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ମହିଳା ସଶକ୍ତିକରଣ ପାଇଁ ଯୁଗାନ୍ତକାରୀ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ



ମାନ୍ୟବର ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ
ଶ୍ରୀ ନରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମୋଦୀ

ସୁଭଦ୍ରା

ଏହି ଯୋଜନା ଅଧୀନରେ ସମସ୍ତ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କୁ
ପ୍ରତି ବର୍ଷ ୧୦ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାର ସହାୟତା ରାଶି

୫ ବର୍ଷରେ ପାଇବେ
ମୋଟ ୫୦ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା

ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ, ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମୋଦୀ ଜୀ



ମାନ୍ୟବର ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ
ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ

- ▶ ଉପକୃତ ହେବେ ୧ କୋଟିରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ମହିଳା
- ▶ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷରେ ବ୍ୟୟ ହେବ ୫୫ ହଜାର ୮୨୫ କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କା

ପ୍ରମୁଖ ବିଶେଷତା

୨୧ ବର୍ଷ କିମ୍ବା ତଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ଏବଂ ୬୦ ବର୍ଷରୁ କମ୍ ବୟସର ସମସ୍ତ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ମହିଳା ହେବେ ଉପକୃତ

ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଗ୍ରାମ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଓ ସହରାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସର୍ବାଧିକ ପରିମାଣର ଡିଜିଟାଲ କାର୍ଡବାର କରୁଥିବା ୧୦୦ ଜଣ ହିତାଧିକାରୀଙ୍କୁ ଅତିରିକ୍ତ ୫୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ ରାଶି

ବାର୍ଷିକ ଦୁଇଟି କିସ୍ତିରେ ୧୦,୦୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ଅର୍ଥରାଶି ପ୍ରଦାନ

ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମା ଏବଂ ଅନୁର୍ଜାତୀୟ ମହିଳା ଦିବସ (ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୮ ତାରିଖ)ରେ ୫,୦୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ଲେଖାଏଁ ପ୍ରଦାନ

ଆଧାର ପେମେଣ୍ଟ୍ କ୍ରିଜ୍ ସିଷ୍ଟମ୍ (APBS) ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ହିତାଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ଆଧାର ସଂଯୋଜିତ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ ଖାତାକୁ ସିଧାସଳଖ ଅର୍ଥରାଶି ପ୍ରଦାନ



ମହିଳା ଓ ଶିଶୁ ବିକାଶ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

OJPR-46005/13/0004/2425

BJP's Pradhan withdraws from RS race

Mamata Mohanta to be elected unopposed

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As expected, BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan, who had filed nominations for the by-poll to the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Odisha, withdrew his papers on Tuesday.

This was because the BJP had earlier nominated former MP Mamata Mohanta for the RS seat.

Pradhan had filed his nominations with support from 10 BJP MLAs, which raised ques-



tions. However, later, BJP State president Manmohan Samal clarified that Pradhan was a dummy candidate and his

nomination was part of the party's strategic decision.

Now, only Mamata Mohanta has remained in fray

for the by-poll scheduled to be held on September 3. As only one candidate is there, there will be no election and she will be elected unopposed, sources said.

Mohanta had been elected to the Rajya Sabha on a BJD ticket in April, 2020. Her tenure as Rajya Sabha MP was to end in April 2026.

She, however, resigned from the Rajya Sabha as well as the primary membership of BJD on July 31. Next day, she joined the BJP.

Mohanta, a leader of the Kudumi community, belongs to Mayurbhanj district.

Govt to hold job fair in September

35,000 appointment letters to be issued

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The new State Government will soon fulfil the BJP's promise made in its Sankalp Patra (manifesto) by holding a mega job fair or Nikujkti Mela in September.

An action plan has been chalked out to hand over 35,000 appointment letters. Soon, a notification will be issued for filling up the vacant posts in various departments. Sources said that there are plans to hand over 22,000 appointment letters by next

month. At present, there are around 1,32,459 vacancies against the sanctioned strength of 2,99,666. An Empowered Committee headed by Chief Minister Mohan Majhi has determined 92,203 posts and out of that requisitions have been sent to different recruiting agencies for conducting the recruitment process for 78,919 posts.

Official sources said directions have been issued for obtaining approval of the Empowered Committee for the remaining vacancies by September. The recruitment agencies have been asked to publish the advertisements within December 2024.

Nalco inks MoU with IISSSC



For skill dev of contractual employees

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As part of Skill India Initiative of the Government of India, the Nalco has inked an MoU with the Indian Iron and Steel Skill Council (IISSSC) to establish a system of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by conduction of NSQF based skill development programmes to be followed by assessment and certification, for its contractual employees.

Nalco in collaboration with IISSSC would facilitate the en-

hancing of the competency level of its workforce against the set industry standards. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IISSSC and Nalco would enable both entities to contribute towards the Skill India Mission as well as sustain growth in their areas.

The MoU signing ceremony, held at Nalco Bhawan in Bhubaneswar was witnessed amongst others by CMD Sridhar Patra, Directors of Nalco, CEO, IISSSC Dr Sushim Banerjee, Director BPNSI Pritam Shankar Purkayastha and officials of Nalco, IISSSC and BPNSI.

2,759 dengue cases in State



Highest in Sundargarh

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

While dengue cases are on a rise in Odisha, Director of Public Health Dr Nilakantha Mishra on Tuesday said that so far 2,759 people have been infected in the State.

"Out of 70,000 tests conducted, 2,759 samples were found positive for dengue.

Most of the positive samples, 865, were from Sundargarh followed by 837 in Khurda district," Dr Mishra said.

More than 500 dengue patients have been identified in Bhubaneswar alone, he informed.

The dengue cases are likely to increase due to more rainfall in Odisha. However, preventive steps are being taken to contain the cases, Dr Mishra further said.

RBI-adopted villages as backward as ever

NHRC puts Union RD Ministry, Odisha Govt on notice

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notice to the Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India and the Chief Secretary, Government of Odisha on the plight of adopted villages in Odisha.

Acting on a petition filed by rights activist and lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy, highlighting the basic amenities and bare necessities issues pertaining to the villages adopted on record by various organs of democracy and institutions in India, the apex human rights panel sought for a detailed reply and asked the authorities to ensure the needful action on the issues and

submit their detail action taken reports to the commission within eight weeks.

The petitioner contended that the basic human rights of the adopted villagers like the poor Scheduled Tribe villagers living in Jalanga village in Bhradrak district and other villages of Odisha and India adopted under 'Samagra Gramin Vikas Yojana' by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have been leading miserable life. Former RBI Governor, D Subbarao, had launched a financial outreach programme on December 3, 2009 in the village.

Again, Subbarao heard grievances against UCO Bank during his visit to Jalanga village in February, 2013. However, there is no visible im-

provement in the quality of life in the adopted villages of the RBI.

Similar is the fate of the villages adopted by the MPs, MLAs and corporates under the CSR activities. Tripathy pointed out the reply received under the RTI Act from the RBI about five villages namely Jalanga, Chandlpur, Pokatunga, Chhatabara and Bhedabahal of Odisha. However, till date, the villages which have been adopted by the RBI under 'Samagra Gramin Vikas Yojna' did not reveal any improvement in the villages even after fourteen years.

Tripathy requested the NHRC to seek a comprehensive data base on the adopted villages in Odisha and all other

States and Union Territories of India and make a study on the development of the villagers so far.

No comprehensive database regarding the adopted villages in India has been prepared by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. It is believed that more than 10,000 villages have been adopted by various institutions, MPs and MLAs in India. Mere adoption of records, spending money with the nexus of corrupt persons in the name of poverty and backwardness further worsens the condition of life of the adopted villagers and weakens their belief system in the democratic set-up, Tripathy alleged.

Under BDA 191 illegal apartments to be razed



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Mohapatra on Tuesday informed the State Assembly that 491 cases have been registered in connection with illegal apartments and other structures under the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA).

Out of this, directions have been issued for demolition of 191 illegal apartments while 63 cases have been dropped

and 237 cases are under trial.

In his reply, the minister further informed that 1,444 cases have been registered against illegal constructions and apartments under the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) limits. Of the total number, 451 cases have been disposed while 993 are under trial.

According to the minister, the department is taking action against the violators as per the Odisha Urban Development Authorities Act 1982.

'CM disrespecting Lord Jagannath'



Youth Congress stage demo

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The BJP government, which came to power claiming to protect Odia Asmita, and BJP leaders are constantly disrespecting Lord Jagannath,

said the Youth Congress on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi is comparing himself with Lord Jagannath, alleged the Youth Congress, which held a demonstration before the CM's residence here and burnt an effigy of his.

Youth Congress members,

led by Ranjit Patra, came in a procession from the Congress Bhawan carrying coconuts.

Patra said the BJP is politicising the name of Shree Jagannath. BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra had said Lord Jagannath is a devotee of Narendra Modi. Now, the Chief Minister is

saying he is Lord Jagannath. He should immediately apologise to the people of the State; otherwise, the Congress would oppose the CM when he goes to any district, said Patra.

Among others, Youth Congress leader Yasir Nawaj and Sudip Samal were present.

Jumbo deaths PCCF seeks performance reports of spl squads

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Expressing displeasure over the recent deaths of wildlife animals in different forest areas, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and Chief Wildlife Warden Susanta Nanda has sought performance reports of special squads deployed in forests under various schemes.

In the order, Nanda said 397 squads are deployed in different forest divisions for protection and conservation of wildlife.

"In spite of such huge manpower at the level of DFOs, which has almost become an extension wing of the department, we have had more than 40 elephant deaths during the current financial year. No action has been initiated nor the

performance of the squads have been reviewed and reported to this office," Nanda wrote.

Stating that the services of the squads are inevitable, Nanda said the leadership required for utilising them and the SOP for their operation in the field while tracking elephants or undertaking protection activities has left little to be desired.

Signs of permanency of the staffs have led to lack of effective patrolling and protection of wildlife and their habitat, the PCCF pointed out.

To tide over the situation, he said the squads from different programme/schemes allocated to Forest Divisions by the Wildlife Wing have now been allocated to RRCFs for effective placement at different divisions

and patrolling in the field.

While an attempt should be made not to disengage any performing squad members, sourced from outsourced agency only, as long as they fulfil the requirements in the field, he instructed.

Regional CCFs have been asked to mobilise the squads from adjoining divisions depending on the situations in field and, when required, for effective utilisation and to ensure protection of the wildlife.

The squad allocation to the circles may be distributed among the Forest Divisions and intimated to the PCCF office immediately for placement of funds at the disposal of DFOs concerned, he directed in the order.

'Entrepreneurship propels economic dev'

IIT BBS holds interaction for start-ups, students to mark Entrepreneurship Day

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As part of the World Entrepreneurship Day celebration, the Research and Entrepreneurship Park (REP) of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar organised enriching interactive sessions for the students and about 30 start-ups incubated by the IIT.

The sessions were handled by Director, IIT Bhubaneswar, Prof Shreepad Karmalkar, president, Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI)

Limited Brahmananda Mishra and some successful start-up



founders.

The session provided a fruitful opportunity for the start-ups to share their journey, challenges, and innovative solutions directly with the Director, fostering a spirit of collaboration and mentorship.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Karmalkar mentioned that more than 15% of the adult workforce is entrepreneurs in economically developed countries. Thus, entrepreneurship is necessary for

economic development. Entrepreneurs are people who choose a life of challenge and risk over security and comfort. "We must create value for such a lifestyle in India from childhood, if we want to promote entrepreneurship and thus propel economic development," he said.

Prof Karmalkar further narrated that the IIT Bhubaneswar has initiated several measures to develop the entrepreneurial mindset fol-

lowing these observations. The institute is building a Rs 130 cr Research and Entrepreneurship Park over 13,500 square meter area that will provide co-working space and workshop facilities for 150 start-ups. The Union Minister of Education launched the transformative 100-CUBE Start-ups initiative of the IIT BBS Research and Entrepreneurship Park (REP) in February 2024. This envisages the development of at least 100

start-ups of minimum Rs 100 crore worth each by 100th year of Odisha, i.e. 2036. About 5% of the IIT faculty would contribute to these start-ups. To achieve this goal, the institute has started a course titled 'Introduction to Research and Entrepreneurship' for all PhD and MS students to create a taste for research and entrepreneurship using interactive lectures, anecdotes, activities and discussions, he added.

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IVA JOVIC
BEATS MAGDA IN
FIRST ROUND
11 SPORTS

PM Modi shares perspectives on Russia-Ukraine conflict with Putin

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin and shared "insights" from his recent visit to Ukraine. During the telephone talks, Modi reiterated India's firm commitment to supporting an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. A day earlier on Monday, Modi had briefed US President Joe Biden on his visit to Ukraine and conveyed India's full support for the early return of peace to the region through dialogue and diplomacy. As regards talks with President Putin, Modi said in a social media post, "Exchanged perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and my insights from the recent visit to Ukraine. Reiterated India's firm support to an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the conflict." The Prime Minister also said he and President Putin also discussed measures to further strengthen Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries. A statement by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) here said Modi had on Tuesday a telephone conversation with the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. The Prime Minister recalled his successful visit to Russia last month to participate in the 22nd India-Russia Bilateral Summit. The two leaders reviewed progress on a number of bilateral issues and discussed measures to further



FILE PHOTO

strengthen the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia. They also exchanged views on a range of regional and global issues of mutual interest. The two leaders exchanged views on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict as Modi shared with Putin insights from his recent visit to Ukraine. He underlined the importance of dialogue and diplomacy as well as sincere and practical engagement between all stakeholders to achieve an abiding and peaceful resolution of the conflict. The two leaders agreed to remain in touch. Modi's talks with Putin took place days after he met Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv. During his meeting with the Ukrainian President, Prime Minister Modi had said India is "not neutral as it is always on the side of peace."

