwanted things too: from used clothes



to perishables that cannot be used optimally. A social media post showed volunteers grappling with heaps of material that reflected collective compassion and magnanimity, but also underlined the difficulty of harnessing people's largesse effectively. An appeal was made to the public to avoid sending vegetables and bread, and chiefly clothes, and instead dispatch other essentials. It was misconstrued by a segment of people and sent wrong signals that the hundreds who had taken shelter in relief camps did not need help anymore as much of it was languishing in the collection centres. Nothing could be further from the

truth. Whether in the tragic instances of natural calamity or in war-ravaged parts of the world where people have had to flee and seek refuge in makeshift camps, there is a colossal need for human kindness and generosity. But we often make mistakes in the way we express and extend this willingness to help and save people from aftermaths of misfortunes. The first thing that comes to our common mind when we talk of aid is heaps of clothes that we dump in collection centres. Although the amount of second-hand wear that people dispose in the name of charity has decreased with awareness campaigns, there still is a huge dearth of information and knowledge regarding the kind of assistance people in relief camps need - be it after a natural calamity or in strife-ridden communities.

There is also scepticism with regard to monetary help: trust is lacking and not many believe that the funds are allocated rightly and to the needy because there are no means to trace the money trail. That a lot of cash gets siphoned off is the public perception. Given this, how do good-natured people who are willing to lend a helping hand to the afflicted make a contribution? What is a trusted channel? It is hard to say with certainty, but the only choice we have is to trust the people who take up such endeavours or be part of volunteer groups that initiates such action. It is indeed a shame that some devious minds take advantage of this opportunity to make a quick buck and instances of wrongdoing are not unheard of. But at the end of the day, it is one person's misery meeting another person's magnanimity. Creating safe and guaranteed channels of help and support will make more people come forward to restore the lives of those affected. The onus of winning public trust through transparency lies with community leaders, politicians and philanthropists. Even the kindest thoughts and action can go to waste if they are not done with discretion. (The author is a Dubai-based columnist and writing coach; views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR



## FIRST COLUMN

### THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF ARROGANCE

Arrogance can lead to both greatness and self-destruction. The key lies in mastering it



RAVI VALLURI

Our mythology (particularly The Ramayana and The Mahabharata) is brimming with several well-stocked illustrations in respect of characters plagued with hubris, hurling them down to their nemesis. We are aware of the conceited Ravana and the unbridled ambitions of Duryodhana. An angry and arrogant mind gets blurred and smudges the vision of an individual. Consequently, he behaves in a groundless manner, which has calamitous and baleful consequences for the person and those in his companionship. Is it possible to associate with such individuals who are prone to filibustering and arrogance?

The answer is an emphatic NO since there is no dialogue, only a monologue or a harangue by the self-conceited person. This drains our energy levels, a situation we would like to circumvent to save ourselves and our minds. The human mind assumes unnatural patterns and behaves in a volatile manner. A volcano of anger and arrogance erupts unexpectedly. Such individuals are veritable prisoners of their image, which is conceited and egotist. Mike Tyson, who earned epithets like Iron Mike, the Baddest Man on the Planet and Kid Dynamite outside the Ring, was convicted of rape and consuming marijuana and suffered from bipolar disorder.

He has had several brushes with the law. Tyson strongly felt that he was stigmatised by American society and that US society has not been constructed on the principles of justice, but on rape, grime, slavery, and injustice. He married thrice, besides various dalliances and philandering. He underwent reformation. He was proselytised and sought refuge in 'Allah'.



He converted the raw energy of anger and arrogance in the boxing ring where he was extremely successful. The mythological figures mentioned earlier, who were victims of anger and arrogance, bore bruised egos resulting from bruised feelings and emotions, alongside a deep sense of hurt and resentment. Ravana lusted after Sita and felt slighted that his sister Surpanakha was cold-shouldered and disfigured by Lakshmana. All his life Karno bore the cross of being called a shudra, his many talents, and abilities notwithstanding. Duryodhana remained perpetually infantile, given to juvenile behaviour.

Besides, he was under the delusion that the powers that be of Hastinapur would have never agreed to his accession after his father Dhritarashtra abdicated the throne. The feelings of hurt, playing a victim, jealousy, and injury, get metamorphosed in such personalities into deep-seated vexation and anger, leading to false bravado and arrogance.

The anger and arrogance get vitiated into negative thoughts, leading to self-destruction under the strain of self-delusion. However strange it may appear, there is a flip side at the end of the spectrum, where individuals have deployed emotions of anger and arrogance to become achievers. "Anybody can become angry—that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose and in the right way—that is not within everybody's power and is not easy," wrote Aristotle.

Who does not miss the swagger of Vivian Richards, and the ferocity of the pace of Dennis Lillee and Thomson? Several politicians, industrialists, writers, artists, kings and monarchs could channelise this energy of anger and arrogance to become highly victorious and triumphant. "To be a tennis champion, you must be inflexible, you must be stubborn, you must be arrogant, and you must be selfish and self-absorbed. Kind of tunnel vision almost," says Chris Evert. Therefore, arrogance is a double-edged sword. Often it subsumes the personalities to self-destruction as they lack the power of self-discrimination and self-examination, thus becoming victims of guilt and persecution complex.

*(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)*

# Afghanistan's struggle after the US withdrawal



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

As Afghanistan observes the third anniversary of the contentious US withdrawal, the country continues to face upheaval, struggling with a severe humanitarian crisis under Taliban

Experts from the United Nations have issued a statement regarding the situation in Afghanistan, commemorating three years since the United States and its allies' shameless and disgraceful withdrawal, betraying the Afghan people. Based on historical patterns, this represents yet another instance of a nation being abandoned, leaving its people in a dire state while the US and its proxies maintain indirect control. The irony is striking: the very group once branded as terrorists by the West is now, paradoxically, expected to govern, despite having been considered freedom fighters not long ago. The UN experts express grave concern over ongoing human rights violations under the Taliban regime, highlighting systemic discrimination, segregation, and severe marginalisation of women and girls.

As we confront three years of this precarious status quo, it is evident that isolationism is inadequate. The international community must seek effective engagement strategies to address the complex realities in Afghanistan, moving beyond mere diplomatic or punitive measures. In this context, it is crucial to reassess Afghanistan's historical trajectory, where the land has been used as an instrument by powerful actors, often at the expense of one of the most vibrant and resilient human communities. In the aftermath of the September 2001 attacks, the world bore a heavy cost as the United States' "war on terror" led to the deaths of over a million unarmed civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, ostensibly in pursuit of justice for the three thousand lost lives. This tragic toll exposes the brutal reality of US foreign policy, which relies on organised violence against perceived threats to its dominance, highlighting the need for a significant realignment. The disgraceful withdrawal from Afghanistan, marked by the abandonment of billions of dollars worth of weapons, exemplifies the catastrophic failure of this approach.

Meanwhile, a recent UNICEF report reveals the severe mental health crisis afflicting Afghan children, with over 24 per cent suffering from anxiety—ten times the global average—and 15 per cent battling depression, underscoring the profound psychological trauma inflicted by the ongoing conflict. Western civilisation often positions itself as the pinnacle of human development, a hubris that has led to immense destruction. The US's quest for global dominance sowed the seeds of terrorism; groups now labelled as terrorists, such as the Afghan Mujahideen, were initially supported by the US through covert operations like Operation Cyclone, with British intelligence aiding in what became one of the most costly US operations. During the Cold War, the US, in its zeal to counter Soviet influence, allied with any force against the USSR, turning a blind eye to human rights and legal norms. While seeking to replicate the Soviet Union's Vietnam misstep, the US supported the Mujahideen in Afghanistan via Pakistan. In 1987, President Reagan praised Mujahideen's progress and promised ongoing support for a free Afghanistan.

Yet, subsequent US actions revealed stark hypocrisy and a readiness to use ruthless tactics for political advantage. The Afghan crisis offers crucial insights into global power dynamics. Understanding the Soviet invasion requires recognising its complex



background and the rise and fall of Afghanistan's communist regime from 1978 to 1989. The communist ideology, as practised under Stalin, evolved into a form of tribal feudalism, which some in Afghanistan found more appealing than Western market economies. This alignment facilitated political power for those who exploited socialism for their ends, illustrating how political ideologies can be distorted to serve specific interests, ultimately leading to their downfall. The introduction of communism into Afghanistan profoundly impacted its social structure. Afghanistan, a fragmented region with diverse tribal groups and a mountainous terrain, was ill-suited for a unitary political system. Federalism might have been more effective, but this reality was often overlooked, leading to ongoing violence that the Taliban would inherit.