Protests singe City of Joy

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Many people, including policemen, were injured in pitched battles intermittently fought at various locations of Kolkata and Howrah between the men in uniform and students protesting against the rape and murder of the lady doctor at a medical college in Kolkata. Several protesters were taken into custody. The students under the banner of a relatively obscure Paschim Banga Chhatra Samaj — with apparent blessings of the Opposition BJP — marched towards the State Secretariat Nabanna to demand the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee when clashes took place. Initial jostling turned into skirmishes with the police repeatedly bursting tear gas, charging water jets and resorting to lathicharge as the charged up agitators that included many women refused to relent and turned aggressive. The pitched battles continued for more than five hours giving the police a harrowing time, sources in the administration said, adding additional combat forces and RAF had to be called in from the neighbouring districts. At various places people profusely bleeding from head were seen being carried away by their co-agitators to the hospitals. Similarly the policemen who often got isolated were also attacked. At Babu Ghat a crowd of agitators badly beat up two policemen with lathis, rods, bricks and even shoes. Some even spit on them while



Tear gas shells being used by security personnel to disperse students during their protest march towards West Bengal Secretariat over the alleged sexual assault and murder of a trainee doctor, in Kolkata, on Tuesday

Chatterjee Road and elsewhere shouting the hitherto familiar slogan "we want justice." At Princep Ghat and Mahatma Gandhi Road the police chased away the agitators who were trying to break the cordons. At Kona Express Way too, the police fought intermittently with the agitators who were trying to enter Nabanna area from Howrah side. In the melee more than 50 people, including policemen were hurt, sources said, adding that the count could go up as "more information from other zones are still awaited." The police had detained more than 350 people, the BJP sources said. While the police accused the agitators of resorting to violence first by throwing bricks the opposite side said the students got agitated as news spread that four of their leaders who had been organising the movement for the past several days had "mysteriously gone missing" as they had allegedly been picked up around midnight on Monday. Incidentally most of the agitating doctors at various medical colleges and the members of the civil society remained indifferent to the Tuesday's march but continued their cease work at their workplaces, sources said. The Tuesday's clashes were the culmination of fortnight long protests by the people from all walks of life against the brutal rape and murder of a lady doctor at the RG Kar Medical College Hospital and allege effort by the Kolkata Police and the powers that be to shield the real guilty.

journalists covering the incident tried to intervene by appealing the people not to take law into their own hands. Intensity of the protest was such that the agitators who were quickly joined by swarms of political activists, moved dangerously close to the seat of State power, Nabanna with the police armed with riot gear having a trying time to push them back. The scene was almost same on both sides of the Hooghly River as the agitators broke through firmly erected barricades one after the other at Mahatma Gandhi Road, College Square, Princep Ghat, Esplanade, Hastings, Santragachi, Vidya Sagar Setu leading to Nabanna, Howrah Maidan, Sarat

Safety of healthcare workers: Portal floated, public view sought

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court-appointed National Task Force (NTF) to formulate a protocol for the safety and security of healthcare professionals held its inaugural meeting under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary on Tuesday. It decided to conduct broader consultations with key stakeholders to identify critical issues and develop a comprehensive framework for protecting those in the healthcare field. Soon after the NTF panel also favoured setting up an online portal seeking suggestions from public, the Union Health Ministry shared a link in this regard, posting on the X social platform, "Suggestions to N T F" — <http://serviceonline.gov.in/directApply.do?serviceId=2987> for seeking suggestions from individuals and different stakeholders across the country.



NDA touches majority mark in Rajya Sabha, 11 elected unopposed

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a major boost to the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), nine candidates from the BJP and two from allies have been elected unopposed in the bypolls for the Rajya Sabha. This is the first time that the NDA has reached a majority mark in the Upper House. Currently, it has the support of six nominated and one Independent member. As nine of the BJP members were elected unopposed, taking its tally to 96 and taking NDA to 112 in the Rajya Sabha. Among the three others to get elected unopposed were one each from NDA allies NCP faction of Ajit Pawar faction and Rashtriya Lok Manch. One member of the Congress also got elected, taking the Opposition numbers in the Upper House to 85. Rajya Sabha has 245 seats, though currently there are eight vacancies — four from Jammu and Kashmir and four nominated. With the House's current strength of 237, the majority mark is 119. The BJP candidates elected unopposed include Mission Ranjan Dass and Rameshwar Teli from Assam, Manan Kumar Mishra from Bihar, Kiran Chadhary from Haryana, George Kurien from Madhya Pradesh, Dhirya Sheel Patil from Maharashtra, Mamata Mohanta from Odisha, Ravneet Singh Bittu from Rajasthan and Rajeev Bhattacharjee from Tripura. Congress's Abhishek Manu Singhvi was elected unopposed from Telangana. NCP Ajit Pawar faction's Nitin Patil got elected from Maharashtra and RLM's Upendra Kushwaha made it to the upper house from Bihar.

UCCIL to hold 'Resurgent Odisha 2024'

From Aug 30 to Sept 1 at Janata Maidan
LALIT MOHAN MISHRA ■
BHUBANESWAR



The Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry Limited (UCCIL) on Tuesday announced to hold 'Resurgent Odisha 2024: A Global Trade Show' from August 30 to September 1 at the Janata Maidan here. This event, supported by the Government of Odisha and the Union Ministry of Micro,

Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), promises to be a landmark occasion in Odisha's economic and industrial journey. It aims to showcase the growth and opportunities Odisha offers in various sectors, including Information Technology (IT), Artificial In-

telligence (AI), manufacturing and more. The event is designed to foster collaboration, innovation and networking among industry leaders, experts and stakeholders from around the globe. UCCIL president Brahma Mishra said, "Govt of India has set an ambitious plan to make

India a 30-trillion dollar economy by 2047. To reach the target, every State needs to contribute one trillion dollars each. In this context, Odisha has to contribute substantially. "With the help of our partners, we will prepare a white paper on how Odisha can

achieve the one-trillion dollar economy target and will submit it to both the Centre and State Government," said Mishra. He said there shall be ample opportunities for all stakeholders to connect with industry leaders, experts and innovators from across the globe. The UCCIL will collaborate with organisations such as the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), and Assocham, he said.

No move to give free electricity up to 300 units

Singh Deo clears confusion
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Amid demand for free electricity up to 300 units, Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister K V Singh Deo on Tuesday clarified that there has been no announcement of giving free electricity up to 300 units.

Singh Deo told the State Assembly, "The correct position is that availing up to 300 units of electricity by way of installing rooftop solar unit under PM Suryaghar Muft Bijlee Yojana is part of a new Government of India scheme." Under the scheme, the Central Government gives a subsidy of Rs 78,000 on installation of 3-KW solar plants



on rooftops. It is capable of producing more than 300 units per month which is highly beneficial to consumers as they can significantly reduce the electricity bill by such self-generation of solar power, he said. He urged the electricity consumers to participate in the PM Suryaghar Muft Bijlee Yojana and benefit from the same.

Singh Deo further said the government has observed that in some parts of Bargarh district, deliberate misinformation is being spread and electricity consumer meters are being removed. "It is not only illegal but also highly unsafe for the public at large. Only trained and qualified technical people are authorised to handle installation or removal of electricity meters," he said.

Uproar in Assembly Opp demands ST, SC quota & caste census

Speaker convenes all-party meet
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

With opposition BJD and Congress creating ruckus and disrupting proceedings in the State Assembly over the demands of reservation and a caste-based census on Tuesday, Speaker Surama Padhy convened an all-party meeting in an effort to ensure smooth functioning of the House. Shortly after the House assembled for the day, BJD and



Congress members raised the issue and demanded steps to provide reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs in the field of education. During the Question Hour, the BJD, Congress and CPI(M) legislators stormed into the well of the House demanding reservation for the ST, SC and OBC communities. The House was adjourned several times during the Ques-

tion and Zero Hours. The Speaker convened the all-party meeting and the situation improved thereafter. The Congress, however, sought a statement from the Chief Minister regarding the reservation issue. Earlier, uproarious scenes had been witnessed as Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati and BJD's Adhiraj Panigrahi attempted to climb the Speaker's podium while BJD member Romanch Ranjan Biswal shouted slogans atop the reporters' table.

Low pressure to form around Aug 29

Rainfall to intensify further in State
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The intensity of rain in the State is likely to increase from August 29 with the likely formation of a low-pressure area over east-central and adjoining north Bay of Bengal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tuesday. On Wednesday, heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorm and lightning is likely in Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati and Ganjam districts. Thunder-

DAHI HANDI SHOW



Devotees form a human pyramid to break the 'dahi handi', an earthen pot filled with curd, as part of Janmashtami celebrations, at Dadar, Mumbai, on Tuesday

storm with lightning may also occur in Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha and Nayagarh districts, said the Regional Office of the IMD here. On Thursday, heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm) along with thunderstorm or lightning is likely in Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur and Rayagada districts. Heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorm and lightning may also occur in Ganjam, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Balangir, Nuapada, Nayagarh, Khodha and Puri, said the IMD issuing an Orange warning. On Friday, isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm) with isolated extremely heavy rainfall (20cm) has been sounded for Malkangiri and Koraput. There is also a Yellow warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20 cm) for Nabarangpur, Kalahandi and Rayagada. Heavy rainfall (7 to 11 cm) may also occur in Nuapada, Balangir, Kandhamal, Ganjam, Gajapati, Puri, Khodha and Nayagarh. On Saturday, heavy to very heavy rainfall may occur in Nabarangpur, Malkangiri and Koraput districts along with heavy rainfall in Rayagada, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Balangir and Ganjam.

First Heritage Walks held in Puri with gusto

Participants visit mutts, shrines; explore their rich traditions

PNS ■ PURI

On the eve of Janmastami, the heritage enthusiasts from across the State had a memorable time in the Sankhakhshetra Puri, with the first episode of Puri Heritage Walks familiarising heritage lovers with the essence of Jagannath cult and the rich traditions of the deities and shrines around the world famous temple, which epitomises Odia cultural traditions and ethos.

Led by the young heritage activists of Puri, the maiden walk was participated by more than 50 walkers from Konark, Gop, Puri, Bhubaneswar, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Cuttack. After initiating the event from near the Mahaveer Temple adjacent to the Southern Gate (Horse gate or Aswa Dwar), they visited Sriramdas Mutt or Dakshina



Parswa Mutt and Kapal Mochan Mahadev Temple and entered the temple premises to see Adi Nrusingha, Maa Bimala and Nirmalya Khala (yard to prepare Nirmalya) shrines.

The heritage walkers then went to Ananda Bazaar and before having the Mahaprasad had an in-depth discussion on the unique aspects of the Sri Jagannath Temple and the cult and how the various other traditions like Shaivism, Shakti worshiping and Tantricism has created a wonderful collage over the religious fabrics of its day-to-day traditions. Before that "Chunara Sevak" Dr Sarat Mohanty shared his experi-

unique blending of the major religious traditions under Shiva, Devi (Shakti) and Tantric traditions.

In the participatory discussion he also answered to the queries of other participants on the unique religious traditions of the shrine.

Before the discussion at Ananda Bazaar, Jagannath Culture researcher Dayanidhi Tripathy and Debiprasanna Nanda also spoke on some of the unknown aspects of the temple traditions.

Puri Heritage Walks conveners Sanjay Baral, Dr Aurojyoti and Biswaranjan Dehury coordinated the event and the young heritage enthusiasts of Puri worked hard to see that it ended with a great perfection. Despite a Sunday and presence of thousands of devotees inside the Shreemandir premises, they managed it efficiently.

The conveners and the participating heritage enthusiasts decided to continue the event every month on the second Sunday.

Laxmananda death anniv held in K'mal



PNS ■ PHULBANI

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) organised a function to mark the 16th death anniversary of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati at his Jalespatta Ashram in Kandhamal district on Sunday.

Sports and Culture Minister Suryabansi Suraj and Panchayati Raj Minister Rabinarayan Nayak were the guests.

Suraj said Swami Laxmanananda was his inspiration. The Swami dedicated his life for the society. From

Talcher to Kandhamal covering a distance 400 km, he chose Kandhamal as his workplace. He said women empowerment is essential and started a school at Chakapada with three girl students. Now, the school has three hundred students. His dream was education for girls from KG to PG.

Swami Jibanmuktanandaji, Kandhamal MP Sukanta Panigrahi, Phulbani MLA Umacharan Mallick, VHP leader Priyanath Sharma, Kanyashram principal Sandhyarani Panigrahi were, among others, present.

'Ankurodgam' held in M'bhanj HS



By Sahitya Parishad

PNS ■ BARIPADA

The "Mayurbhanj Sahitya Parishad" has begun holding an innovative "Ankurodgam Karyakram" (Talent-searching and talent-sprouting program) in different schools of the tribal-dominated district.

As a part of the educative campaign, an Akurodgam program was held on Saturday here at the local Sripadganj High School, in which the stu-

dents of classes IX and X took part. Students were asked 30 questions related to Indian culture and heritage. They were also told inspiring stories pertaining to Indian history and tradition.

Headmistress Sujata Behera presided over the whole show, while Sahitya Parishad president Padmanabh Sahoo and senior Parishad functionaries like Samarendra Basa, Kavi Vishnu Satpathy and Bhaswati Panda conducted the event smoothly.

In Baleswar Villagers detain 10 forest officials

After elephants damage houses, crops

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Irate locals of Dholpur village under Aupada block in Baleswar district allegedly detained several Odisha Forest Department officials on Tuesday due to frequent damage of houses and crops by rampaging elephants.

The villagers took the drastic step after their demands for compensation of the losses due to the elephants were not ad-

ressed by the Forest Department.

Elephants have been damaging houses and crops in the nearby villages and people have been living in constant fear, but forest officials are not taking any measures, alleged a villager. Elephants on Tuesday also damaged crops and the asbestos roofs of several houses. However, forest officials allegedly didn't take any action to drive the elephants away. Later, when officials reached the area, some locals detained 10 of them, including a woman.

In Cuttack

Body of S'pur girl who jumped into Mahanadi found

PNS ■ CUTTACK/SAMBALPUR

The body of the Class-IX girl student, who had jumped into the Mahanadi river from Chaunpur village in Sambalpur district, was found after three days in Cuttack district on Tuesday.

Locals found the body floating in water near the banks of the river in Kandarpur under the Athagarh police station in the district. Fire Service personnel reached the spot and recovered the body, which was then taken to the Athagarh

hospital.

The deceased, Kajal Sahani, was a student of the Hindi School near Golebar. She left home for school on August 24 morning, but an hour later, morning walkers saw her near Chaunpur bridge, where she parked her bicycle and jumped into the river before anyone could stop her.

The river had swelled due to the opening of sluice gates of Hirakud Dam in Sambalpur and the girl was suspected to have been swept away in the floodwaters despite knowing how to swim.

Paradip Sangha pays tribute to ex-president Das

PNS ■ PARADIP

The Paradip Port Banika Sangha (PPBS) on Monday held a tribute service in front of the merchant association office to honour the memory of Prahlada Chandra Das, a senior businessman and a former president of the OOPS, who passed away on August 25. Das was known for his simplicity, humility and dedication to the community.

The meeting was presided over by current PPBS president Santosh Kumar Pattnaik, who spoke fondly of Das' legacy. He highlighted Das' efforts in fostering a sense of brotherhood and mutual respect among the traders dur-

ing his tenure. He prayed for strength and support to Das' family during this difficult time.

PPBS vice-president Anadi Charan Parida, general secretary Debabrata Sahu, along with members Ayas Kant Samal, Chandra Shekhar Mohapatra, Kashi Nath Sahu, Umakant Sahu, Babuni Sahu and Chaitanya Sahu, also paid their respects to Das and extended their condolences to the bereaved family. The PPBS organised a special puja to Maa Durga on the occasion. Fruits were distributed to patients at government hospitals and a charitable meal (Narayan Seva) was organised for the underprivileged.

Space Day: Host events held at BU Physics Dept



PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

On the National Space Day, the PG Department of Physics of Berhampur University organised a seminar and a quiz on the journey of India's space exploration.

The students also presented posters signifying the ideas of space mission, satellite technology and planetary science to mark the event. The students of various departments of the university also participated in the quiz related to space technology. A telescope demonstration followed by a quiz was held in Chhatarpur Science College on behalf of the PG Department of Phys-

ics as an outreach programme to induce curiosity and passion for space exploration among the young students.

PG Council Chairman and Head of the Department of Physics Prof Sukanta Kumar Tripathy along with other faculty members, Prof. Siddhartha Sankar Panda, Dr Sashi Shekhar Behera, Dr Kush K Naik, Dr Salila Das, Dr Sarita Mohanty and Dr Bidyadhar Das participated in the seminar. Research scholar Rashmita Panda gave an elaborate talk on the topic.

The PhD students of the department also attended and helped in the smooth conduct of the seminar.

Chicken farmer shot dead in Jharsuguda

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

A chicken farm owner was shot dead on Monday night at Beherapatra under the Sadar police station in Jharsuguda district. The assailants later dumped the body somewhere to destroy evidence.

The deceased was identified as Shahjahan Khan.

As per sources, police detained two persons in connection with the murder. Various teams including a dog squad, forensic team, and police began investigating the case. However, the deceased's body and the murder weapon were yet to be recovered.

"The dispute related to the chicken farm which led to the

murder. The prime accused Imran is currently in police custody. Along with him, we are suspecting the involvement of another individual, who is also in our custody. We are tracing the routes the accused used to dispose of the body and one team has already been dispatched to collect CCTV footage," said Jharsuguda SP Smith P Parmar.

"We have recovered their call records in order to pinpoint their location which will indicate their movements. Our primary focus now is to retrieve the body of the deceased and the murder weapon. We have formed teams to probe the case," Parmar added.

B'pur Rotary wellness centre serves patients

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

The Rotary Club of Brahmampur's Wellness centre served a number of needy patients by providing them free consultation and diagnosis by specialist Rotary doctors.

The event, managed by the Brahmampur Rotary Community Service Projects, offered free services including blood pressure, fasting blood sugar, ECG, SPO2, and more. A panel of specialist doctors, including Dr Priyajit Jena, Dr Nihar Ranjan Sahoo, Dr N Santosh Kumar, Dr Gourav



Kumar Sahu, Dr Mahesh Mohapatra, and Dr B Rupa, provided expert care to the patients.

Chairman of the Rotary Wellness Centre Rtn. Santosh Ku Rath expressed satisfaction

and wellbeing in the region," he said.

The event was attended by several Rotary members, including Rtn KVG Ravi Kumar, Secretary, Rtn V Satyanarayana, treasurer, Rtn Satyakam Patro, ex-president, Rtn Venkat Anand, Rtn Madhusmita Sahu, Goura Shankar Agarwal, Rtn Sanjeev Mohapatra, Rtn Tata Vijaylaxmi, Rtn Gopi Agarwal, Rtn A Anil Kumar and Rtn M Praveen Kumar among others.

The wellness centre is open on the 4th Sunday of every month from 8 am to 10 am.

In Konark Community radio broadcasters' meet ends

50 representatives from 25 community radio stations join

PNS ■ KONARK

A State-level workshop for community radio broadcasters, organised by Young India in collaboration with UNICEF, concluded on Saturday at Konark. The five-day programme, held from August 20 to 24, brought together 50 representatives from 25 community radio stations across Odisha.

The workshop aimed to empower community radio stations to become agents of social change. Senior communication experts from within and outside the State participated, discussing the crucial



role of community radio in promoting social and behavioural changes through effective and audience-centric programming.

Currently, there are 42 community radio stations operating in Odisha, reaching approximately 25% of the State's population.

The MissionCR314 aims to establish community radio stations in every block of Odisha, said NA Shah Ansari, a senior communication media specialist, during the workshop.

Throughout the programme, participants developed strategies to address various social issues, including child marriage, education, gender equality, health, and nutrition. The workshop emphasized the importance of community radio in amplifying the voices of ordinary people and fostering societal change.

The workshop was inaugurated by Dr Sugata Roy, a Specialist at UNICEF. Several experts, including Sarada

Lahangir, Pritikant Panda, Ghasiram Panda, Yogendra Yadav, Jyotirmay Dev Goswami, Subrat Pati, SA Safique, Prajna Choudhury, Dr Anil Patnaik, Dr Ashok Panigrahi among others, participated in the event. They provided valuable encouragement and training to the delegate broadcasters, focusing on various societal needs and the essentials of effective radio programming. The goal was to develop impactful, pro-people content for community radio.

Climate change threatens food security of India's population

The impact of climate change is starkly evident on the Indian monsoon, which has become more erratic and violent over the past few years. The increasing variability in heatwave and precipitation has resulted in prolonged-day spells followed by a heavy downpour. A more chaotic monsoon has a grave bearing on Indian agriculture and food production. The below-normal rainfall has sparked concerns over the output of summer-sown crops such as cotton, soybean, corn and rice. Being the largest exporter of rice and the top importer of edible oils, a drop in production could put pressure on the country's burgeoning trade deficit.

In the Budget 2024, the Government of India claims to focus more on effective, efficient and climate-resilient public spending. It is trying to accelerate inclusive and transformative development in agricultural sector. Ever since India's Independence, Indian economy is dependent on farm sector considering its contribution to growth



BISHNUPRIYA PADHI

and consumption expenditure. The impetus for recognising women's contribution to the farm sector is also noteworthy.

The National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act 1977, defines the term sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site specific application that will, in the long run, satisfy human food and fiber needs; enhance environmen-

tal quality and the natural resources upon which the agriculture economy depends; make the most efficient use of non renewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

Sustainability in agriculture is basically defined as environment that is designed to promote endless regeneration. It aims at balancing the needs of farmers pursuing their livelihoods. It reconciles ecology and biodiversity within human landscape.

Sustainable Agricultural practices (SAP) as envisaged in the National Environmental Policy 2006, aims at achieving the targets such as; reaching 25% of Indian agriculture organic by 2030; reducing 50% of the use of pesticides, use of fertilizers by 20%, nutrient loss by at least 50%, and use of antimicrobial in agriculture by 50% -all by 2030.

Climate change threatens the very foundation of food security for 1.4 billion population of India. The 2024 Budget presents a chance to show the seeds of a transformed agricultural sector-resilient, sustainable and empowered. By embracing innovation, investing in the future and placing the farmer at the heart of the equation, India can navigate a productive agricultural landscape that could support its people.

Investing in R and D of climate-resilient crop technologies is essential and therefore, sufficient allocations should be made to develop and distribute seeds that thrive in unpredictable weather patterns. Drought-resistant varieties of staple crops like rice and wheat, pulses and oil seeds are a dire need. Also, promoting organic and regenerative farming practices like crop rotation, mulching, composting can improve soil health and water retention, making farms more resilient to droughts.

Improving efficiency in water

use for agriculture is critical amid looming water crisis. This requires institutional restructuring and strengthening business ecosystem for promotion of water-efficient technologies such as micro-irrigation.

Transformation could be brought about by digital initiatives like Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and National Agriculture Market (e-NAM). These platforms empower farmers by connecting them directly to markets, eliminating exploitative middle men. By strengthening and promoting these platforms, the Union Budget can ensure better market access and fairer prices for farmers' produce.

The water storage data from the Central Water Commission, showed live storage at 150 reservoirs across the country as on March 7, 2024 at 40% of capacity, and trailing both the 10-year average and the year earlier levels, also doesn't portend well for summer sown crops. This is particularly so in the

southern region, where the storage deficit compared with the 10 year average is a most acute 29%.

In the last two decades, India has made significant strides in rural road infra and electrification. Assuring stable power supply through emphasis on higher investments in alternative energy sources, such as solar, would help address a key opportunity around agro-processing. This would assure value creation from agriculture by value-adding and higher income for farmers.

In view of the climate change, several crucial factors have to be taken into account. The income sources and asset base of farmers need to be diversified. Their coping capacity to withstand -climate shocks be strengthened. Higher investments in farm-inputs, irrigation infrastructure, storage facilities and post harvest technologies be made by the collaboration of Government and private sectors. Besides, aggregation through producers' cooperatives may help realise

the value of economies of scale.

Transition to low carbon energy sources would be a key step towards achieving 'Net-Zero 2050' goal. Indians are among the lowest per-capita energy users and carbon emitters in the world. Harnessing their innovation capacity, entrepreneurial ability and the risk taking ability of farmers, who have made the country among top five food producing countries, will be a game changer.

What is imperative to achieve such a climate friendly agriculture is that social relations and governance regimes should support and expand these forms of food production, such as emancipatory labour and market relations. The local food economies based on solidarity, farmers' independence from dominant industrial agricultural system and maintaining diverse crop and livestock that reflect the region's culture and history, should be encouraged.

(Prof Dr Padhi is a researcher, columnist)

BJP targets 10 cr new members in one month

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The BJP will launch a fresh membership drive with Prime Minister Narendra Modi scheduled to get the certificate for the renewal of his membership from the party President Jagat Prakash Nadda. The BJP this month set a target of enrolling at least 100 million new members across the country except in the election-bound Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Jharkhand. The first phase of the membership drive will go on till September 25 and then a review of the exercise will be carried out before the launch of the second phase on October 1. It will continue till October 15. Party sources said that Sadasyata Abhiyan 2024 will be launched in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 2, in the National Capital. According to BJP leaders, Union



Ministers, Chief Ministers and elected representatives from Sarpanch to parliamentarians will spearhead the BJP's nationwide membership drive starting from September 2, an exercise which will serve as the launch pad of the party's internal polls leading to the election of its new President. BJP National General Secretary Vinod Tawde, who is also the head of the membership drive, appealed

to people to join the party in a big way. "A strong BJP will lead to the making of a 'Viksit Bharat', he said. Active members, a term for party workers who can contest organisational elections after making a certain number of new members, will be enrolled between October 16-31. Sources said there was no plan as of now to appoint a working President before a full-fledged President is

lected. They, however, added that the party leadership may take a fresh call depending on organisational needs. Tawde said party workers across the country have been trained for the drive, which relies heavily on the digital medium. The party is relying on its 10 lakh active members to carry out the exercise, he added. All existing members of the BJP have to renew their membership every six years. The current drive will be marked by the renewal of existing membership as well as making new members. The BJP had earlier announced that the party aims to induct more than 10 crore members during the drive that will not cover the States going to polls in the coming months. The party's membership strength was 18 crore after the last such exercise, and it has expressed hope that the party will cross the figure this time.

About 110 million people signed up as BJP members in 2014 and about 70 million in 2019 when the membership drive was opened for a limited period. New members will be made through four methods - calling a mobile number (8800002024), scanning QR code, by NaMo app and through the BJP's website. However, in remote areas, the party will use the traditional method with papers to enrol new members. The campaign will set membership targets for each unit, from Booth to State levels, based on the party's performance in recent elections. Notably, State workshops were conducted on August 19 to 21 and district workshops on August 22 to 24, whereas, Mandal workshops had to be conducted on August 25 to 27. On August 31, a meeting of Page Pramukhs is also to be held at all booths to prepare for the campaign.