DURING THE COLD WAR, THE US, IN ITS ZEAL TO COUNTER SOVIET INFLUENCE, ALLIED WITH ANY FORCE AGAINST THE USSR, TURNING A BLIND EYE TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGAL NORMS

In the 1970s, reformist movements emerged, bringing communist ideologies to Afghanistan. Abdulrahman Mahmudi, an early communist figure, founded the newspaper Nida'-yi-Khalq (Voice of the People) and the Hezb-e Khalq (People's Party) in the late 1940s. Although imprisoned and later dying in 1963, Mahmudi's legacy continued through his family until the 1970s, eventually evolving into a Maoist movement. Prominent leftists like Mir Muhammad Siddique Farhan and Noor Muhammad Taraki also played significant roles, with Taraki becoming a key communist leader after returning from India. The Afghan monarchy, led by Mohammad Zahir Shah, was overthrown in a coup by his cousin General Mohammad Dawood Khan on July 17, 1973. Dawood established the Republic of

Afghanistan but was ousted in 1978 by leftist leaders Noor Mohammad Taraki, Babrak Karmal, and Hafizullah Amin, following the assassination of Mir Akbar Khyber. Taraki's presidency and Amin's prime ministership attempted significant social reforms, but their rapid implementation in a culturally resistant society led to widespread protests. The political struggle culminated in a coup by Amin, who ousted Taraki, later reported as dying of an "unknown illness" but suffocated by guards. Key figures in pre-Taliban Afghan politics included Mohammad Zahir Shah, Mohammad Dawood Khan, Mir Akbar Khyber, Noor Mohammad Taraki, and Hafizullah Amin. Mohammad Zahir Shah, king of Afghanistan from 1933 to 1973, oversaw significant social reforms and modernisation efforts. Educated in Kabul and France, Zahir Shah returned to Afghanistan at age 19 and took on various roles within the monarchy. By the early 1960s, he was a respected ruler who embraced democratic principles and established a new parliament, working to modernise Afghanistan and improve living standards. Many nostalgic images of pre-Taliban Afghanistan reflect the successes of his administration.

In 1973, while Zahir Shah was in Italy for eye surgery, his cousin Mohammad Dawood Khan overthrew the government and established a new regime. Zahir Shah spent decades in Italy, during which Afghanistan's progress towards democracy was undone. Dawood's regime, followed by the leadership of Noor Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, marked a shift towards Cold War-era conflicts. The assassination of Mir Akbar Khyber, whose killer remains debat-

ed, facilitated Taraki and Amin's rise to power. Taraki's government, which came to power in April 1978, was seen as a new dawn but soon became mired in violence and discord. The administration's failure to address the needs of Afghan refugees and internal dissent led to widespread dissatisfaction. Taraki's efforts to implement rapid social reforms, aimed at expediting the revolution, only intensified internal strife and fuelled extremist opposition, further destabilising the country. In August 1978, Noor Mohammad Taraki, addressing the growing Islamic protest movement, remarked: "From the moment our party assumed power, capitalist and reactionary forces have sought to undermine us using religion as a weapon against our progressive agenda. This tactic is outdated and flawed. These forces, driven by imperialistic agendas, aim to overthrow our government, believing they can succeed swiftly. But we are resilient, and their conspiracies are merely remnants of failed efforts against progressive movements." Taraki's statement reflects the early resistance he faced, which he struggled to address effectively.

Internal strife within his party, particularly with Hafizullah Amin, compounded his challenges. Taraki, who once praised Amin's ambition, soon discovered Amin's dangerous intentions. Despite Taraki's belief that Soviet support would safeguard his power, his political naivety and disregard for social realities created a fertile ground for extremist groups nurtured by Pakistan. This eventually led to Amin's rise and the Soviet intervention. To be continued

*(The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are personal)*

## Brutality against female doctors raises questions on safety in govt hospitals

The brutal assault on a resident doctor in Kolkata has sent shockwaves across the nation raising questions about systemic negligence

In 1973, Aruna Shanbaug, a 25-year-old nurse at Mumbai's KEM Hospital, was brutally assaulted—raped and strangled with a metal dog chain—which left her in a vegetative state for the next 43 years. Five decades later, history has repeated itself with the horrific rape and murder of a 31-year-old resident doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College. Both crimes occurred within hospital premises, underscoring the vulnerability of female medical staff in supposedly secure environments. The question is inevitable: has the state failed these women—and society—yet again?

The recent murder of the Kolkata doctor has sparked outrage across the nation. Protests by junior doctors have



RAHUL KAMBLE

disrupted medical services, as they demand justice and action. While a "civic volunteer" was arrested, there is growing suspicion that more individuals were involved in this gruesome crime. What's particularly alarming is that the assailant may have been a regular visitor to the hospital, raising the likelihood that he had prior interactions with the victim. The nature of her injuries, as revealed by the

post-mortem report, suggests that this was not only an act of sexual violence but also one of intense personal vengeance. Crimes of this brutality—especially those involving rape—are not isolated incidents in India. In 2022, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported an average of 90 rapes per day. However, authorities acknowledge that the actual number could be much higher, as many rapes go unreported due to societal taboos. Unofficial estimates suggest that over 100 rapes occur daily in India, with a staggering 80% of them classified as brutal. Despite the shocking frequency of such attacks, society and the state have failed to address the root causes effectively. The 1973 case of Aruna

Shanbaug was a grim precursor to today's epidemic of violence against women. After being raped and left for dead by a ward boy, she remained in a coma for 43 years, lovingly cared for by her colleagues. Her assailant, however, served only seven years in jail. Aruna's case remained in the media spotlight for decades, yet no sweeping reforms were made to improve the safety of female medical staff. Hospitals like RG Kar Medical College continue to lack basic security protocols, leaving women vulnerable to heinous acts of violence.

Despite the public outcry that followed Aruna's case, and the more recent protests in Kolkata, most state-run hospitals have not implemented adequate safety measures. The issue of relying on "civic



volunteers" instead of trained security personnel has long been a problem in government-run hospitals. These volunteers are often paid meager wages and supplement their income through unofficial means. Many have political affiliations, which give them a degree of immunity from disciplinary action. Year after year, issues related to hospital safety—such as malfunctioning CCTV cameras, poorly lit areas, and inadequate

security staff—are flagged but seldom addressed. These failures have made doctors, especially women, increasingly vulnerable to attacks. The horrific gang rape of a young woman in Delhi in 2012 led to promises of reforms, yet most of these remain unfulfilled. The Nirbhaya Fund, created in the aftermath of that tragedy to improve women's safety, remains largely underutilized. Between 2013 and 2022, less than half of its allocation was spent. The gap between intentions and outcome remains wide, and women continue to pay the price for this failure.

The implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act of 2013 has been half-hearted at best. Women in the

medical profession are especially vulnerable—not only to sexual assault but also to intimidation and violence from patients, hospital staff, colleagues, and even senior faculty. In many government hospitals, security is virtually nonexistent in certain sections, leaving female staff, including doctors and nurses, at the mercy of anyone who wishes them harm. There is a pressing need for the government to regulate security protocols in medical institutions across the country. Promises on paper are insufficient; action must follow. Hospitals must invest in safe lodging for female doctors, and legislation protecting doctors from violence must be passed without delay. The Supreme Court of India, in May 2023,

criticized authorities for failing to ensure a secure workplace for women. Such failures are not just administrative oversights—they are a direct threat to the lives of women in the medical profession. The case in Kolkata, where the city ironically ranked as the safest in India in 2024 according to NCRB data, exposes a troubling disconnect between official statistics and the grim reality on the ground. The tragic deaths of women like Aruna Shanbaug and the young doctor in Kolkata serve as stark reminders that much remains to be done to protect women in India. Their stories should not just be a cause for temporary outrage but a call to action for systemic change.

*(The author is a freelance writer; views are personal)*

# Parliament elects Thaksin's daughter as Thailand PM

AP n BANGKOK

Thailand's Parliament elected Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the youngest daughter of the divisive former leader Thaksin Shinawatra, as the country's new prime minister Friday. Paetongtarn becomes Thailand's third leader from the Shinawatra family, after her father, who was ousted by coup before returning from exile last year, and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra, who lives in exile. Paetongtarn also became Thailand's second female prime minister after her aunt and the country's youngest leader at 37. She is the leader of the ruling Pheu Thai party but was not an elected lawmaker, which was not required for her to be a candidate for prime minister. Paetongtarn was the sole nominee and got a majority of the votes in Parliament with the voting ongoing. The last prime minister had been removed by the Constitutional Court two days ago over an ethics violation.



Thaksin is one of Thailand's most popular but divisive political figures and was ousted by a military coup in 2006. He is widely seen as a de facto leader of Pheu Thai, the latest in a string of parties linked to him. His residual popularity and influence is a factor behind the political support for Paetongtarn.

Her public entry into politics came in 2021 when the Pheu Thai party announced she would lead an inclusion advisory committee. She was appointed as leader of Pheu Thai last year, after she was named one of its three prime ministerial candidates ahead of the polls. When Paetongtarn was on the campaign trail for Pheu Thai, she

acknowledged her family ties but insisted she was not just her father's proxy. "It's not the shadow of my dad. I am my dad's daughter, always and forever, but I have my own decisions," she told a reporter. However, her father's shadow is too big to be dismissed and her work will not be easy with him continuing to call political shots for Pheu Thai, said Petra Alderman, a political research fellow at England's University of Birmingham. "Thaksin was a political force to reckon with, but he was also a liability," she said. "He has a tendency to overplay his political hand, so serving in his shadow has never been easy." Paetongtarn's nomination followed the removal of Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on Wednesday after less than a year in office. The Constitutional Court found him guilty of a serious ethical breach regarding his appointment of a Cabinet member who was jailed in connection with an alleged bribery attempt.