Amit Shah to throw light on new criminal laws at police think tank meet



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will attend 54th foundation day of Indian police's think tank Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) as the chief guest on Wednesday where he will deliver Anand Swaroop Gupta Memorial Lecture on "New Criminal Law - Citizen Centric Reforms". The minister will also honour the recipients of the President's Medal for Distinguished Service (PSM) and President's Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM) for the years 2023

and 2024. A special edition of the Bureau's publication "Indian Police Journal" on new criminal laws will also be released by him during the function, said a statement from the Ministry of Home Affairs. "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and guidance of Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah, BPR&D is committed to transform the Indian Police Forces into SMART forces to successfully meet the challenges of policing as well as internal security by equipping them with the necessary intellectual, physical and organizational resources," it said. BPR&D has been serving as the think tank of the Indian Police since its inception in 1970 by developing policies and procedures for police and correctional services, exploring new technologies for enhanced service delivery to the citizens, capacity building of law enforcement agencies, promote cooperation and coordination between States and central police organisations, it said. Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director General of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), heads of central police organisations as well as senior officials of the Home Ministry and other departments will also attend the inauguration ceremony.

NEP advocates access, equity, quality and Bharat-centric education, says NIOS chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) Chairperson Prof Saroj Sharma on Tuesday said the New Education Policy introduced by the Narendra Modi Government focuses on value education so that today's students become a responsible citizens.



Addressing the National Symposium on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 at Jiva Public School in Faridabad, Prof Sharma said the NEP advocates access, equity, quality and Bharat-centric education. "The NEP envisages creation of 'New India'. It focuses on value education. The NEP is rooted in our ancient culture and traditions which we need to preserve," she said. "There is a difference between literacy and knowledge. We may be fully literate in a few years now but then knowledge can only bring the change in society and prevent untoward incidents like the recent West Bengal traumatic incident," she said, differentiating that though all were literate and getting good education but knowledge to keep society healthy failed. "I understand there is a problem with the education system and most of the things have been addressed in the NEP," Prof Sharma added. She further said: "India aims to achieve 100 per cent literacy by 2030, and to achieve this NIOS will impart education to students who are not attending regular schools besides covering marginalised sections into our education system which includes special and underprivileged children." Addressing the symposium, Shiksha Sanskriti Uththan Nyas Secretary, Dr Atul Kothari, said: "NEP focuses on development of human values. The world knows that it is only India which understands the value system and can teach the world about it. There is a growing demand for this from various countries and institutions. Our educators should prepare for this challenge." Stating that the NEP focuses on a holistic approach to education, Dr Kothari said: "We need to create a model for effective implementation of the NEP." Addressing the symposium, NCERT's Head of Teacher Education Department, Prof Sharad Sinha, said that bringing out NEP in a diverse and huge country like India was a Herculean task. "There is so much diversity. There are different school formats like Government schools, private institutions, trust etc, several languages across the length and breadth of vast Bharat, teachers and educators of vivid vision had to be taken into account in making of the epic over 600-page National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for School Education," she said.

BJP alleges scam in land to Trust run by Kharge's family, seeks CBI probe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday alleged a "scam" in allocation of a piece of land to a trust run by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's family in Karnataka and demanded a CBI probe into the matter. Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia demanded Mallikarjun Kharge's resignation as the Congress President and that of his son Priyank Kharge, who is a Minister in the Karnataka Government. He also demanded Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resignation. "There is a consistency in the

Congress' acts of corruption. Wherever we will go we will do corruption is the new slogan of the Congress. It will not be wrong to say that the Congress has become synonymous with corruption," Bhatia said. "We saw the MUDA scam and Valmiki Development Corporation scam happening under the nose of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Now a case of allocation of five-acre land to a trust run by Mallikarjun Kharge and his family in Karnataka has emerged," he added. The land has been allocated to the Kharge family-run trust by flouting of rules, the BJP Spokesperson said, claiming that Mallikarjun Kharge, his wife, his son-in-law Radhakrishna

and sons - Priyank Kharge and Rahul Kharge - are in the trust. "As per information with us, several companies and organisations had given application for the land but it was allocated to the Kharge family-run trust by flouting the rules," Bhatia claimed. The BJP spokesperson demanded that Mallikarjun Kharge immediately resign as the Congress President and his son Priyank Kharge as the state Minister. "There should be an impartial probe into it by an independent agency CBI to ascertain the truth," he said. BJP leader Lahar Singh Siroya, also a Rajya Sabha member, had on Sunday questioned the alleged allocation of Karnataka Industrial Area

Development Board (KIADB) land to a trust run by Kharge's family and asked when did they become aerospace entrepreneurs to be eligible for the land. He had also sought to know whether the case was about misuse of power, nepotism and conflict of interest. Karnataka Large and Medium Industries Minister M B Patil said on Monday that the educational trust run by AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge's son Rahul Kharge was allotted a Civic Amenity (CA) plot at Aerospace park at a prescribed price in accordance with the norms. In a statement, Patil dismissed the allegations made by Siroya and insisted that no rules were violated in the process.



BJP demands WB CM Mamata's resignation, calls her dictator

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

Accusing West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of shielding those involved in the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata, the BJP on Tuesday called her a "dictator" and demanded her resignation to ensure a fair probe into the matter. The BJP has also demanded that the CBI conduct a polygraph test on Banerjee and Police Commissioner Vineet Goel, who the party alleged had initially said that the victim died by suicide. The BJP condemned the incident of lathicharge by the West Bengal Police on the students, who had taken out a rally in Kolkata demanding justice for the victim and the Chief Minister's resignation. "Whatever is happening in West Bengal is worrisome. It's akin to tearing the Constitution to shreds. It's clearly visible that if at all there is a dictator in the country, it's Mamata Banerjee," BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia told a Press Conference at the party headquarters here. He accused Banerjee of shielding those involved in the rape and murder case, and demanded that she immediately resign as the Chief Minister so that a fair probe into the case can take place. The BJP spokesperson also demanded that the Police Commissioner, who had called the case of the victim's rape and murder a suicide earlier, should also resign and face investigation. "Truth must come out. The CBI is investigating the case. It should conduct a polygraph test on Mamata Banerjee and the police commissioner to ascertain the truth," he added. BJP co-incharge for West Bengal Amit Malviya said that Sanjoy Roy, accused in the trainee doctor rape and murder case, was on that fateful night riding a bike registered in the name of the Kolkata Police Commissioner, "as per the Kolkata Police and the TMC". "This is serious and needs investigation. Both Mamata Banerjee and Kolkata Police Commissioner must step down immediately for a free and fair probe," he said in a post on X. The CBI should take them into custody, go over their phone records and subject them to polygraph test to unearth the conspiracy behind the young woman doctor's rape and murder, Malviya demanded.

Monkeypox: Testing kit to deliver result in 40 minutes

ARCHANA JYOTI
NEW DELHI

As Monkeypox increasingly threatens global health, India has taken a significant step forward with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation's (CDSCO) approving a new indigenously developed RT-PCR testing kit that can deliver results within 40 minutes. The IMDX Monkeypox Detection RT-PCR Assay, created by Siemens Healthineers, is designed to detect both clade I and clade II variants of the virus. This advancement marks a crucial milestone for India's "Make in India" initiative and is a pivotal addition to the country's arsenal in combating the Monkeypox public health emergency. "IMDX Monkeypox Detection RT-PCR Assay will be manufactured at our molecular diagnostics manufacturing unit in



Vadodara, which has a manufacturing capacity of 1 million reactions per year. The factory is all set to make the kits available," said Siemens Healthcare Private Ltd. Explaining about its functioning, the company said that "The IMDX Monkeypox Detection RT-PCR Assay is a groundbreaking molecular diagnostic test that targets

two distinct regions in the viral genome, spanning both clade I and clade II variants of the virus. Hariharan Subramanian, Managing Director, Siemens Healthcare Private Limited, said that the urgency for precise and accurate diagnostics couldn't be more crucial than now amid the WHO announcement of its second public health emergency of global concern

due to the virus. The new strain of this virus (Clad-1) is considered to be more transmissible and has higher mortality rates. The WHO has launched a global Strategic preparedness and response plan to stop outbreaks of human-to-human transmission of mpox through coordinated global, regional, and national efforts. Dr. Anurag Agrawal, Scientists and Head, Koita Center for Digital Health at Ashoka Dean, BioSciences and Health Research, Trivedi School of Biosciences, Ashoka University highlighted the ongoing need for vigilance and investment in diagnostics and vaccines. The former director of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, a national laboratory of CSIR noted that leveraging the infrastructure developed during the COVID-19 pandemic could enhance global cooperation and containment efforts. Reflecting similar opinion, Gautam Menon, Dean of Research and Professor of Physics and Biology, Head of Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability (3CS) at Ashoka University stressed the importance of monitoring and tracking travelers, along with keeping up-to-date with the latest epidemiological insights into Monkeypox. He suggested that Indian medical agencies must lead in understanding the virus's transmission dynamics and potential asymptomatic spread. India has not recorded any Mpox case so far but as a precautionary step amid rise in cases of zoonotic virus cases in neighbouring Pakistan, the Government has kept the airports on the alert and identified nodal hospitals to handle the cases when needed.

Women's groups demand action on sexual violence after Kolkata tragedy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

In response to a series of recent rape cases across the country, a battery of Women's rights groups on Tuesday issued a joint statement demanding urgent action and systemic change to end sexual crimes and break the silence surrounding gender-based violence in the country. The 35 organizations who made the appeal included, the All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM), All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), All India Mahila Samskritik Sanghathan (AIMSS), All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA), All India Feminist Alliance (ALIFA), All India Lawyers' Association for Justice (AILAJ), calling for an end to sexual crimes and gender-based violence. The trigger for the outburst was a tragic rape and murder of a 31-year-old medical practitioner at RG Kar Hospital and Medical College in Kolkata. The groups criticised both the brutal nature of the crime and the subsequent handling by authorities, which they allege involved a "cover-up". They also accused the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee led West Bengal Government of mishandling the case by initially labeling it a suicide and transferring key hospital officials amidst national protests. The women activists in the statement said that sexual violence cases from various parts of the country including Kolkata, Manipur, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh are a grim reminder of the ongoing



threat to women's safety in India. The statement also highlighted the challenges of securing justice in an environment where the Government has been accused of releasing and even honouring individuals convicted of heinous crimes, such as those involved in the Bilkis Bano case, the Kathua case, and the violence in Manipur. Despite the existence of mechanisms to monitor the laws to protect the women, the groups argued that they are often ignored, creating a climate of impunity that allows gender-based violence to continue unabated and cited data from the NCRB, which reports an average of 86 rapes per day in India, with a national conviction rate as low as 27 per cent. The statement also criticised the recent budget allocations, questioning the lack of funding for monitoring the implementation of key protective laws. The Ministry of Women and Child Development's refusal to disclose whether mandated mechanisms are in place and functioning is seen as further evidence of governmental neglect, the statement said.

CBI to consult AIIMS experts on DNA, forensic reports in Kolkata horror case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will consult experts from the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) on the DNA and forensic reports related to the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College, officials said Tuesday. In order to build a watertight case, the CBI will send the reports to AIIMS to seek their opinion in the case, they said. The reports will also help the agency to ascertain if Sanjay Roy was the only accused who committed the crime or there were others involved, they said. So far, the agency is working on the leads that Roy was the only accused in the crime but involvement of others will only be ruled out after receiving the opinion of AIIMS experts, the officials said. The rape and killing of the junior doctor in a seminar hall of the hospital has sparked widespread



protests. The medic's body with severe injury marks was found inside the seminar hall of the hospital's chest department in the morning of August 9 by a doctor who was on round. Kolkata Police had arrested Roy on August 10 based on CCTV footage in which he was seen entering the seminar hall at 4.03 AM on August 9 when the crime was allegedly committed. Based on CCTV footage, Roy was put through extensive interrogation and

the Kolkata Police to the CBI, which started its investigation on August 14. The CBI took over all the forensic evidence from Kolkata Police and also subjected Roy, former principal of the medical college Sandip Ghosh, four doctors who were on duty with the victim, and a civic volunteer to polygraph tests to get further leads about the crime. The initial reports from CFSL are being analysed and corroborated with evidence to get further direction to the probe, the officials said. A polygraph test can help in assessing inaccuracies in statements of suspects and witnesses. By monitoring their psychological responses - heart rate, breathing patterns, sweating and blood pressure - investigators can determine if there are discrepancies in their response, these are not admissible evidence during the trial and can only be used to get further leads in a case.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Step in the right direction

Modi Govt launches assured pension scheme for Central Govt Employees, amid concerns of financial implications

The Modi Government has announced the fixed pension scheme for the central government employees. This must be music to the ears of central employees who were not happy with the ongoing market-linked pension scheme and were demanding its scrapping. In a significant policy shift, the Indian government has approved a new pension scheme guaranteeing central government employees 50% of their base salary as a pension. This move marks a departure from the current National Pension Scheme (NPS), which links payouts to market returns. The newly introduced Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) is set to be implemented from April 1, 2025, and will impact over two million federal employees. The shift towards the UPS stems from growing dissatisfaction with the NPS, which was adopted in 2004 as part of a broader fiscal reform. Under the NPS, employees contribute 10% of their base salary, and the government adds 14%, with the eventual pension amount depending on the market returns from investments, primarily in federal debt. However, as some states began reverting to the older, more fiscally burdensome system of guaranteed pensions, the Modi government faced mounting pressure to reassess the NPS.



The decision to approve the UPS aligns with demands from trade unions and the Opposition parties, who have long advocated for a guaranteed minimum pension. The issue gained political traction during recent general elections, where the lack of pension security under the NPS became a contentious topic. The UPS guarantees that employees who have completed at least 25 years of service will receive 50% of their base salary, calculated over the last 12 months before retirement, as a pension. This assured payout provides a safety for retirees, addressing concerns about the volatility of market-linked pensions. While the UPS offers greater security for employees, it also imposes a significant financial burden on the government. The expected cost to the exchequer for the fiscal year 2024-25 is approximately Rs 62.5 billion. This annual expenditure is likely to fluctuate based on the number of employees retiring each year. However, the shift to the UPS raises several concerns. First, the financial sustainability of the scheme is a critical issue. The guaranteed nature of the pension could strain government finances, especially if economic growth slows or tax revenues decline. Additionally, the UPS may lead to disparities between central and state government employees. Moreover, there is a risk that the shift back to a defined benefit pension system could set a precedent for other sectors, potentially leading to broader demands for similar guarantees. This could exacerbate fiscal challenges, particularly in a country where social welfare spending is already under pressure. As India prepares to implement the UPS in 2025, careful management and ongoing evaluation will be essential to ensure that the benefits of the scheme are balanced against its fiscal impact.

PICTALK



A painter gives final touches to the Goddess Durga's idol ahead of Durga puja, in Kolkata

A new standard for global populism

Kamala prioritises the everyday citizen over corporate interests and her message is getting traction not only in the US but across the globe



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The global economic landscape could shift dramatically if the US Democratic Party's presidential nominee, Kamala Harris, succeeds in implementing her bold stance on prices and corporate control. This move could send shockwaves across the world, compelling nations like India to reconsider their current economic models—just as they did during the liberalization era when corporate power surged. It appears the tide is turning, as people worldwide demand freedom from the manipulative tactics that drive up prices. Harris's message is clear: Americans can no longer tolerate skyrocketing costs. Her aggressive, populist economic agenda aims to rein in corporate power and lower the cost of living, potentially setting a new standard for global economic policies.



A 74-year-old Indian blogger after a lavish Indian corporate marriage in July blurted out on X-twitter, "In my 74 years, I have not seen, or even heard of, a more tasteless, egotistical or pretentious wedding than the recent, 24X7 televised extravaganza. The perversity and its real portent lie elsewhere. "It lies in the way money was expended, at a time when the average Indian has never been worse off economically, when inequality and unemployment have reached record heights, when 67 percent of the country's wealth, when 800 million people have to be provided free/ subsidized foodgrains to survive". Not much different is the weekend speech of Harris. She says, "We know that many Americans don't yet feel that progress in their lives. Costs are still too high and it feels too hard to get ahead." No wonder Republican nominee Donald Trump calls her too liberal. It seems so similar to the echoes of severe price rises and joblessness during the June Lok Sabha elections in India amid rows of mutton, muslim, mandir and mujra, mehngai and berogari. Yes, Indians and Americans need food, a minimum quality of

life and freedom from organised oppression. Indians are certainly more concerned because with whatever rank in the world economy, it is nowhere near the US. If the American economy is not in good shape, Indians can at best be convalescing, post-COVID-19. But the stranglehold of the honchos in India is more gripping than in the US, which has strong anti-trust laws despite the protests from the big. Indian policies suit the big shops more with quite a few trillions being waved off in taxes and other benefits, including tailoring national and stock market policies. Harris instead, despite being the Vice President of the USA, empathising with the American people, says, "The bills add up. Food, rent, gas, back-to-school clothes, prescription medication. After that, for many families, there's not much left at the end of the month. As president, I will take on the high costs that matter most to most Americans." Those words any Indian voter would love to hear from their leaders. It follows a dozen proposals for improving the lives of Americans. Some like 3 million new housing units to the people seemingly have been picked up from Indian political party manifestos. Like India's PM Avas, she proposes to provide up to \$25,000 in down payment support for a million first-time home buy-



AMERICANS CAN NO LONGER TOLERATE SKYROCKETING COSTS. HER AGGRESSIVE, POPULIST ECONOMIC AGENDA AIMS TO REIN IN CORPORATE POWER AND LOWER THE COST OF LIVING, POTENTIALLY SETTING A NEW STANDARD FOR GLOBAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

ers. An addition is tax incentives for builders, who build affordable rental housing. It could be a welcome scenario for most Indians. As now being debated in India on capital gains tax indexation or also rentals, Harris is keen on preventing corporate landlords from using algorithmic price-setting tools to increase rents by large margins. It is gradually becoming a problem in areas in the national capital regions of Noida, Gurgaon, Delhi's Dwarka, Bengaluru, and Chennai. India has just started feeling it. Medical costs and health insurance fraud are the worst in the US. Many Indian companies now have emulated it. Medical expenses are increasing in India and the US. Both countries are discussing it intensely and often end up saying the United Kingdom has the best medical facilities. Harris promises to eliminate medical debt for millions of Americans, possibly by using federal funds to buy and forgive outstanding debt from health providers. She wants to limit Americans' annual out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs to \$2,000. Thousands of kilometres apart the conditions are so similar! The one difference is that India wants to repeat the US insurance follies and they are trying to change it. Though in some cases like PM

JanAushadhi, India is doing better in providing generic medicines at low prices. Harris does not have that option and says would cap the out-of-pocket cost of insulin at \$35 per month for all. As direct benefit pensions are given to kisans in India, Harris would give a child tax credit that would provide \$6,000 per child to families for the first year of a baby's life. Indian budgetary novelties introduced as direct benefits or pensions in various ways have fascinated Harris. Each of Harris's proposals, whether in terms of food, medicine, housing or child care is "populist", involving government intervention against corporate interests on behalf of consumers. Socialism, direct or indirect, despite big companies ruling the roost, is returning to world politics. What Harris does may just create a flutter, but countries like India, who claim to be the next global leaders, have to trudge more cautiously to safeguard the poor, farmers and the working class. Harris has borrowed quite a few of it from the Indian budget. Now it is India's turn to ensure how it could check the corporates to serve people's interests. The world is changing and India's populism is winning big one's heart. (The author is a freelance writer and columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CELEBRATING KRISHNA'S BIRTH

Madam — Krishna Janmashtami, the birthday of Lord Krishna, is a joyous celebration that embodies the triumph of love and divine joy over evil and negativity. This auspicious occasion marks the arrival of Krishna, the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu, who brought hope and redemption to a world plagued by darkness and despair. As devotees around the world honor Krishna's birth, they are reminded of his profound teachings in the Bhagavad Gita, which emphasize the importance of spiritual growth, self-realization, and the eternal victory of good over evil. Through vibrant festivities, soulful bhajans, and heartfelt pujas, Krishna Janmashtami celebrates the unconditional love and divine joy that Krishna embodies, inspiring devotees to embrace their own spiritual journey and revel in the bliss of the divine.

Purva Pandya | Ujjain

STALIN'S NEW MOVE

Madam — As against the Sanatana Dharma before the Lok Sabha elections, the DMK has changed its stand now by a mix in the Dravidian model by supporting the individual's faith of choice and wanting to help them in their religious pursuits. By inaugurating the two day Global Muthamizhil Murugan Conference, the Chief Minister of TN M K Stalin is bringing in a new colour other than black and red as he's well aware that this will help him in the forthcoming assembly elections to woo the votes of the Hindus by using the Murugan card to play to DMK's advantage. We welcome this change and are happy if something good for the people happens from the leadership of M K Stalin whom I respect for his flexibility of principle if he finds something worth it. One hopes Stalin's new found alliance with the Lord Murugan may bestow the blessings for the people for the prosperity of the state. A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Unified pension scheme launched



This refers to the news report, "Unprecedented Unified Pension Scheme by Modi Government" (August 25). Though driven by the huge political pressure after jolts in recently held Lok Sabha polls, the NDA Government's decision to roll out a new guaranteed Unified Pension Scheme for its employees is a step in right direction. In fact, pension is a social welfare measure which is granted to ensure that a retired employee lives with dignity in his

old age. Reversing its 21 year old pension reforms partially, the Government has introduced OPS features like assured pensions, inflation-linked adjustments, family pensions, and a guaranteed minimum pension in the UPS. Employees are still required to contribute 10% of their basic pay and dearness allowance to UPS remains only major difference between the OPS and the UPS. The government will also contribute to the UPS, which will increase from 14% (currently contributed to NPS) to 18.5%. Thus, the UPS will lead to higher burden on the exchequer. Thus, it remains to be seen whether state governments adopt the UPS, which certainly would not augur well for their financial health.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

PM MODI BROKERS PEACE

Madam — Modi's visit to Kyiv will strengthen India-Ukraine bilateral relationship. Like with Russia in March 24 Modi is likely to have had the message of peace with Zelenskyy about ending the war and restoring peace. The catch is both Russia and Ukraine are not keen in fighting any further but both wanting to end the war on their own terms. Kyiv does not want to compromise on its sovereignty and territorial integrity which could lead to an instability and even a revolution in Ukraine. Kyiv wants to retrieve all the Ukrainian territory occupied by Russia something that Russia is unwilling to do. The US and NATO have rejected Russia's demand to end the war. Under this situation it is extremely unlikely that a peace can be brokered by PM Modi as an one off attempt. Unlike other leaders of the world PM Modi enjoys a special relationship with Putin who in his words has called Modi as his best friend. India also in none of the resolu-

tions passed by the UN has gone against Moscow. While on the same lines has been maintaining good equation with Zelenskyy (post his ire after having a hug with Putin in March 24) through telephone calls and the sidelines meetings in summits. With Modi's Aug 23 personal visit and signing of the trade agreements and India's commitment to be on the side of the PEACE and just a not a neutral country one can expect PM Modi will make attempts for a peace talk between the two warring leaders. Besides, PM Modi's initiative also takes care of the growing Chinese influence in the region and places India at par with it if not above, India must be more proactive in the region to safeguard its own interests. With US already started feeling the heat of recession and a leadership change in the offing one can see the light at the end of the tunnel!

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The risk of monetising public education

Commercialisation of these institutions undermines their core mission which is to provide inclusive, affordable high-quality education to all



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

The Vice-Chancellor of JNU, Prof. C Santhishree D Pandit recently remarked that the country's top university is facing a financial crunch with little regular income generated from its resources. The VC has decided to repurpose the university's properties with private participation. This culture of looking at public academic institutions as a source of revenue has been rhyming among our policymakers during the past several years.



One reason is the huge prime land area holding maintained by the public sector institutions and another is the change in the societal perception. Today's society evaluates everything based on money. The primary objective of public sector academic institutions is to offer an inclusive and excellent education to all sections of the population. Central to these institutions is the concept of education as a public good—a valuable asset that has advantages for society as a whole, rather than solely for individuals. Education, in this view, is not simply a product that can be purchased and

impact of market ideology in public policy. Consequently, numerous public universities and colleges have resorted to alternate sources of income, such as raising tuition fees, extending online programs, providing executive education courses, renting out spaces and forming alliances with private industry.

Private parties, if allowed to rent out spaces, should work closely with the academic and research community of the university. It should also help in imparting knowledge and transformation to students. In many NITs, the guest house rate has been increased tenfold, as mandated by the policymakers. Unfortunately, people who visit these institutions including academicians and parents of students have to pay more than what is the market rate in that area. Although these initiatives can offer significant financial support, they also pose a potential threat of altering the core purpose of public sector institutions. It can be detrimental to maintaining high academic standards and fostering a wide range of intellectual perspectives.

Additionally, it can generate pressures to give higher priority to programs and research areas that provide greater profits, perhaps overlooking subjects that are less financially rewarding but equally crucial for societal progress. It is vital to provide students with a well-rounded education that encourages critical thinking and broad-based knowledge. Public sector academic institutions hold a distinct and crucial role in maintaining the social fabric of the nation. Their objective is not to earn financial gain but rather to generate enlightened minds capable of critical thinking, and contribute to the development of the nation. The great minds working in every field, including the bureaucrats and political leaders are groomed by these public sector institutions. For this to continue, we should not put a price tag on every facility a public sector university offers to the student or society at large.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

LIVE IN THE PRESENT

MOMENT, IT MATTERS MOST

One needs to inculcate habits of equanimity, and remaining calm, whatever the circumstance



RAVI VALLURI

The romance was in the air as India attained freedom from the British yoke. The period was the 1950s as India embarked upon the socialistic pattern to revive the country, which had inherited an impecunious economy. Two bright students from coastal Andhra landed in rain-washed Delhi University to pursue their dreams. To remain connected with their past, they made recurrent trips to the New Delhi Railway Station to receive students arriving in droves from their state and revive those nostalgic moments. When it is repetitively said, "Those good old days!", in one stroke we send a signal to our Universe that the present is not congenial. As Buddha says, "The mind is everything. What you think you become." If we live in the past, we keep fretting and fuming about the missed opportunities and those past impressions create roadblocks in our physical and metaphysical advancement.