# Diplomacy intensifies to halt Israel-Hamas war

AP n JERUSALEM

International diplomacy to prevent the war in Gaza from spreading into a wider regional conflict intensified Friday, with the British and French foreign ministers making a joint trip to Israel while internationally mediated cease-fire talks in Qatar were expected to enter their second day. The new push for an end to the Israel-Hamas war came as the Palestinian death toll in Gaza climbed past 40,000, according to Gaza health authorities, and fears remained high that Iran and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon would attack Israel in retaliation for the killings of top militant leaders. "This is a dangerous moment for the Middle East," British Foreign Secretary David Lammy said. "The risk of the situation spiraling out of control is rising. Any Iranian attack would have devastating consequences for the region." Lammy and French Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjourné were expected held a joint meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer. "It's never too late for peace," Séjourné said. "We must at all costs avoid a regional war, which would have terrible consequences." International mediators believe the best hope for calming tensions would be a deal between Israel and Hamas to halt the fighting and secure the release of Israeli hostages. The United States, Qatar and

Egypt began a new round of talks Thursday, meeting with an Israeli delegation in Qatar. Hamas, which didn't participate directly in Thursday's talks, accuses Israel of adding new demands to a previous proposal that had U.S. and international support and to which Hamas had agreed in principle. Israel accuses Hamas of adding its own new demands. White House National Security spokesperson John Kirby called the talks an important step. He said a lot of work remains given the complexity of the agreement and that negotiators were focusing on its implementation. A U.S. official briefed on Thursday's talks called the discussion "constructive." The official was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Qatar said the talks would continue Friday. The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed across the heavily guarded border on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 250 to Gaza. More than 100 were released during a weeklong cease-fire in November, and around 110 are believed to still be inside Gaza, though Israeli authorities believe around a third of them are dead. Israel's devastating retaliatory offensive has killed 40,005 Palestinians, Gaza's Health Ministry said Thursday, without saying how many were militants. Israel's military spokesperson, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said Thursday that Israel had

killed more than 17,000 Hamas militants in Gaza in the war, without providing evidence. Diplomats hoped a cease-fire deal would persuade Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah to hold off on retaliating for the killing of a top Hezbollah commander in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut and of Hamas' top political leader in an explosion in Tehran that was widely blamed on Israel. Kirby said that Iran has made preparations and could attack soon with little to no warning — and that its rhetoric should be taken seriously. The mediators have spent months trying to hammer out a three-phase plan in which Hamas would release the hostages in exchange for a lasting cease-fire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Both sides have agreed in principle to the plan President Joe Biden announced on May 31. But Hamas has proposed amendments and Israel has suggested clarifications, leading each side to accuse the other of trying to tank a deal. Hamas has rejected Israel's demands, which include a lasting military presence along the border with Egypt and a line bisecting Gaza where it would search Palestinians returning to their homes to root out militants. In a reminder of how the violence has spread from Gaza, masked Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank stormed the village of Jit, setting homes and cars on fire Thursday, Israeli and Palestinian media said.

# Hurricane Ernesto targets Bermuda after hitting Puerto Rico

AP n SAN JUAN

Hurricane Ernesto has barreled towards Bermuda after leaving hundreds of thousands of people in Puerto Rico without power or water as sweltering heat enveloped the US territory, raising concerns about people's health. A hurricane warning was in effect for Bermuda, with Ernesto expected to pass near or over the island on Saturday. The Category 1 storm was located about 450 miles (730 kilometres) south-southwest of Bermuda on Thursday afternoon. It had maximum sustained winds of 90 mph (150 kph) and was moving north at 13 mph (20 kph) over open waters. "I cannot stress enough how important it is for every resident to use this time to prepare. We have seen in the past the devastating effects of complacency," said National Security Minister Michael Weeks. Ernesto was forecast to near Category 3 hurricane status on

Friday and then decrease in strength as it approaches Bermuda, where it is expected to drop between 6-12 inches of rain, with up to 15 inches in isolated areas. "All of the guidance show this system as a large hurricane near Bermuda," said the National Hurricane Center in Miami. Ernesto is then expected to pass near or east of Atlantic Canada on Monday. Meanwhile, the spinning storm on Thursday was generating southern winds in Puerto Rico, which have a heating effect as opposed to the typical cooling trade winds that blow from the east. "We know a lot of people don't have power," said Ernesto Morales with the National Weather Service as he warned of extreme heat and urged people to stay hydrated. More than 290,000 of 1.4 million customers remained in the dark Thursday evening, more than a day after Ernesto swiped past Puerto Rico late Tuesday as a tropical storm before strength-

ening into a hurricane. A maximum of 735,000 clients were without power on Wednesday. Hundreds of thousands also were without water as many questioned the widespread power outage given that Ernesto was only a tropical storm when it spun past the island. "I haven't slept at all," said Ramón Mercedes Paredes, a 41-year-old construction worker who planned to sleep outdoors on Thursday night to beat the heat. "I haven't even been able to take a shower." At a small park in the Santurce neighbourhood of the San Juan capital, Alexander Reyna, a 32-year-old construction worker, sipped on a bright red sports drink that friends provided as roosters crowed nearby above the slap of dominoes. He had no water or power and planned to spend all day at the park as he lamented the lack of breeze, a slight film of sweat already forming on his forehead. "I have to come here because I cannot stand to be at home."

# Kamala Harris will make one hell of a president: Biden

Washington (PTI): US President Joe Biden has said that Kamala Harris will make "one hell of a president" as they appeared together in their first public event since she replaced him as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee. Biden and Harris appeared on Thursday at Prince George's County Community College in Maryland, just outside Washington DC. The Democratic Party event celebrated the Biden administration's newly announced deal to cut the cost of 10 common prescription drugs for millions of Americans. The meeting also offered a glimpse of their dynamic, weeks into a realignment of the party ticket. "I have an incredible partner in the progress we made," President Biden said. "She's going to make one hell of a president," an untethered Biden said, praising his deputy who will be challenging the former president

and the Republican Party's candidate Donald Trump in the November 5 election. Harris, 59, became the first-ever woman of colour to be on the top of a presidential ticket of a major American political party when Biden withdrew from the race for the White House last month and backed her. She is also the first ever Indian American to be nominated as presidential candidate of either the Republican or the Democratic Party. Harris's mother, Shyamala Gopalan, was Indian and her father, Donald Jasper Harris, a Jamaican; both immigrants to the US. During the event, Biden, 81, brought the crowd to their feet multiple times. "There's a lot of love in this room for our president," Harris said. "Few leaders in our nation have done more, on so many issues, including to expand access to affordable healthcare, than Joe Biden," she said.

# Trump refuses to tone down personal attacks on Harris

PTI n WASHINGTON

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has said he is "entitled" to personally attack his Democratic rival Kamala Harris because he doesn't "have a lot of respect for her", as he dismissed calls from allies to refocus his campaign on policy issues in his bid to reclaim the White House. Trump, 78, said he is "angry" at Vice President Harris, 59, over the Biden administration's handling of issues ranging from inflation to immigration. "I don't have a lot of respect for her. I don't have a lot of respect for her intelligence. I think she'll be a terrible president. I think it's very important that we win. And whether the personal attacks are good or bad she certainly attacks me personally," the former president told reporters at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey on Thursday. Trump was responding to questions from his party members urging him not to



Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks at a news conference at Trump National Golf Club, Thursday in Bedminster, N.J.

make personal attacks on Harris, who is the first woman of colour running for the presidency. "As far as the personal attacks (against Harris), I'm very angry at her because of what she's done to the country. I'm very angry at her that she weaponised the justice system

# China alarmed by US missile system deployed to its North

Manila (AP): China expressed its "very dramatic" alarm over a mid-range missile system that the US military recently deployed to the Philippines, and warned it could destabilise the region. But Manila's top diplomat said Friday he reassured his Chinese counterpart that the weaponry was only in the country temporarily. Philippine Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo said his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, expressed China's concern over the US mid-range missile deployment to the Philippines during their talks last month in Laos on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings with Asian and Western countries. "We discussed it and, well, they made it very dramatic," Manalo said in response to questions during a news conference in Manila.

# S African leaders to meet in Zimbabwe amid Mpox, political tensions

AP n HARARE

African leaders will meet in Zimbabwe on Saturday for a scheduled summit of the 16-nation Southern African Development Community that may discuss the rising issue of mpox outbreaks across the continent but is less likely to tackle international concerns about the human rights record of its host. This week, the World Health Organisation declared the mpox outbreaks in Africa a global health emergency. The SADC region includes Congo, which has more than 90 per cent of mpox cases. Mpox has been present in central and West Africa for years, but it has been detected in more than a dozen African countries this year, including some where it was never previously reported. Scientists have also identified a new form of mpox in Congo that might be more infectious. WHO raised concerns it might start to spill over international borders, and Sweden has reported its

first case of the new variant. South Africa's Democratic Alliance party, which is part of the coalition government, has urged South African delegates at the SADC summit to raise the issue of mpox. South Africa and other southern African nations have reported only a few cases, but the Democratic Alliance said Congo's large outbreak "shows just how fast the situation can change". As heads of state or their representatives began arriving for the summit in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, there was criticism from United Nations human rights figures and other groups over an alleged political crackdown by the government of Zimbabwe, where more than 160 activists and opposition members have been arrested in recent months. On Thursday, the UN's human rights office released a statement on behalf of a range of experts calling for the release of dozens of activists and opposition members who have been jailed. The statement said three

# Pakistan reports 3 Mpox cases

Islamabad (PTI): At least three patients with mpox virus have been found so far in Pakistan, it emerged on Friday as the government decided to strengthen the screening system at the airports. The mpox detection in Pakistan is the first in Asia and it might be more easily transmitted. The World Health Organisation has declared the spread of mpox a global health emergency. All three patients belong to the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in the northwest, the militancy-whacked region bordering Afghanistan. Salim Khan, the director general of health services for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that two patients were

detected on their arrival from the United Arab Emirates, while a third patient's samples had been sent to the National Health Institute in Islamabad for confirmation. According to the spokesperson of the Federal Ministry of Health, the last patient in whom this virus was found belongs to the Mardan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is not yet clear which strain of mpox the said patient contracted and whether it is the same variant that was first confirmed outside of Africa in Sweden. "Contact tracing of the affected person has been started and samples of more people are being obtained," the spokesman said. Officials said that all three patients were

being quarantined and their contact tracing was going on. Pakistan's Ministry of Health also issued an advisory on the disease on Thursday, which states that "the screening system at airports and entry points is being further strengthened." Prime Minister's Coordinator for Health Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath says that federal hospitals have been instructed to take precautionary measures and the Ministry of Health and Border Health Services are "alert to deal with any kind of situation." The WHO declared the outbreak of mpox in parts of Africa as a cause of international concern and a threat to public health.

held in pretrial detention for weeks. Zimbabwe's president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, is set to take over the rotational leadership of SADC, but there has been little diplomatic pressure on the 81-year-old's administration from neighbours in SADC, even though rights groups have alleged he has overseen a crackdown before and since last year's presidential election, where he was reelected for a second term. Ahead of Saturday's summit, Zimbabwe has paved over damaged and potholed roads, planted palm trees along highways and even promised uninterrupted electricity and water supplies for delegates, while Zimbabweans are often hit by blackouts and water cuts. Analysts doubt that regional leaders will step up and use this summit to caution Zimbabwe over its rights record. "They avoid the difficult issues," said Antony Reeler, a Zimbabwean researcher and political analyst.

# Many suspects in Pakistan anti-Christian rampage still at large

Multan (Pakistan) (AP): Most of the suspects in a rampage last year against minority Christians in eastern Pakistan over alleged blasphemy are not in custody and authorities have failed to deliver justice to the victims, a human rights group said on Friday. "More than 90 per cent of the suspects of the attack in Jaranwala, in Punjab's Faisalabad district, are still at large," Amnesty International said in a statement on the anniversary of one of Pakistan's worst attacks on Christians, in which churches and homes of Christians were destroyed. The violence erupted after Muslims alleged that they saw a local Christian and his friend desecrating pages from a Quran. The attack drew nationwide condemnation. No one died, as terrified Christians quickly fled to safer places. Amnesty International said it obtained its information from police after filing a Right to Information Request. It said of the 5,213 accused, 380 were arrested and 4,833 were still at large. It said of those who were arrested, 228 were released on bail and 77 others had the charges against them dropped. It said trials of the suspects have not started and about 40 per cent of victims whose lost property are still awaiting government compensation. Abid Khan, the regional police chief, said investigators have referred the cases of suspects linked to the violence to an anti-terrorism court, and their trial was expected to start soon. "Despite the authorities' assurances of accountability, the grossly inadequate action has allowed a climate of impunity for the perpetrators of the Jaranwala violence," Babu Ram Pant, Amnesty International's deputy regional director for South Asia, said in the statement.

# India's I-Day celebrated with fervour across New York City

PTI n NEW YORK

The hues of the Indian tricolour, India's rich cultural heritage and strong bilateral relations with the US resonated across the city as the country's 78th Independence Day was celebrated here with patriotic fervour. A slew of events commemorating India's Independence Day were held across the city on Thursday highlighting the strong people-to-people ties between India and the US as well as India's rich heritage. Flag hoisting ceremonies were held at the Consulate General of India in New York, Permanent Mission of India to the UN, Times Square and lower Manhattan in the presence of members of the Indian diaspora and city officials. Minister of



State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita, who was in the city before travelling on to Latin America, addressed members of the diaspora at the flag hoisting ceremony in the Consulate and Times Square. Leading diaspora organisation Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT-NE (FIA) held a special

Independence Day celebration at the iconic New York City destination Times Square, which was seeped in the hues of the Indian tricolour, as patriotic songs reverberated through the air and the country's rich cultural heritage was on full display. Consul General of India in New York Binaya Pradhan hoisted the tricolour at the Consulate as well as at Times Square. Margherita told members of the diaspora that "as I address you for the first time on American soil, I am struck by the profound connection between our two great nations". Echoing the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Margherita said that India and the US, two of the world's largest democracies and economies, share a bond that goes beyond mere diplomatic ties.

# TikTok compares itself to American news outlets as it fights forced sale or ban

AP n WASHINGTON

TikTok on Thursday pushed back against US government arguments that the popular social media platform is not shielded by the First Amendment, comparing its platform to prominent American media organizations owned by foreign entities. Last month, the Justice Department argued in a legal brief filed in a Washington federal appeals court that neither TikTok's China-based parent company, ByteDance, nor the platform's global and US arms — TikTok Ltd. and TikTok Inc. — were entitled to First Amendment protections because they are "foreign organizations operating abroad" or owned by one. TikTok attorneys have made the First Amendment a key part

of their legal challenge to the federal law requiring ByteDance to sell TikTok to an approved buyer or face a ban. On Thursday, they argued in a court document that TikTok's US arm doesn't forfeit its constitutional rights because it is owned by a foreign entity. They drew a parallel between TikTok and well-known news outlets such as Politico and Business Insider, both of which are owned by German publisher Axel Springer SE. They also cited Fortune, a business magazine owned by Thai businessman Chatchaval Jiaravanon. "Surely the American companies that publish Politico, Fortune, and Business Insider do not lose First Amendment protection because they have foreign ownership," the TikTok attorneys

wrote, arguing that "no precedent" supports what they called "the government's dramatic rewriting of what counts as protected speech." In a redacted court filing made last month, the Justice Department argued ByteDance and TikTok haven't raised valid free speech claims in their challenge against the law, saying the measure addresses national security concerns about TikTok's ownership without targeting protected speech. The Biden administration and TikTok had held talks in recent years aimed at resolving the government's concerns. But the two sides failed to reach a deal. TikTok said the government essentially walked away from the negotiating table after it proposed a 90-page agreement that

detailed how the company planned to address concerns about the app while still maintaining ties with ByteDance. However, the Justice Department has said TikTok's proposal "failed to create sufficient separation between the company's U.S. operations and China" and did not adequately address some of the government's concerns. The government has pointed to some data transfers between TikTok employees and ByteDance engineers in China as why it believed the proposal, called Project Texas, was not sufficient to guard against national security concerns. Federal officials have also argued that the size and scope of TikTok would have made it impossible to meaningfully enforce compliance with the proposal.



B'desh caretaker govt promises action

PTI n DHAKA

Bangladesh's newly-appointed Home Affairs Ministry adviser has vowed to take swift legal action against those who attack or abuse minorities, stressing that there is no place for violence, conflict, or hatred in the country.

Brigadier General (ret'd) M Sakawat Hussain's assurance came during a meeting with a delegation from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) Bangladesh at his office in the Secretariat on Thursday, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

Bangladesh saw a spike in violence against members of Hindu communities following the fall of the government led by Sheikh Hasina, who resigned and fled to India on August 5 following massive protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

Hussain emphasised that Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony, where people of all religions have grown up together without any divisions. He said that no one would be spared if they attacked or abused minorities, and swift

Yunus inducts four more advisers

Dhaka (PTI): The interim government in Bangladesh led by Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus was expanded on Friday with four more advisers joining his team of civil society figures, academics, NGOs and rights group leaders. The new advisers are Wahiduddin Mahmud, an economist, Ali Imam Majumdar, former cabinet secretary, Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, former power secretary, and Lt Gen Jahangir Alam Chowdhury.



Majumdar was appointed as special assistant to this interim government's chief adviser on August 12; while Chowdhury is former director general of Border Guard,

Bangladesh. Hasina had resigned and secretly left for India on August 5 in the face of the massive mass upsurge originating from a students' movement over the quota system for government jobs, marking the end of her Awami League regime since December 2008. Most of the advisers are civil society figures, academics, NGOs and rights group leaders. Globally recognised as 'The Father of Microfinance', Yunus, 84, was declared as the head of the interim government by President Mohammed Shahabuddin after dissolving Parliament, a decision prompted by a demand by the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

legal action would be taken. He said that there is no place for violence, conflict, or hatred and that the country believes in peace. During the meeting, Satyaranjan Baroi, president of ISKCON Bangladesh, requested the adviser to take priority measures for the safety of minorities and presented eight proposals for ensuring their safety, including enacting laws, establishing monitoring cells, forming a Minority Commission and providing continuous state security for temples. The adviser assured his full support for these matters. The Bangladesh National Hindu Grand Alliance said that the minority community faced

attacks and threats in 278 locations across 48 districts since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5 and termed it as an "assault on the Hindu religion." Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus who is heading the interim government on Tuesday reached out to the distressed Hindu community and urged them to "exercise patience" and assured them that his government would punish those who attacked the minority members. On Monday, Hussain's ministry set up a hotline asking people to provide information about attacks on temples, churches or any other religious institutions.