On completion of their studies, the more aspiring students stayed back and the less enterprising ones returned home. The person in Delhi aspired to be a civil servant like his more illustrious siblings and their children. But destiny had carved out its plan. His friends and acquaintances qualified for the coveted job, a sinecure that eluded him. So, the mind became envious of his siblings, their children and friends and started implanting his failed mission upon his children, much to their discomfiture. How does one reach that state of 'present moment'? Before dwelling on some techniques, it will be useful to read a fasci-



inating Buddhist parable. One afternoon a Buddhist monk was carrying a bucket filled with water in a dense forest. Suddenly he heard a rustle. It was a tiger, smacking its lips and intently looking at the potential prey. The monk ran for his life, with the tiger in pursuit. The monk reached a precipice and had a choice to make, either be devoured by the ferocious tiger or jump off the cliff. Death stared in his face. The monk jumped and fortuitously clung onto a branch of a strawberry tree. He ate the strawberry—considering it to be his last meal—and thoroughly relished it. The monk had never had such a meal, as was absolutely in the present moment. A simple yet profound technique of sadhana is to be a witness to all the actions and activities that take place. The actor in us becomes the spectator too. This is what is espoused in the esoteric philosophy of Ashtavakra Gita (a classic dialogue between King Janaka—who himself was a Raj Rishi—and the sage Ashtavakra).

Any individual, householder or seeker needs to inculcate habits of equanimity, equilibrium, and equipoise to remain calm, whatever the circumstance or situation, to be contented and remain in the present moment. The protagonist who stayed back in Delhi could fulfil his dreams only partially. His son did qualify for the civil services, but could not join the service of his choice; this was due to excessive pressure applied by family members already in the elite services. Eventually, the son turned into an alcoholic. Perhaps it was because both father and son were not grateful to the Universe and did not adhere to the Law of Gratefulness.

Thus, lives were ruined. Meanwhile, the friend who returned home did not lose his way in the sands of time. He became a trade union leader and politician, living in the present. "Life is one big road with lots of signs. So, when you are riding through the ruts, do not complicate your mind. Flee from hate, mischief, and jealousy," sang Bob Marley.

(The writer is a faculty at Art of Living, views expressed are personal)

Catalyst for cinematic evolution and excellence



CHAITANYA K. PRASAD

The 70th National Film Awards once again celebrated the rich tapestry of Indian cinema, where diverse languages and cultures converged to showcase the best talent

The National Film Awards: A Platform for The Great Leap Forward. At the 70th National Film Awards, India's cinematic excellence once again took centre stage, showcasing vibrant and diverse storytelling from across the nation's many languages. Southern cinema emerged as a dominant force this year, with films and artists from the region sweeping some of the most prestigious honours. The Malayalam film 'Aattam' captured the Swarna Kamal for Best Feature Film, while the Kannada blockbuster 'Kantara' clinched the title of Best Popular Film.

Rishab Shetty, the driving force behind 'Kantara', took home the Best Actor award, sharing the limelight with Nithya Menon and Manasi Parekh, who shared Best Actresses for the Tamil film 'Thiruchitrabalam' and Gujarati film 'Kutch Express' respectively. Meanwhile, the Haryana film 'Fouja' gathered acclaim, earning Pramod Kumar the award for Best Debut Director, while Pavan Raj Malhotra secured Best Supporting Actor. The epic Tamil drama 'Ponniyin Selvan: I' also made its mark, with AR Rahman's power-packed music earning him the Best Music Director (Background Music) award, alongside wins for Best Sound Design by Anand Krishnamoorthi and Best Cinematography by Ravi Varman. In the Hindi cinema category, 'Gulmohar' emerged as the Best Hindi Film, adding another feather to Sharmila Tagore's illustrious cap with her third National Film Award.

This year's awards not only celebrated individual excellence but also highlighted the ever-evolving and dynamic landscape of Indian cinema. The lifeline and longevity of any artist and any film is fuelled by the adrenaline of 4A's "Acknowledgment, Awards, Appreciation, and Applause". Globally, awards are given for excellence in the celluloid space which has opened a new phase of creativity, innovation perspective perspective-building through storytelling and film narration. Since its inception in 1954, the National Film Awards for Excellence in Cinema have symbolised the journey of excellence and creativity. The awards have offered an equal platform to cinemas of various languages, cultures, diversities, themes, and perspectives, where all the creative energies of India converge to speak the unified language of artistic excellence. These awards in the last seventy-odd years have showcased the gold standard of filmmaking across different verticals reinventing and shaping the diverse landscape of cinema in this country.

Each edition of the National Film Awards has strengthened inclusivity and converged the diversity of celluloid space seamlessly. The National Film Awards are unique in terms of their magnitude, canvas, and spectrum. Every award ceremony has been an opportunity to witness the emergence of different forms and categories of cinema that reflect continuity and legacy. The landscape of the National Film Awards is deep and insightful, promoting diversity, storytelling, and narration.

It has truly elevated parallel, regional, and experimental cinema; voiced social concerns; and embraced and adapted to contemporary standards, content, and style



THIS YEAR'S AWARDS NOT ONLY CELEBRATED INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE BUT ALSO HIGHLIGHTED THE EVER-EVOLVING AND DYNAMIC LANDSCAPE OF INDIAN CINEMA

of presentation. Over the years, Indian cinema has witnessed a remarkable evolution, with regional films gaining recognition for their artistic brilliance. It all began in 1954, as the film "Mirza Ghalib" made history as the first recipient of the Best Feature Film award.

This milestone paved the way for a treasure trove of cinematic gems from various regions. Bengali cinema, in particular, has been a shining beacon, with timeless classics like Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali", "Apur Sansar", and "Charulata" earning the prestigious Swarna Kamal. The legendary Soumitra Chatterjee a revered Bengali actor has been lauded for his performances in classics like "Apur Sansar" and "Charulata," earning him National Film Awards for his works.

The spotlight has also turned to Southern cinema, which has produced its own set of trailblazers. In 1965, the Malayalam masterpiece "Chemmeen" captivated audiences and critics alike, winning the Best Feature Film award. Kannada cinema made a powerful statement with "Chomana Dudi" in 1976, sweeping the National Awards for Best Feature Film, Best Actor, and Best Story. Tamil cinema joined this illustrious list in 1990 when Marrupakkam became the first Tamil film to clinch the Best Feature Film award.

The northeastern region of India has also produced its share of winners at the National Film Awards, bringing regional tales to the national stage. "Halodhia Chorai Baodhan Khai", the first Assamese film to win the Swarna Kamal for the Best Feature Film in 1987. Rima Das, a director has been recognized for her movies "Village Rockstars" and "Bulbul Can Sing," which capture the essence of life in Assam by portraying simplicity and resilience. At the 60th National Film Awards, Jahnua Barua's Assamese film "Baandhon" won

the Best Feature Film in the category while "Ko;Yad", a Missing film won the Best Feature Film in the non-Eighth Schedule language category. At the 62nd National Film Awards the movie "Phum Shang", from Manipur was honoured with the Best Investigative Film award showcasing the contributions of filmmakers from North East India.

Such examples also prove that the National Film Awards serve as a crucible for bringing together a convergence of ideas, creativity, and talent. They offer hope that creativity knows no barriers in India, allowing unknown filmmakers and names to become stars. One of the most coveted awards of the National Film Awards is the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, India's highest award in the field of cinema honouring the artists' lifetime achievement. Named after Shri Dadasaheb Phalke, the visionary often hailed as the father of Indian cinema, this award is a tribute to those whose contributions have indelibly shaped the landscape of Indian filmmaking.

This award was introduced in 1969 and was presented to Devika Rani. Since then this distinguished honour has been awarded to Waheeda Rehman, Satyajit Ray, B.N. Reddy, L.V. Prasad, Bhupen Hazarika, Sivaji Ganesan, B.R. Chopra, Soumitra Chatterjee, Lata Mangeshkar, Raj Kapoor, Shyam Benegal, Amitabh Bachchan and Rajnikant are some of the renowned names who have been recognized for their lasting impact and their outstanding contribution to cinema. The National Film Awards also spotlight the significance of non-feature films by inspiring emerging directors to experiment and push boundaries.

This platform has nurtured talent, with acclaimed works like "Ek Tha Gaon" and "An engineered Dream", the Marathi film "Girni" and the Bengali film "Aamaar Katha: Story of Binodini" winners at the 52nd and the 62nd

National Film Awards. These awards bring attention to themes and innovative storytelling approaches demonstrating that Indian cinema thrives on creativity and embraces diversity beyond commercial considerations. The non-feature segment of awards over the years has acted as a catalyst for young film-makers who have unleashed their creativity across diverse subjects and narratives. This segment has showcased a unique simplicity, aesthetics and deep understanding of filmmaking and creativity. The recent changes to the regulations for the 70th National Film Awards demonstrate an evident wave of evolution. Changes like renaming awards and merging categories reflect an approach to acknowledging excellence in filmmaking.

The National Film Awards of India have witnessed several historic moments that have not only enhanced the country's cinematic excellence but also served as a stepping stone to celluloid success and international acclaim. One such landmark was the recognition of Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali" in 1956, which won the Best Feature Film award and subsequently brought Indian cinema to global attention. Another significant milestone was Aamir Khan's "Lagaan" in 2001, which not only won the National Film Award for Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment but also earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. The National Film Awards have played an instrumental role in shaping the course of Indian cinema. By celebrating a variety of perspectives and pushing boundaries the awards not only recognize exceptional achievements but also inspire upcoming filmmakers and artists.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI; views are personal. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan)

How personalised and adaptive technologies are shaping the future of education

The future of education is personal, adaptive, and brimming with possibilities for individual success. It's time to embrace this change

The education system is witnessing a revolutionary shift, one that promises to reshape how we learn, grow, and succeed. At the core of this transformation lies advanced personalized and adaptive learning - a groundbreaking approach set to redefine the educational landscape.

With the global adaptive learning market projected to reach \$5.3 billion by 2025 and the personalized learning market expected to soar to \$19.86 billion by 2030, it's clear that these technologies are more than just a passing trend.

Unpacking Personalized and Adaptive Learning
Personalized learning crafts educational experiences that resonate with each student's



VEDANT HAMIRWASIA

unique needs, skills, and interests. It's about creating learning journeys that allow individuals to flourish in their way. Adaptive learning takes this concept further, using AI to adjust content difficulty and style in real time based on student performance.

It's like having a high-tech tutor that ensures learning is always challenging but never overwhelming.

The Power of Data-Driven Insights: One of the most exciting aspects of these systems is their ability to harness data for good. Through sophisticated learning analytics, educators gain unprecedented insights into each student's progress. This foresight allows for timely interventions, ensuring no student falls behind. Predictive analytics even allows these systems to anticipate which students might struggle, enabling proactive support measures.

Customized Learning Paths: Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all education. Advanced personalized learning creates individual learning plans that adapt to each student's unique learning style.

Whether you're a visual learner who thrives on interactive simulations or prefer diving deep into text-based explanations, these systems have you covered. The flexibility extends to pacing as well, allowing students to linger on challenging concepts or race ahead in areas they excel.

Engagement, the Secret Sauce of Success: Engagement is crucial for effective learning, and these technologies serve it up in spades. Interactive content, gamification elements, and multimedia experiences make learning feel less like a chore and more like an adventure.

By catering to diverse learning preferences, these systems ensure that every student finds their groove and stays motivated.



Levelling the Playing Field: Perhaps one of the most profound impacts of these technologies is their potential to promote equity in education.

Assistive features embedded within these systems support students with disabilities, offering tools like

text-to-speech and customized interfaces. This push for inclusivity ensures that quality, personalized education is accessible to all, regardless of individual challenges.

The Benefits and Challenges Ahead: The benefits of advanced personalized and adaptive learning are clear and compelling. Studies consistently show improved learning outcomes, increased student engagement, and the potential to bridge achievement gaps.

However, it's important to acknowledge the challenges that come with this educational revolution. Privacy concerns surrounding student data and the persistent digital divide are hurdles

that must be addressed thoughtfully. Embracing the Future of Education
The educational landscape is evolving rapidly, propelled by the transformative potential of advanced personalized and adaptive learning.

By embracing these technologies thoughtfully and addressing the challenges head-on, we can create an educational landscape where every student has the opportunity to thrive, learn, and reach their full potential. The future of education is personal, adaptive, and brimming with possibilities for individual success. It's time to embrace this change and unlock the potential of every learner.

(The author is director, ODA Class; views are personal)

Khamenei open to America over nuclear talks

AP n DUBAI

Iran's supreme leader opened the door Tuesday to renewed negotiations with the United States over his country's rapidly advancing nuclear program, telling its civilian government there was "no barrier" to engaging with its "enemy." Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's remarks set clear red lines for any talks taking place under the government of reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian and renewed his warnings that Washington wasn't to be trusted.



"We have long said that we ultimately view diplomacy as the best way to achieve an effective, sustainable solution with regard to Iran's nuclear program," it said. "However, we are far away from anything like that right now given Iran's escalations across the board, including its nuclear escalations and its failure to cooperate" with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations nuclear watchdog. "If Iran wants to demonstrate seriousness or a new approach, they should stop nuclear escalations and start meaningfully cooperating with the IAEA," it said. Since the deal's collapse, Iran has abandoned all limits that the deal put on its program, and enriches uranium to up to 60 per cent purity — near weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent. Surveillance cameras installed by the IAEA have been disrupted, while Iran has barred some of the Vienna-based agency's most experienced inspectors. Iranian officials also have increasingly threatened that they could pursue atomic weapons. Meanwhile, tensions between Iran and Israel have hit a new high during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. Tehran launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel in April after years of a shadow war between the two countries reached a climax with Israel's apparent attack on an Iranian consular building in Syria that killed two Iranian generals and others.

But his comments mirror those around the time of Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which saw Tehran's nuclear program greatly curtailed in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. Yet it remains unclear just how much room Pezeshkian will have to maneuver, particularly as tensions remain high in the wider Middle East over the Israel-Hamas war and as the US prepares for a presidential election in November. "We do not have to pin our hope to the enemy. For our plans, we should not wait for approval by the enemies," Khamenei said in a video broadcast by state television. "It is not contradictory to engage the same enemy in some places, there's no barrier." Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters, also warned Pezeshkian's Cabinet, "Do not trust the enemy." Khamenei, 85, has occasionally urged talks or dismissed them with Washington after then President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from the deal in 2018. There have been indirect talks between Iran and the US in recent years mediated by Oman and Qatar, two of the United States' Middle East interlocutors when it comes to Iran. Khamenei's remarks came a day after Qatar's prime minister visited the country. Asked for comment, the US State Department told The Associated Press: "We will judge Iran's leadership by their actions, not their words."

'US, China aim to avoid conflict in Beijing talks'

AP n BEIJING

The United States and China are working to ensure the competition between them does not veer into conflict, a top White House official said Tuesday as the two sides started talks on a relationship that has been severely tested during President Joe Biden's term in office.

Jake Sullivan, the US national security adviser, is meeting over two days with Wang Yi, a senior foreign policy official for Chinese leader Xi Jinping, in a scenic lake area on the northern outskirts of Beijing. "President Biden has been very clear in his conversations with President Xi that he is

committed to managing this important relationship responsibly," Sullivan said in brief remarks to media before the talks began.

The goal of his visit, which lasts through Thursday, is limited — to try to maintain communication in a relationship that broke down for the better part of a year in 2022-23 and was only nursed back over several months. No major announcements are expected, though Sullivan's meetings could lay the groundwork for a possible final summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping before Biden steps down in January. Wang, the director of the Communist Party's Central Foreign Affairs Commission

Office, noted that the China-US relationship has gone through twists and turns in past few years.

"The key," he said, "is to keep to the overall direction of mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, and win-win cooperation." According to Da Wei, a US and international relations expert at Tsinghua University in Beijing, it's important for the two countries to avoid any crisis in the remaining months of the Biden administration, as it could set the tone for US-China ties under the next one. The goal of this visit is not reaching new breakthroughs or progress but to continue the stable momentum of China-

US relations in the past year through strategic communication, and to avoid new crises in the next few months," he said. The Biden administration has taken a tough line on China, viewing it as a strategic competitor, restricting the access of its companies to advanced technology and confronting the rising power as it seeks to exert influence over Taiwan and the South China Sea. Already frosty relations went into a deep freeze after then-Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, a senior US lawmaker, visited Taiwan in August 2022. Hopes of restoring ties were dashed the following February when a suspected Chinese spy balloon

drifted across the US before being shot down by the US military. Sullivan has been Biden's point person for often unannounced talks with Wang, who is the foreign minister as well as the ruling Communist Party's top foreign policy official. Wang had initially stepped down as foreign minister when he took the party post, a more senior position, but he returned about seven months later, in July 2023, after his successor was removed for reasons that have not been made public. At a meeting between Sullivan and Wang in Vienna in May 2023, the two countries launched a delicate process of putting relations back on track. Since

than, they have met two more times in a third country, Malta and Thailand. This week will mark their first talks in Beijing. China's Foreign Ministry said this week that relations with the US remain at "a critical juncture." It noted that the two sides are talking on climate and other issues, but it accused the US of continuing to constrain and suppress China. Canada announced on Monday that it will match America's 100 per cent import tariff on Chinese-made electric vehicles, after being encouraged to do so by Sullivan during a meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Cabinet ministers the previous day.

'Hasina's ouster watershed for student activism'

PTI n DHAKA

The recent student movement in Bangladesh, culminating in the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, marks a watershed moment in the nation's political landscape, fuelled by a 70-year legacy of student activism from the 1952 Language Movement to the Liberation War and beyond. Political analysts and observers view the recent student protests, which many in Bangladesh have christened as the "Bangla Spring" — taking a cue from the Arab Spring — or the "Monsoon Revolution," as a watershed moment in Bangladesh's political landscape, driven by the same spirit of activism that has characterised student movements in the country for over 70 years, even before its independence in 1971, when it was known as East Pakistan. The latest movement, which began in July 2024, was sparked by the Court's decision to reinstate a controversial job quota system, a move that reignited long-standing frustrations among students and the general public.

The reinstatement of the job quota system, which had been abolished in 2018 due to student protests, sparked widespread demonstrations led by students that ultimately led to the collapse of the government led by long-time prime minister Hasina.

5 more murder cases filed against B'desh ousted PM

Dhaka (PTI): Five more murder cases have been filed against Bangladesh's ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina taking the total number of cases filed against the Awami League leader to 71, a media report said on Tuesday. Four of the new cases were filed in Dhaka and one in Rajshahi against the 76-year-old deposed former prime minister, several former ministers and police officials, The Daily Star newspaper reported. In the first case, Hasina and 48 others were booked for the death of one Dulal alias Selim in the city's Jatrabari area on August 3 during mass protests. The victim's brother Mostafa Kamal filed the case against the Awami League president and others with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Saddam



Hossain. Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, Awami League general secretary Obaidul Quader, former Awami League lawmakers Shamim Osman and Ramesh Chandra are among the accused, The Daily Star said. In the second case, Hasina along with 21 others was booked on the charge of killing one Mansur Miah, a machine operator of Buriganga Filling Station at

Basila of Mohammadpur on July 19. In the third case, Hasina and 91 others were sued for the death of one Miraz Hossain at Sanarpar in the city's Demra area on August 5. The victim's brother Khorshed Alam filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Belal Hossain. The fourth case was filed against Hasina and 40 others for the death of 21-year-old Nahidul Islam at Mirpur-10 on July 19. The victim's brother Md Sabuj filed the case with the court of Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mehedi Hasan. Quader, Asaduzzaman, Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, Hasina's sister Sheikh Rehana, son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, Harun Or Rashid and former DMP commissioner are among the accused.

Over several weeks, the protests escalated, resulting in nearly 450 deaths and the detention of thousands, including hundreds of students. Despite harsh government crackdowns, the persistent student-led movement forced Hasina to resign after 16 years in power, marking a historic victory for

Bangladesh's youth and highlighting the enduring impact of student activism in the nation's history. "The students' movement has always played a vital role in charting the course of Bangladesh's history and policies even before the Liberation War of 1971. But this time, the students' movement was dif-

ferent and on a scale that had never been witnessed before." "The 'Monsoon Revolution', as it is being called, marks a turning point in Bangladesh's history, driven by the same spirit of resistance that has characterised student movements for over 70 years," former Major General Muniruzzaman, the president

Ex-minister held

Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh police on Tuesday arrested former junior minister for information and broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat, an accused in several cases, including one filed over the killing of a student during the anti-government protests. Police said they arrested Arafat from the upmarket Gulshan area in the national capital. They were preparing to produce Arafat to a court with a petition seeking remand custody. The arrest came amid speculation that he might have left the country during or after the ouster of the Awami League regime on August 5 in a student-people mass upsurge as he was active on social media while other ministers or party leaders were unseen in the public domain. Two weeks ago, Bangladesh Bank's Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) ordered banks to freeze the

accounts of Arafat and his wife. Arafat was arrested a day after left-leaning Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JASOD) president Hasanul Haque Inu was detained from a relative's house in Dhaka while police sought a court order for him to be placed under a 10-day remand for questioning in a murder charge. JASOD was one of the key allies of the past government, with the Workers Party of Rashed Khan Menon being another. Menon was also arrested in a case and was placed on a five-day police remand by a Dhaka court. Former law minister Anisul Huq and expremier's private sector affairs adviser and business tycoon Salman F Rahman were the first who were arrested from Dhaka's main river port Sadarghat terminal area as they were allegedly trying to leave Dhaka on a boat in disguise.

of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, a think tank, told PTI. He pointed out that the recipe for the success of student movements in Bangladesh lies in the "secular nature and ideology of the movement and the mass participation of people cutting across social, religious, and economic

lines." "The students' movement, be it the 1952 Language Movement or the recent Monsoon Revolution, would never have tasted success had they not been secular. Because if they had only catered to one community or creed, it would never have taken the shape of a mass movement," he pointed out.

Starmer warns of 'painful' budget ahead in speech

PTI n LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Tuesday gave the first indication of some tough tax measures in store in the October budget in the first keynote address of his premiership since taking charge at 10 Downing Street last month. In a planned speech at the Rose Garden before a gathering of apprentices, medics and other professionals, Starmer declared the state of the public finances was left in a much worse condition by the previous Conservative Party regime than the Labour government had expected. He declared that his job was now to fix the foundations which would involve "short-term pain for long-term good" and admitted that "unpopular" decisions would have to be made. "There is a Budget coming in October and it is going to be painful. We have no other choice given the situation that

we are in," said Starmer. "I promised that this government would serve people like you — apprentices, teachers, nurses, small business owners, firefighters, those serving our community and our country every day," he said, with reference to the Downing Street gathering. The keynote, timed a week before Parliament resumes after its summer recess next week, was designed to assert that "it won't be business as usual because we can't go on like this any more." "Things will have to be done differently. We will do the hard work to root out 14 years of rot, reverse a decade of decline and fix the foundations. Between now and Christmas, we will carry on as we started: action not words. We will introduce legislation and take decisions to protect taxpayers' money," said Starmer. Referencing the recent far-right riots across different parts of the UK, the former barrister and chief prosecutor said the

violent clashes didn't just "betray the sickness" left in the wake of the former government's "cynical conflict of populism" but also revealed that the cure was to be found in the "coming together of a country." "When, after the hard work of clearing up the mess is done, we have a country that we have built together, built to last, that belongs to every single one of us... This is our country. Let's fix it — together," he noted. Addressing media queries after the speech, Starmer reiterated that the tough economic decisions ahead were down to a GBP 22 billion "black hole" left at the end of 14 years of Tories in charge. "We were being honest about the situation before the election, we set out very clearly what we would be doing with tax rises," he said, stressing that his commitment not to put up income tax, National Insurance or VAT "remains the position" and "those with the broadest shoulders should bear the heavier burden."

Israeli military rescues hostage abducted in October Hamas attack

Jerusalem (AP): The Israeli military said Tuesday that it has rescued one of the scores of people abducted in Hamas' October 7 attack, which ignited the ongoing war in Gaza. The military said Qaid Farhan Alkadi was rescued "in a complex operation in the southern Gaza Strip." It did not provide further details. The 52-year-old is from Israel's Arab Bedouin minority and was working as a guard at a packing factory in Kibbutz Magen, one of several farming communities that were attacked on October 7. He has two wives and is the father of 11 children. Israel's Channel 12 showed Alkadi's family members sprinting through the hospital where he was brought after they received the news. Hamas-led militants abducted some 250 people in the October 7 attack, in which some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who do not say how many were fighters. It has displaced 90 per cent of Gaza's 2.3 million people from their homes and caused heavy destruction across the besieged territory. Hamas is still holding around 110 hostages, about a third of whom are believed to be dead. Most of the rest were released in exchange for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel during a cease-fire last November. Israel has rescued a total of eight hostages, including in two operations that killed scores of Palestinians. Hamas says several hostages have been killed in Israeli airstrikes and failed rescue attempts. The United States, Egypt and Qatar have spent months trying to negotiate an agreement in which the remaining hostages would be freed in exchange for a lasting cease-fire.

French judge extends police custody for Telegram CEO

Paris (AP): A French investigative judge extended police custody for the CEO of the popular messaging app Telegram, Pavel Durov, prosecutors said on Tuesday. Durov was detained Saturday at Le Bourget airport as part of a judicial inquiry opened last month involving 12 alleged criminal violations. They include complicity in selling child sexual abuse material and in drug trafficking, fraud, abetting organized crime transactions and refusing to share information or documents with investigators when required by law. A statement from the Paris prosecutor's office said Durov's police custody order was extended on Monday evening for up to 48 hours. After that, authorities must release or charge him, the prosecutor's office said in an earlier statement. Durov is a citizen of Russia, France, the United Arab Emirates and the Caribbean island nation of St Kitts and Nevis.

Turkish-backed authorities arrest Syrian journalist

Idlib (AP): A local journalist in rebel-held northwestern Syria who works with international news agencies was arrested by Turkish-backed authorities, his wife and rights groups said Tuesday. Journalists and activists called Bakr Qassim's arrest part of an ongoing crackdown on them. Local authorities did not immediately comment. Qassim, who has reported and taken photos for French news agency Agence France Presse and Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency, was arrested Monday afternoon in al-Bab city in northern Aleppo province as he and his wife finished work. Britain-based opposition monitor The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said he was dragged and beaten while asking the reason for his arrest. It said he was presented with "a number of charges, including preparing press reports for several parties." His wife, Nabiba Taha, and the opposition monitor said he was held by Turkish-backed authorities in Hawar Kilis village along the border with

Turkey. Local military police held Taha for two hours before she was released following protests from journalists and residents, she said in a video. Taha said Qassim was taken to another location and his current circumstances were unknown. "We call on the local authorities in northern Syria to immediately release our correspondent Bakr Qassim and allow him to resume his work freely," AFP editor-in-chief Sophie Huet said in a statement. Journalists and activists in northwestern Syria said they would stage a protest later Tuesday calling for the release of Qassim and other journalists and activists they say are arbitrarily detained. They also call for the release of activist Karam Kellieh, who was arrested two months ago and whose whereabouts remain unknown. Northwestern Syria is the last rebel bastion in the war-torn country. Idlib province is under al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, and northern Aleppo province is under Turkish-backed forces.