Participants prepare a kite during Denpasar International Kite Festival in Sanur, Bali, Indonesia on Friday

Palau's president says China is weaponising lucrative tourism

AP n WELLINGTON

Beijing weaponised tourism to the Pacific archipelago of Palau over its allegiance to Taiwan and its accusations that China was behind a major cyberattack there, President Surangel Whipps Jr said. Palau, along with Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands, is one of three Pacific nations to recognise Taiwan as an independent democracy — viewed as a snub by Beijing, which asserts it is part of China. Taipei's allies in the Pacific have dwindled from six countries in 2019; Nauru abandoned its ties in January. Whipps told the AP in an interview late Thursday that, in 2020 while he was running for his current post, the Chinese ambassador to a neighboring country pledged to flood his tourism-dependent nation of 20,000 people with a million visitors if he capitulated to the country's stance. "That continues to be the overture," he said by phone Thursday. "They say, why are you torturing yourselves? Just join us and the sky's the limit."

territory, resources and political sway, Beijing's pressure on the three hold-out countries was increasing, analysts said. "As the number of Taiwan's diplomatic allies in the Pacific dwindles, the obstacles to China's regional diplomacy diminish," said Mihai Sora, Director of the Pacific Islands Program at the Lowy Institute. China's penalties for Palau's intransigence are not new, but they have escalated in the months leading up to November's election in which Whipps will seek another term as leader, he said. In May, he blamed China for a major cyberattack on Palau in which 20,000 government documents were stolen. The claim was unproven, Whipps said, but no other motive or actor had emerged. Earlier that month, Palau tourism industry representatives were denied visas to enter Macau for a lucrative international industry conference. Then reports appeared in China's state media and on an official WeChat channel in June, warning tourists of an increase in safety issues for Chinese visitors to Palau. The remarks, seen by the AP, urged citizens to be cautious when traveling there. Whipps rejected the reports of security problems but said the claims had stuck — visitor numbers from China halved in 2024, now down to 30% of its tourists. Once, 70% of Palau's visitors came from China, but

Ukrainian officials urge civilians to evacuate eastern town of Pokrovsk

AP n KYIV

Military authorities in the eastern Ukrainian town of Pokrovsk on Friday urged civilians to speed up their evacuation because the Russian army is quickly closing in on what has for months been one of Moscow's key targets in the war. The call for people to get out as soon as possible came as Kyiv's forces are trying to divert the Kremlin's military focus to Russian soil by launching a bold incursion across the border into the Kursk region. The urgency also underscored the high-stakes gamble Ukraine is making by taking the war into Russia with its ongoing assault that started August 6. The attack was a daring attempt to change the dynamics of the 2½-year conflict, but

Pak govt admits tinkering with internet: Report

PTI n ISLAMABAD

For the first time, the Pakistan government has confirmed that it was upgrading its "web management system" to cope with cyber security threats amid speculation about the installation of a so-called "firewall" that could be leading to internet disruptions in the country, according to a media report on Friday. Millions of people across Pakistan have been facing trouble accessing internet services for some time now due to limited connectivity, particularly while using mobile data in some regions. So far, official stakeholders in Pakistan have either been feigning ignorance in response to public outcry and media queries, or claiming that the problems were because of telecom and internet service providers, or even Meta. While talking to reporters after the

Senate Standing Committee on Information Technology and Tele-communication meeting on Thursday, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said the government had sought a report from Pakistan Telecommunication Authority and other institutions over the internet disruption. "The internet should never be slow. We have even been talking about bringing 5G technology to Pakistan. There is no doubt about that, and conversations about higher internet speed are underway," the Dawn newspaper quoted Khawaja as saying. When the minister was asked about the 'firewall' — a blanket term used by the public to describe the causes of internet disruption in the absence of any official explanation — she said the issue had been "blown out of proportion." "The government has been operating a web-management system. The system is now being upgraded." She also called the process "a routine exercise" across the globe to enhance internet security, without giving any detail to substantiate her claims about which other countries have deployed this system. "It is the right of the government to take measures to protect its interests given the cyber security attacks that Pakistan is facing." This was the first time an acknowledged government's actions, which have been blamed for everything from slow browsing speeds, the arbitrary blocking of social media platforms and WhatsApp connectivity issues on mobile data, the paper said.

Flights, trains cancelled in Tokyo area as a strong typhoon swerves nearby

Tokyo (AP): Flights and trains in the Tokyo area were cancelled Friday, and people were warned of strong winds, heavy rains and potential flooding and mudslides as a typhoon swerved near Japan on its way further north in the Pacific Ocean. Typhoon Ampil was forecast to reach the waters near Tokyo in the evening then continue north, bringing stormy conditions to the northern Kanto and Tohoku regions early Saturday. It had sustained winds of 162 kph (101 mph) with higher gusts Friday morning and was moving north at 20 kph (12 mph), the Japan Meteorological Agency said. Ampil was not expected to make landfall and would weaken to a tropical storm by Sunday. The Shinkansen bullet trains running between Tokyo and Nagoya were halted for the entire day, according to Central Japan Railway, a common response to typhoons here. Bullet trains serving northeastern Japan and some local Tokyo trains were suspended temporarily or switched to a slower schedule. Dozens of departing and arriving flights were cancelled at Tokyo's two airports, Haneda and Narita, as well as at Kansai, Osaka and Chubu airports. The flight cancellations affect some 90,000 people, according to Japanese media reports. Several highways may also partly close to traffic.

Airports and train stations had been packed Thursday with people moving up their plans to avoid disruptions from the typhoon. Friday morning was drizzly and windy in Tokyo, and traffic and crowds out on the streets were sparse, mostly because of the Bon summer holiday period, not just the weather. Stores remained open.

Wickremesinghe backed by grand alliance in SL presidential poll

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, the front runner in the presidential poll scheduled for next month, was on Friday endorsed by a grand coalition of over 30 political parties and groups. This comes after Wickremesinghe, 75, announced himself as the independent candidate on Thursday by handing over nominations to contest the September 21 presidential election. Wickremesinghe, the leader of the now decimated grand old party, the United National Party (UNP), is backed by the Rajapaksa family breakaways from the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP).

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# Sensex jumps to two-week high

PTI | MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex spurted by 1,330 points to close at a two-week high of 80,436.84 on Friday, while Nifty jumped 397 points to settle above the 24,500 level on Friday as easing fears of a recession in the US triggered buying in IT shares amid a sharp global stocks rally.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,330.96 points or 1.68 per cent to settle at 80,436.84, marking its best single-day gains in more than two months. During the day, it zoomed 1,412.33 points or 1.78 per cent to 80,518.21.

The NSE Nifty surged 397.40 points or 1.65 per cent to close at a two-week high of 24,541.15. As many as 47 Nifty shares closed in green while three closed in red.

From Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies, ICICI Bank and Tata Steel were the biggest gainers. Sun Pharma emerged as the only laggard.

"The stability of the Japanese Yen has been instrumental in driving a global market recovery. Besides that, the strong US retail sales and a decline in weekly jobless claims have helped alleviate fears of a US recession. Further, the market sentiment has improved due to a decrease in US CPI inflation. On the backdrop of these, the Indian IT firms exhibited strong buying interest," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled significantly higher. European markets were trading mostly in the green. The US markets ended with sharp gains on Thursday. "The Indian frontline indices traded significantly higher today, mirroring the positive global market sentiment. The gains in the market were broad-based as the midcap and smallcap indices also moved higher. This upbeat market mood was primarily driven by reduced volatility, which stemmed from increased expectations of a US rate cut in September," Avdhut Bagkar, Technical and Derivatives Analyst, StoxBox, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.80 per cent and smallcap index climbed 1.70 per cent. All indices ended higher. IT index soared 2.72 per cent and realty jumped 2.45 per cent. Teck (2.23 per cent), auto (1.90 per cent), commodities (1.89 per cent), power (1.80 per cent), financial services (1.77 per



cent) and consumer discretionary (1.74 per cent) also closed higher. A total of 2,462 stocks advanced while 1,467 declined and 107 remained unchanged on the BSE.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 730.93 points or 0.91 per cent, the Nifty climbed 173.65 points or 0.71 per cent. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,595.27 crore on Wednesday, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) were buyers as they bought equities worth Rs 2,236.21 crore, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.22 per cent to USD 80.05 a barrel. Indian stock markets were closed on Thursday on account of Independence Day.

# FDI in food processing sector down 30% to `5,037 cr in 2023-24

PTI | NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's food processing sector declined 30 per cent in the last fiscal to Rs 5,037.06 crore, according to official data.

The FDI in the food processing sector stood at Rs 7,194.13 crore in 2022-23. According to the data presented by the Food Processing Industries Ministry in Lok Sabha, the FDI in food processing sector stood at Rs 5,290.27 crore in 2021-22 and Rs 2934.12 crore in 2020-21.

FDI was Rs 6,414.67 crore in 2019-20; Rs 4430.44 crore in 2018-19; Rs 5,835.62 crore in 2017-18; Rs 4,865.85 crore in 2016-17; and Rs 3,312 crore in 2015-16 in the food processing sector.

In order to enhance foreign investment in the food processing sector, the ministry has taken various measures, including 100 per cent FDI permitted through automatic route for the food processing sector subject to sectoral regulations.

It has allowed 100 per cent FDI, under the government-approval route, for trading including through e-



commerce, in respect of food products manufactured or produced in India. The government has exempted all processed food items from the purview of licensing under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951. There is a lower GST for raw and processed products. More than 71.7 per cent of food products under various chapter heads/sub-heads are covered in lower tax slabs of 0 per cent and 5 per cent. The export of processed foods declined 17 per cent to USD 10,881.81 million in 2023-24 from USD 13,078.3 million in the preceding fiscal. For the development of this sector, the ministry is implementing the Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana (PMKSY) and Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) and Prime Minister Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) schemes.

All these three schemes are demand-driven and implemented across the country. These schemes are aimed at creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet, and to help in providing better returns to farmers, creation of employment opportunities, reducing wastage, increasing the processing level and enhancing the export of processed foods.

# SBI hikes lending rate by 10 bps across tenors, raising EMIs for borrowers

PTI | NEW DELHI

State Bank of India, the country's biggest lender, has raised the Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points (0.1 percentage point), across tenors, making most of the consumer loans costlier. This is the third time in a row that the bank has increased MCLR. The benchmark one-year tenor MCLR, which is used to price most consumer loans such as auto and personal, is now pegged higher at 8.95 per cent against the earlier rate of 8.85 per cent, according to the information posted on its website.

The three-year MCLR is 9.10 per cent, while the two-year is now 9.05 per cent, up 10 basis points. Among others, the rates of one-month, three-month and six-month tenors are in the range of 8.45-8.85 per cent. The MCLR on overnight tenor will be 8.20 per cent against 8.10 per cent.

The new rates are effective from August 15, 2024, it said. The rate hike has come days after RBI kept its benchmark lending rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the ninth consecutive time earlier this month.

# Rupee settles flat at 83.94 against US dollar

PTI | MUMBAI

The rupee stayed in a narrow range and settled flat at 83.94 (provisional) against the American currency on Friday, as the support from a rally in domestic equities and weak greenback was negated by foreign fund outflows amid geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 83.93 and touched the intraday low of 83.96 against the greenback during the session. The local unit finally settled flat at 83.94 (provisional) against the dollar. On Wednesday, the rupee settled 3 paise higher at 83.94 against the US dollar. Forex markets were closed on Thursday on account of Independence Day.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said the positive tone in the domestic markets



supported the rupee at lower levels. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on...Geopolitical tension in the Middle East between Israel and Iran. Traders may take cues from US consumer confidence and housing data today. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.75 to Rs 84.25," he added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading lower by 0.14 per cent at 102.66. Analysts said the dollar

weakened as market participants were awaiting the US consumer confidence index and housing data to be released later in the day. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 1.20 per cent to USD 80.07 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex surged 1,330.96 points, or 1.68 per cent, to settle at 80,436.84 points. The broader Nifty also soared 397.40 points, or 1.65 per cent, to 24,541.15 points. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Wednesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,595.27 crore, according to exchange data.

On the domestic macroeconomic front, wholesale inflation fell to a 3-month low of 2.04 per cent in July on the decline in prices of food items, especially vegetables, government data released on Wednesday showed.

# India's forex reserves drop USD 4.8 bn to USD 670.11 bn

PTI | MUMBAI

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 4.8 billion to USD 670.11 billion for the week ended August 9, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the kitty jumped by USD 7.53 billion to an all-time high of USD 674.919 billion.

For the week ended August 9, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 4.079 billion to USD 587.96 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves declined by



USD 860 million to USD 59,239 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by USD 121 million to USD 18.282 billion, the apex bank said. India's reserve position with the IMF increased by USD 18 million to USD 4.638 billion in the reporting week, the central bank data showed.

# NITI Aayog calls for guidelines, E-KYC to check background of PMMY loan applicants

PTI | NEW DELHI

The government think tank NITI Aayog has pitched for a set of guidelines for assessing the creditworthiness and background verification for those availing loans under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY).

The Aayog in a report titled 'Impact Assessment of PMMY' suggested encouraging E-KYC authentication for loan underwriting. This will enhance the effectiveness of assessment checks.

"A set of guidelines for assessing the creditworthiness and background verification must be enlisted to provide a security net to the banks, considering the loans are collateral free and a proper risk check and assessment has a critical role to play in the sustainability of results and success of the scheme," it said in the report posted on its website.



The majority of borrowers under PMMY are small entrepreneurs who have very limited documents and this makes it difficult for the banks to run verification checks as it requires more staffing and employees. The Aayog also suggested that a proper reward mechanism is needed for different banks based on their scale of operation and performance. It noted that a portal enabling real-time upload of beneficiary data will help streamline the beneficiary data collection PMMY, since its inception in 2015 has provided credit support of Rs 18.39 lakh crore to 34.93 crore accounts. According to the report, compared to the pre-

pandemic, the credit disbursements to MSMEs have doubled across segments indicating support for the increasing credit demand by the industry, while the number of NPA accounts and the amount have been increasing year after year with a CAGR of 22.51 per cent and 36.61 per cent respectively from FY 2017. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector plays a defining role for entrepreneurs and is a key driver of socio-economic development in India. The sector contributes about 33 per cent (FY 2015 to FY 2019) of the country's total manufacturing gross value of output. It accounts for more than 40 per cent of exports and contributes over 28 per cent of gross value added in India's GDP while creating employment for about 11.10 crore people.

# Govt to impose stricter safety standards on electric construction equipment vehicles

PTI | NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has proposed new stricter safety standards for electric powertrain construction equipment vehicles including dumpers and excavators from October 1, 2024.

The ministry in a draft notification has proposed an amendment to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 with an aim to push electric vehicles (EV) across various sectors. "On and after (1st October 2024), construction

equipment vehicles fitted with electric power train shall meet requirements as specified in AIS-174, till the corresponding BIS specifications are notified under the Bureau of Indian Standard Act, 2016," the draft rule said.

Electric and hybrid powertrain are being used in construction equipment vehicles. According to the notification, the objections or suggestions which may be received from any person in respect of the said draft rules before the expiry of the aforesaid period will be considered by the central government.

# Gold plunges `400; silver rallies `800

PTI | NEW DELHI

Gold prices plunged Rs 400 to Rs 72,750 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal had closed at Rs 73,150 per 10 grams in the previous session. The commodity markets were closed on Thursday on the occasion of Independence Day.

Silver prices rallied Rs 800 to Rs 84,000 per kilogram from Rs 83,200 per kg in the previous close. Gold rose slightly on Friday as geopolitical uncertainty continued to provide support



for precious metals. "However, stronger US retail sales and jobless claim data released on Thursday suggest robust consumer spending, reducing concerns about recession risk in the US and dampening aggressive interest rate-cut expectations,

potentially limiting further gains in precious metals," Saamil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

However, silver was quoting lower at USD 28.66 per ounce in the international markets. "Comex gold closed 0.5 per cent higher at USD 2,492.4 per ounce on Thursday, as mixed US data with easing Consumer Price Index inflation and stronger retail sales did not provide any fresh insights on the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy path," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research at Kotak Securities, said.

# Finance Ministry permits 15 securities firms to undertake Aadhaar verification of clients

PTI | NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has permitted 15 securities firms, including SBICAP Securities, IIFL Securities, and Angel One, to conduct Aadhaar authentication of their customers.

The Revenue Department under the finance ministry has issued a notification under the Prevention of Money-laundering Act allowing the 15 reporting entities to conduct Aadhaar-based KYC (know your

customer) process. The 15 entities also include JM Financial Services, Arihant Capital Market, SMC Global Securities, Aditya Birla Money, R.K. Stock Holding, Monarch Network Capital, RKSV Securities, Comfort Securities, and OPG Securities Pvt Ltd.



# IFIN reports cumulative loss of `5,654 cr in FY14-18: Revised balance sheet

PTI | NEW DELHI

IL&FS Financial Services (IFIN), a group company of debt-ridden IL&FS Ltd, has incurred a cumulative loss of Rs 5,654 crore for the five-consecutive fiscals — from FY14 to FY18, according to the revised balance sheet of the firm undergoing resolution process.

However, as per the original balance sheet, the company had earned a total profit of Rs 1,015 crore during the five-year period.

Following the recast, the company is exploring the option of seeking a refund of income tax paid from the Income Tax for these years. In June this year, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) asked the newly-appointed board of the IL&FS group to file a revised balance sheet, along with its two other subsidiaries.

Moreover, its total income also went down to Rs 7,777 crore on an aggregate basis during those five years against Rs 10,297 crore reported earlier, revealed the updated financial results.

The company's new board has completed the reopening and recasting of financials and the revised accounts as per the direction of the NCLT. In June this year, the Mumbai bench of NCLT gave a go-ahead to the newly-appointed board of the IL&FS group with the revised balance sheet, along with its two other subsidiaries — IL&FS Transportation and IL&FS Financial Services.

The restated account reflected that the company had actually reported a loss of Rs 3,322 crore in the financial year ended March 2018. However, the previous management

had reported a profit of Rs 100 crore in the said financial year. Similarly, it had booked a loss of Rs 1,315 crore during FY17 against a profit of Rs 209 crore recorded originally. On January 1, 2019, the NCLT passed an order permitting reopening and recasting of the financial



accounts of three IL&FS group companies — IL&FS Transportation, IL&FS Financial Services and IL&FS Engineering.

The order was passed on an application moved by the central government, which had suspended the board of debt-ridden Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) and appointed a six-member panel.

IL&FS is settling its over Rs 90,000-crore debt through asset resolution. So far, IL&FS has discharged a total debt of Rs 35,650 crore as on September 30, 2023, and maintains an overall debt resolution target of Rs 61,000 crore.

It is resolving debts through monetisation and termination/settlement of payments by its group entities from concessioning authorities and counter-party to the relevant contract.

On October 1, 2018, NCLAT superseded the existing board of IL&FS on the recommendation of the Centre after the mega-crisis in IL&FS, which shook the finance industry. A new board for IL&FS,

which had a debt burden of Rs 94,000 crore, was appointed to take charge of the affairs and NCLAT conceived a framework for resolution of the crisis-hit group.

It had also granted protection to the IL&FS companies against recovery of the further dues and provided immunity to the newly-appointed directors of IL&FS against any proceedings for the past actions of suspended directors or any of the officers thereof.

At the same time, the Centre vide order dated September 30, 2018, directed that the affairs of the company to be investigated by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO). SFIO commenced an investigation of affairs of IL&FS and its subsidiaries under the Companies Act.

## INBRIEF

**STUDENTS TAUGHT HOW TO BUILD PAYLOADS**  
NEW DELHI: About 26 students underwent rigorous training by Space Kidz India for over 9 months before this launch. Students were taught everything about space, gravity in space, role of space stations specially unmanned space stations, satellites, building payloads, role of satellites in the future, coding of satellites, space research etc. They were also given hands on experience in building a payload. Earlier to this SRM Public School signed a MoU earlier in June 2023 with Space Kidz India for the same.

**OLYMPIC QUIZ ORGANISED**  
NEW DELHI: Contributing to the Olympic fervour, and testing the Olympic quotient of employees and their family members, NTPC organised a grand Olympic Quiz at the Power Management Institute, Noida on 13th August, 2024.

**TATA POWER TO DEVELOP HYDRO STORAGE PLANTS**  
NEW DELHI: On August 12, Tata Power, India's largest integrated power company signed an MoU with the Government of Maharashtra's Water Resources Department to develop 2,800 MW of Pumped Hydro Storage Plants. The ceremony was organised in presence of Devendra Fadnavis.



# WINGS OF COURAGE

## UNVEILING THE IAF'S UNTOLD KARGIL SAGA

Through rare footage and powerful testimonies, riveting documentary, 'Kargil 1999: The Untold Story of the Indian Air Force' pays tribute to the bravery and strategic brilliance of Indian air force in Operation 'Safed Sagar'

**K**argil 1999: The Untold Story of the Indian Air Force' is more than just a recounting of military history; it is a tribute to the indomitable spirit of India and the brave men and women who defend our skies. As the nation marks the 25th anniversary of the Kargil victory, this documentary stands as a fitting homage to their legacy. This Independence Day, DocuBay streamed a new documentary, 'Kargil 1999: The Untold Story of the Indian Air Force'. Produced by Media Indica in association with Juggernaut Productions, this film sheds light on the critical and often overlooked role the Indian Air Force (IAF) played

during the Kargil War. The documentary delves into the heart of Operation 'Safed Sagar', revealing the untold stories of courage, innovation, and strategic brilliance that defined the IAF's contribution to the conflict. Through the eyes of veterans and officials, viewers will be taken behind the scenes of daring missions that were instrumental in securing India's victory. What sets this documentary apart is its access to rare footage and personal diaries that provide a unique perspective on the Kargil War. The documentary takes a 360 degree look at the IAF's cutting-edge aircraft, including the Mirage and MiG, in



action and gains a deeper understanding of the technological advancements that played a pivotal role in the conflict.

Featuring first-hand accounts from iconic figures such as Air Chief Marshal Tipnis, Air Chief Marshal Dhanoa, Air Marshal Padamjit Singh Ahluwalia, Air Marshal Narmadeshwar Tiwari, and Group Captain Nachiketa, the documentary weaves together a powerful narrative of valor and sacrifice. Combined with stunning visuals, these stories offer an emotional and inspiring portrayal of the Kargil War. "We are honoured to collaborate with the Indian Air Force to bring Kargil 1999: The Untold Story of the Indian Air Force to our audiences," said Girish Dwibhashyam, COO of DocuBay. "The film will not only delight defence and aviation

enthusiasts but will also be a gripping tale that will enthrall audiences worldwide." Richa Pant, Creative Director and Producer at Media Indica, shared the challenges faced during production: "Shooting this documentary on Operation Safed Sagar has been incredibly demanding. Our research team spoke to over 40 veterans, and matching their stories to historical facts was a daunting task. We had an overwhelming amount of material, yet only 55 minutes to tell this important story." The film will stream from 15 August 2024. Indeed, it would be a compelling way to celebrate India's spirit and the bravery of its armed forces.

# A Fashion Show that Celebrates Inclusion and the Human Spirit

In a heartwarming celebration of individuality, the Tamana Foundation and FDCI came together for a fashion show that was a heartfelt tribute to the beauty of diversity and inclusion. It honoured the strength of individuality and left an indelible mark, inspiring and uplifting all who attended, says SAKSHI PRIYA



In a spectacular fusion of fashion and philanthropy, the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) recently co-hosted an unforgettable fashion show with the Tamana Foundation. The event, titled "Walking Tall, Walking for Hope, Walking for Inclusion," was more than just a display of stunning designs; it was a powerful celebration of inclusivity, diversity and the human spirit. The highlight of the evening was the participation of Tamana herself and the students of the Tamana Foundation, a non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting individuals with developmental and multiple disabilities, who graced the runway with their confidence and grace. The Tamana Foundation, established in 1984 under the inspiring leadership of Shayama Chona, a Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri awardee, has grown from a humble tent with just three students into a beacon of hope for hundreds with special needs. Named after the Hindi word for "aspiration," Tamana is dedicated to ensuring that every individual, regardless of ability, receives the care and support they deserve. The foundation has since expanded to three centres in New Delhi, offering comprehensive programmes that include education, therapy, and vocational training for those on the autism spectrum and with other developmental challenges. The event was honoured by the presence of Sunil Sethi, Chairperson of FDCI, Ram Mohan Naidu, Minister of Civil Aviation and other esteemed



dignitaries. The fashion show was not just about showcasing clothes, it was about creating a world where everyone is celebrated for who they are. The event opened with a soul-stirring performance by Diwakar Sharma, whose melodious voice set the tone for an evening filled with emotion and inspiration. The applause that followed his performance was a tribute to the impact of his music and the significance of the show. As the models took to the runway, it was clear that this was no ordinary fashion show. The designs, created by some of India's most talented designers, including Payal Pratap, Namrata Joshipura, Anju Modi and Payal Jain, were a tribute to the power of hope, diversity and human resilience. Each piece was carefully crafted to highlight the beauty of individuality,

with intricate embroidery, vibrant colours and innovative silhouettes that captured the essence of the evening. Payal Pratap's collection, featuring monotonous with a pop of red and multicoloured embroidery, was a standout. Anju Modi's chic shift dresses and asymmetrical silhouettes, paired with silver oxide jewellery, added a touch of elegance to the runway. Namrata Joshipura's collection, with its black and golden palettes, corsets and draped skirts, exuded charm and sophistication. The use of satin skirts and black gowns, combined with minimalistic makeup and sleek ponytails, created a look that was both modern and timeless. Payal Jain's maximalist bohemian prints and denim pieces added a burst of colour and energy to the runway, showcasing the designer's ability to blend traditional elements with contemporary styles. The showstopper of the evening, however, was not a designer or a celebrity but Tamana herself and the students of Tamana Foundation. Their inclusion walk, accompanied by designers and educators from various prominent schools, was a moment of pure joy and pride. Each student, dressed in their finest,

walked the runway with a smile that lit up the entire room. The audience was visibly moved, with many wiping away tears of happiness and admiration. The evening was beautifully rounded off with a touching speech from Tamana, which expressed the spirit of the foundation and left a lasting impact on all who attended. This fashion show was a celebration of life, diversity and the power of inclusion. It was a reminder that, while we may all be different in many ways, at our core, we share the same humanity. The credit for this beautiful and inspiring event goes to the talented designers, the dedicated Tamana Foundation team and the visionary leadership of FDCI Chairperson Sunil Sethi, who continues to use fashion to drive social change and a special acknowledgment to Shayama Chona, President and Founder of Tamana, whose unwavering commitment has profoundly transformed lives and established Tamana as a beacon of hope and inclusion. The Tamana Fashion Show 2024 was a heartfelt celebration of the human spirit, radiating beauty, hope and unity. It beautifully demonstrated how fashion can be more than just clothing; it can be a powerful force for bringing people together and inspiring change, creating a world where everyone, regardless of their abilities, feels valued and celebrated. The event was a moving reminder of the strength and joy that come from embracing our shared humanity.

Photos: Pankaj Kumar



# The Call of the Mirror: Reflecting on Reality

'The Call of the Mirror' invites viewers to engage deeply with art, enriching a space for introspection and connection. Each artwork challenges and enriches, offering a personal journey through diverse and compelling perspectives, SAKSHI PRIYA

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's refreshing to encounter moments that invite us to pause and reflect. "The Call of the Mirror," curated by Rohit J. Kapoor, offers such an opportunity. This group art show provides a rare chance for people to step away from their routines and engage profoundly with art that speaks directly to the heart. What makes this exhibition truly special is its range of voices and perspectives. Each artist brings something unique to the table, encouraging visitors to explore different aspects of the human experience. For instance, Asha Thadani's powerful photographs address challenging social issues, inviting viewers to confront and reflect on topics like caste and child labor. Suvajit Mondal's ceramics, meanwhile, offer a more meditative look at our relationship with nature, encouraging us to think about our impact on the world around us. The blend of traditional and modern art forms adds another layer of intrigue. From Maulik Oza's beautifully crafted



ceramics to Sergey Vinogradov's surreal portraits, *The Call of the Mirror* showcases a wide range of artistic expression. This mix not only highlights the artist's versatility but also mirrors the evolving landscape of art itself. What really stands out about

this exhibition is how it engages viewers on a personal level. It's not just about admiring art from a distance; it's about seeing oneself reflected in the works and exploring how they resonate with personal experiences and emotions. This interactive element transforms the experience, making it a journey of self-discovery as much as it is a visual feast. *The Call of the Mirror* is more than an exhibition, it's an invitation to slow down, reflect and connect with art in a meaningful way. It serves as a reminder of art's power to mirror our lives and inspire personal insight. For anyone seeking a deeper connection with art, this exhibition offers a compelling and enriching experience.

# Horse riding, bharatnatyam and skating on Manu's mind during break from shooting

PTI n NEW DELHI

**H**er shooting hand bruised by repeated pistol recoils during unrelenting training, Manu Bhaker will take a well deserved three month break. But it will be no vacation. The double Olympic medallist will continue her other routines including yoga and waking up at 6 am — which she hates. And oh yes. She also plans to catch up on her hobbies — horse riding, skating, Bharatnatyam and violin practice to name a few. The 22-year-old, who won bronze medals in the 10m air pistol mixed team (partnering Sarabjot Singh), was at PTI headquarters on Friday along with her coach and shooting great Jaspal Rana for a freewheeling interaction with its editors. Proudly flaunting her medals, the vivacious youngster from Haryana's Jhajjar spoke about

her Paris preparations, how the Tokyo setback was nothing more than a distant memory now, and also her plans to indulge in everything that she put on hold for her Olympic dreams. "Now, I have some time off and I can probably do that (martial arts) again," said Bhaker, a karate kid in her teens before a change of heart led her to shooting. "I was not able to get that kind of time to invest myself into that (martial arts). Finally, I can take time off for my hobbies, and I have many, many hobbies. Horse riding... Personally, I love horse riding, skating, I can still manage on the roads, then fitness, I really enjoy working out. "Then, I have dance (as a hobby) also, I am learning Bharatnatyam. I love the dance forms. I was training in France, I wasn't able to get time, not able to cope up with the (Bharatnatyam) classes," said Bhaker, whose trainer is from

Tamil Nadu. "She takes my classes personally and then I have violin also," she added. As she revealed her bucket list for the "holiday", Rana had a faint smile on his face and he also made it a point to shake his head in disapproval at the very mention of horse riding. "...Then she has to come back in one piece," Rana said, drawing a laugh from Bhaker. "Skating and horse riding are something she should not be doing and she'll be responsible for whatever happens. Who rides a horse thinking that they will fall?" he wondered aloud. A bemused Bhaker was not going to back down easily, their banter also being a reflection of the easy equation between one of the most talked about coach-player combinations in Indian sports right now. "I have been learning horse riding for sometime now," she retorted immediately, asserting that she would be responsible



if anything goes haywire. "I was waiting that after the Olympic, I will do horse riding. And so many other things I want to do like skydiving, scuba diving. I've waited for so long," she said, inviting another shake of the head from Rana. On his part, Rana was clear that the break was to ensure that the youngster's shooting hand gets back to full fitness. "This (pointing to her injured hand) is the reason we are making her rest for three months. Because this (injury) has been for the last eight months, and it has not healed till now," Rana said. "So rest is mandatory for the hand, and we had decided much before the World Cup (Final was awarded to New Delhi)... Our decision to stop for three months was before that," he added. "It will not be very easy but this break is required. It's not something we'll enjoy. It's only the shooting part which will

not be there but her mental (training) waking up in the morning for yoga, everything will be as per what we were doing. Because that's the lifestyle she has to follow." Bhaker will not compete in the season-ending prestigious ISSF World Cup Final for elite shooters from across the world in October in Delhi, and also likely skip the national championships and the camps that will follow to tend to her injured hand. Bhaker had done a rendition of the national anthem on a violin, gifted to her by her brother, and a video of it went viral after her Paris performance. "Yes, I was able to manage something on the violin, but I'm only on the basics," said the champion shooter. "Indian classical is my preference, but I'm only like beginning to learn it, so I'm not at the advanced level. I'm just one month into it... Just the basics."



## Smith eyes IPL comeback after stellar show in MLC

PTI n SYDNEY

**B**olstered by his strong show at the Major League Cricket, veteran Australian batter Steve Smith is hopeful of making a return in the Indian Premier League next year. The 35-year-old, who was ignored for the T20 World Cup and the upcoming tour of Scotland and England, guided the Washington Freedom to their maiden MLC title, finishing the T20 tournament as the franchise's equal leading run-scorer with 336 runs at a strike rate of 148.67. Smith made a 52-ball 88 against a bowling attack that featured Australian captain Pat Cummins and Pakistan quick Harris Rauf in the final against the San Francisco Unicorns and was adjudged the player-of-the-match. "I'd certainly love another opportunity at IPL. I'll be throwing my name in the hat, and we'll see how we go," Smith was quoted as saying by FOX Cricket. "I feel like in every opportunity I've had in T20 cricket recently and franchise stuff, I've played

quite nicely. So hopefully I just keep putting my name up there and enjoying it." Smith has not featured in the IPL since 2021, having gone unselected in the previous two auctions. With the national selectors preferring youngsters, the veteran also opened up on his axing and said he would go about his business trying to get better. "In terms of international T20s, I don't know what's going on there," Smith said. "They've obviously got some people they want to bring in, and that's fine. "I understood the way that they wanted to stack up for the World Cup, with all the strong guys that smack it miles. I understood that. "I'm not that fussed. I'll just go about my business, keep trying to improve and get better." Asked about giving a shot at winning gold at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028, Smith said: "That's still a while away as well, so we'll wait and see. Never say never. "I did watch quite a bit (of the Paris Olympics). I quite enjoyed it."

PTI n PARIS

**C**hef de Mission Gagan Narang hailed India's performance in the just-concluded Paris Olympics and said it's time to chalk out a strategic roadmap ahead of the new Olympic cycle to increase the participation in the 2028 Games in Los Angeles. A total of 117 Indian athletes participated across 16 disciplines at the Paris Games and India ended their campaign with six medals - one silver and five bronze. "Firstly, I congratulate the medal winners. A total of 6 medals (1 Silver, 5 Bronze) is a commendable effort," said Narang ahead of his return from the French capital. "Though, personally, I feel we could have finished with a few more medals, it is worth mentioning the near-misses. There were at least six 4th place finishes and quite a few of our athletes finished in the finals of their respective events. "This is encouraging, and we should take heart from these results, introspect on the fine margins and how we can better these performances," he added. Narang, who had won a bronze in shooting at the London Olympics, said the National Sports Federations (NSFs) should chart out a roadmap to increase participation in the next Games. "We must find ways to build a strong sports culture and increase the number of participations from India. That should be our goal for this new Olympic cycle," he said. "Also, most importantly I feel whilst we are teaching our athletes how to win, we must also teach them how to accept defeat and come back with a bang." There were six fourth place finishes in Paris and Narang said it is important to take lessons from the near misses and move ahead. "There are many learnings and take aways from these performances in Paris. From what I saw at this Olympics, it's only the small margins that we need to close in now to elevate this performance," he said. "I will be submitting my observations in an extensive report to the IOA and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. While India has come a long way in the past decade, and we had a fully equipped medical team at the village with Dinshaw Pardiwala as CMO. "We will grow from strength to strength to compete with the USA and China in the future in sport science backup

## Increased participation should be our goal in new Olympic cycle: Chef de Mission Narang

as well." "NEED TO CREATE A PATHWAY FOR ATHLETES": Narang said collective efforts must be made to chart an athlete's career trajectory, which also includes long-term financial literacy and utilising the athlete's



as well." "NEED TO CREATE A PATHWAY FOR ATHLETES": Narang said collective efforts must be made to chart an athlete's career trajectory, which also includes long-term financial literacy and utilising the athlete's

experience by absorbing them into the system. "To further the growth, collective efforts are being made and should be strengthened further to chart our athlete's career. We need to plan life after sport for an athlete so that their approach is long term," he said. "Financial literacy, absorbing them into the system and utilizing their knowledge and experience, creating job opportunities in district, state and national sports organizations as administrators and coaches should be a priority." Narang said such steps will help athletes to pursue their events with confidence. "Only then will parents and the athletes feel secure to pursue sport professionally and invest their time and efforts in it. We must also focus on athlete's mental well-being, this is extremely critical for athletes to feel assured and that they are cared for," he noted.

## Have to prepare mentally to transition from player to coach: Sreejesh

PTI n KOCHI

**I**ndian hockey's goalkeeping stalwart P R Sreejesh, who was given a grand welcome on his arrival at the international airport here, said he will be spending the next 2-3 months to mentally prepare himself to transition from a player to a coach. With regard to the enthusiastic welcome given to him, including a roadshow from the airport to Palarivattom here, he said it was like the "cherry on top of the cake". "Working hard for the country, sacrificing a lot and then winning a medal, it is not just for me, but for the country. So, to be a part of this happiness, the welcome organised by everyone, is like the cherry on top of the cake. The pleasure is doubled," he said, speaking to reporters outside the airport. Regarding the next step of his career, Sreejesh said that he knows what he has to do as a player. "But, as a coach, what all I should do or the transition from a player to a coach, I have to mentally prepare for that. So, I will spend the next 2-3 months on that," he said. A big crowd, including several MLAs, welcomed Sreejesh at the airport.



People holding up placards with his photo cheered him on as he came out of the airport. Thereafter, the hockey player held a roadshow from the airport in an open-top jeep. Along the route of his roadshow, people waved and cheered him on, some handed him flowers and bouquets and others walked up to his vehicle to shake his hand and congratulate him, according to visuals shown on TV channels. Sreejesh bid adieu to the game following his starring role in the country's second consecutive Olympic bronze at the just-concluded Paris Games. He is now going to be the team coach of the junior Indian hockey team.

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I, Pravena Subash, W/o-SUBASH ARUMUGAM, resident of At- 1/362, Udumbiyam Veppanthattai TK, Dist-Perambalur Tamil Nadu -621116 residing at Plot No-550, C202, Praxair Township, Paradip, Dist-Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, formerly known as Pravena, hereby declare that I have changed my name to Pravena Subash. Henceforth, I shall be known by the name Pravena Subash in all records, deeds, and documents. All persons are requested to address and refer to me, my husband, and children by this new name.

S/d-  
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