WH pressured FB over some COVID-19 content during pandemic: Zuckerberg

Washington (AP): Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg says senior Biden administration officials pressured Facebook to "censor" some COVID-19 content during the pandemic and vowed that the social media giant would push back if it faced such demands again. In a letter to Rep Jim Jordan, the Republican chair of the House Judiciary Committee, Zuckerberg alleges that the officials, including those from the White House, "repeatedly pressured" Facebook for months to take down "certain COVID-19 content including humor and satire." The officials "expressed a lot of frustration" when the company didn't agree, he said in the letter. "I believe the government pressure was wrong and I regret that we were not more outspo-



ken about it," Zuckerberg wrote in the letter dated August 26 and posted on the committee's Facebook page and to its account on X. The letter is the latest repudiation by Zuckerberg of efforts to target misinformation around the coronavirus pandemic during and after the 2020 presidential election, par-

ticularly as allegations have emerged that some posts were deleted or restricted wrongly. "I also think we made some choices that, with the benefit of hindsight and new information, we wouldn't make today," he said, without elaborating. "We're ready to push back if something like this happens again." In response, the White House said in a statement that, "When confronted with a deadly pandemic, this Administration encouraged responsible actions to protect public health and safety. Our position has been clear and consistent: we believe tech companies and other private actors should take into account the effects their actions have on the American people, while making independent choices about the infor-

mation they present." Experts warn this year's US election could be swamped by misinformation on social media with the proliferation of artificial intelligence and other tools to produce false news stories and content that could mislead voters. Facebook in early 2021 appended what Zuckerberg called labels with "credible information" to posts about COVID-19 vaccines. That's after it moved in April 2020 — just as the virus had led to global shutdowns and radical changes in everyday life — to warn users who shared misinformation about COVID-19. Conservatives have long derided Facebook and other major tech companies as favoring liberal priorities and accused them of censorship.

Dam collapse in Sudan kills at least 30

Cairo (AP): The collapse of the Arbaat Dam in Sudan's eastern Red Sea state over the weekend flooded nearby homes and killed at least 30 people following heavy rains, a UN agency said. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said late Monday, citing local officials, that the actual number of fatalities from the collapse on Sunday might be higher. Additionally, about 70 villages around the dam were affected by the flash flooding, including 20 villages that have been destroyed. The Arbaat Dam, which is about 38 kilometers northwest of Port Sudan, was massively damaged because of heavy rains.

US judge pauses Biden's plan on spousal legal status

Houston (PTI): A Texas court has put a temporary pause on President Biden's ambitious plan to fast-track permanent residency for illegal migrants married to American citizens, a move that could hamper the hopes of approximately half a million such spouses, including several thousand Indian-Americans. In June, President Joe Biden issued a massive immigration relief to non-citizens offering a path to citizenship to the non-citizen spouses and children of American nationals. Biden had directed the Department of Homeland Security to take action to ensure that US citizens with non-citizen spouses and children can keep their families together. This new process will help cer-

tain non-citizen spouses and children apply for lawful permanent residence — a status that they are already eligible for — without leaving the country, the White House said. On Monday, US District Judge J Campbell Barker issued the two-week-long administrative stay on the same day the Department of Homeland Security began accepting applications for the so-called Parole in Place programme, which would grant work authorisation, permanent residency and eventually citizenship to spouses and stepchildren of US citizens who have been in the country for at least 10 years. "The claims are substantial and warrant closer consideration than the court has been able to afford to date," Barker wrote in his nine-page

order, which followed a lawsuit filed by 16 Republican-led states arguing that the programme would "incentivise illegal immigration and will irreparably harm" the states, the New York Post reported. The lawsuit, filed on Friday, further contended that the "Biden-Harris Administration — dissatisfied with the system Congress created, and for blatant political purposes — has yet again attempted to create its own immigration system." Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who noted in the complaint that the Lone Star State has had to pay tens of millions of dollars annually to cover the costs of illegal migrants living in Texas, called the ruling "just the first step" in what may be a lengthy court battle.

Ukraine troops control nearly 500 sq miles of Kursk region

AP n KYIV

The chief of Ukraine's army said ON Tuesday that the country's troops control nearly 1,300 square kilometres (500 square miles) of Russia's Kursk region since their surprise incursion three weeks ago.

Gen Oleksandr Syrskiy also said that Ukraine has captured 594 Russian prisoners in its operation.

"The enemy drags troops from other directions, in such way weakening them. They attempt to create a ring of defence around our offensive group of troops and plan counter-offensive actions," Syrskiy said, commenting on the situation in the Kursk region. The seized territory is roughly the size of Los Angeles.

His claim, which could not be independently confirmed, came hours after Ukraine endured a second consecutive barrage of nighttime air and missile attacks from Russia.

Five people were reported killed and 16 injured in the attacks, which President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said included 81 drones, as well as cruise and ballistic missiles. He said four people died, but the governor of the Zaporizhzhia region later said a fifth person had died there from burns in the attacks.

"We will undoubtedly respond to Russia for this and all other attacks. Crimes against humanity cannot go unpunished," Zelenskyy wrote on X.

The Kursk operation, the largest incursion into Russia since World War II, forced some 130,000 residents to evacuate their homes. Russia has sent reinforcements into the region, but it was not clear to what extent these movements might be weakening Russia's position in eastern Ukraine, where it was making slow advances in efforts to gain ground in the Kharkiv region.

The Russian Defence Ministry said Tuesday that Ukraine has suffered heavy casualties in Kursk — some 6,600 troops either killed or injured — and that more than 70 tanks have been destroyed along with

5 people killed in missiles and drones strike across Ukraine

AP n KYIV

Nighttime Russian drone and missile attacks struck across Ukraine, killing at least five people on Tuesday, a day after a heavy barrage pounded energy facilities throughout the country.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the attacks included 81 drones, as well as cruise and ballistic missiles and that 16 people were injured. He said four people died, but the governor of the Zaporizhzhia region later said a fifth person had died there from burns in the attacks.

"We will undoubtedly respond to Russia for this and all other attacks. Crimes against humanity cannot go unpunished," Zelenskyy wrote on X.

In the Kyiv region, which had struggled with blackouts after Monday's onslaught, five air alerts were called during the night. The regional administration said air defences destroyed all the drones and missiles but that falling debris set off forest fires.

After the Monday barrage across Ukraine of more than 100 missiles and a similar number of drones, Prime



Minister Denys Shmyhal said "the energy infrastructure has once again become the target of Russian terrorists" and urged Ukraine's allies to provide it with long-range weapons and permission to use them on targets inside Russia.

President Joe Biden called Monday's Russian attack on energy infrastructure "outrageous" and said he had "re-prioritized US air defence exports so they are sent to Ukraine first." He also said the US was "surging energy equipment to Ukraine to repair its systems and strengthen the resilience of Ukraine's energy grid."

The Russian Defence Ministry said the attacks used "long-range precision air- and sea-

based weapons and strike drones against critical energy infrastructure facilities that support the operation of Ukraine's military-industrial complex. All designated targets were hit."

In Russia, meanwhile, officials reported four Ukrainian missiles were shot down over the Kursk region, where Russian forces are fighting Ukrainian troops that made a surprise incursion this month. The fighting in the region has raised concerns about the nuclear power plant there.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi arrived inspected the plant on Tuesday, but did not immediately give a public assessment.

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Japan protests after Chinese plane violates its airspace

AP n TOKYO

Japan's top government spokesperson said on Tuesday a Chinese military aircraft had briefly entered Japanese airspace the day before, calling the incident an "absolutely unacceptable" territorial violation and safety threat.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said that a Chinese Y-9 reconnaissance plane briefly entered Japan's southwestern airspace Monday, forcing its military to scramble fighter jets. He added that it was the first time the Japanese Self Defense Force detected a Chinese military aircraft in Japan's airspace.

"The Chinese military aircraft's incursion into Japan's airspace not only is a serious violation of our territorial rights but also a safety threat," Hayashi told a regular news conference. "We found it absolutely unacceptable." The Chinese Y-9 reconnaissance plane circled above Danjo Island off the southwestern coast of Japan's main southern island of Kyushu for two minutes, the Joint Staff of the Japanese Self Defense Force said late Monday, adding that officials were analyzing the latest Chinese military activity.

The Joint Staff said Japan scrambled fighter jets and warned the Chinese plane to leave.

Hayashi stressed that China's military activity around Japan in recent years has become "increasingly expanding and intensifying." Hayashi said Japan will continue watching Chinese military activity and do its utmost to respond to possible anti-airspace violations.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Masataka Okano summoned acting Chinese Ambassador Shi Yong to strongly protest the airspace violation. Okano also demanded that China take steps to avoid such incidents.

According to Japan's military, it scrambled jets nearly 669 times between April 2023 and March 2024, about 70% of the time against Chinese military aircraft, though that did not include airspace violations.

Philippine defence chief says China is 'the biggest disruptor of peace'

AP n MANILA

The Philippine defense chief said Tuesday that China is "the biggest disruptor" of peace in Southeast Asia and called for stronger international censure over its aggression in the South China Sea, a day after China blocked Philippine vessels from delivering food to a Coast Guard ship at the Sabina Shoal. Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr spoke at an international military conference organized in Manila by the US Indo-Pacific Command amid a spike in clashes between China and the Philippines in the disputed South China Sea and in its airspace.

China is "the biggest disruptor of international peace" in Southeast Asia, Teodoro told the conference, which was attended by military officials and senior diplomats from the US and allied countries.

He later told reporters on the sidelines of the conference that international statements of concern against China's increasingly assertive actions in the disputed waters and elsewhere were "not

enough."

"The antidote is a stronger collective multilateral action against China," Teodoro said, adding that diplomats and defense officials should determine those stronger steps.

Pressed by reporters to be more specific, Teodoro said a UN Security Council resolution condemning and ordering a stop to Chinese acts of aggression would be a strong step but acknowledged the difficulty of pursuing that. "The world is not that perfect," Teodoro said.

There was no immediate reaction from Chinese officials. China, like its geopolitical rival the US, is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and has power to veto such an adversarial step.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has paid "attention" to China's aggressive actions but should do much more, Teodoro said. The 10-nation Southeast Asian bloc includes the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei, which have South China Sea claims that overlap with each

other, as well as China's and Taiwan's.

"ASEAN, to remain relevant and credible, cannot continue to ignore what China is doing in the South China Sea," Teodoro said.

In the latest incident in the South China Sea, Philippine officials said China deployed "an excessive force" of 40 ships that blocked two Philippine vessels from delivering food and other supplies to Manila's largest coast guard ship in the disputed Sabina Shoal in the latest flare-up of their territorial disputes in the busy sea passage. China and the Philippines blamed each other for the confrontation on Monday in Sabina Shoal, an uninhabited atoll both countries claim that has become the latest flashpoint in the Spratlys, the most hotly disputed region of the sea passage that is a key global trade and security route. China and the Philippines have separately deployed coast guard ships to Sabina in recent months on suspicion the other may act to take control of and build structures in the fishing atoll.

China calls for more support for Ukraine peace plan with Brazil

AP n BANGKOK

China called on Tuesday for more countries to endorse its peace plan for Ukraine, after a round of diplomacy with Indonesia, Brazil and South Africa to support its plan.

Envoy Li Hui called the three countries representative of the Global South and "important forces in promoting world peace" who share similar positions with China. "They have maintained communication with both Russia and Ukraine and stay committed to a political settlement to the crisis through dialogue and negotiation," said Li, China's special envoy for Eurasian affairs.

China and Brazil issued a joint peace plan earlier this year that calls for a peace conference with both Ukraine and Russia

and no expansion of the battlefield. China and Russia were absent from a peace summit hosted in Switzerland in June. Russia was not invited while China chose not to attend.

Initially, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said China had pressured other countries to not attend the peace summit. But since then, Ukraine has recognized China's role in a peace process, given its close relationship with Russia, with the Ukrainian foreign minister paying a visit to the country in July, the first since the war began.

While a diplomatic dialogue between Russia and Ukraine so far appears out of reach, the war has shifted. In August Ukraine opened a new front in the war by attacking the Russian oblast of Kursk, in a surprise move that

made clear Russia was also vulnerable. Zelenskyy has said the aim was to create a buffer zone to protect Ukraine from attacks. Li noted the incursion and criticized Western support for Ukraine. "All sides are worried that the West continues to relax conditions for Ukraine to strike the Russian territory with aided weapons," Li said. "And recent developments on the battlefield confirmed these kind of worries." The US and NATO have called China an enabler of Russia in the war. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg then said China provides equipment, microelectronics and tools that are "enabling Russia to build the missiles, to build the bombs, to build the aircraft, to build the weapons they use to attack Ukraine."

Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) awarded to top Chinese general

PTI n ISLAMABAD

Commander of the Ground Forces of the People's Liberation Army of China General Li Qiaoming was on Tuesday conferred the Nishan-e-Imtiaz, one of the top honours in Pakistan, for his "unwavering commitment" in promoting close cooperation between the militaries of the two all-weather friends.

Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif and Army Chief General Asim Munir participated during a special investiture ceremony at the President's House and parliamentarians.

"The citation at the ceremony highlighted General Li Qiaoming's four-decade career, noting his significant contributions to the Chinese military. His intellect, administrative skills, and dedication have earned him a reputation as a courageous and capable officer, crucial in promoting peace and stability in China and beyond," the state-run news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said.

"General Li is renowned for his exceptional professionalism and skills in maintaining peace and stability around China. As a friend of Pakistan, he greatly strengthened Pak-China military relations with unwavering commitment," it said.

Earlier on Monday, Qiaoming met with Prime Minister Sharif and discussed various aspects of the Pakistan-China friendship, particularly the bilateral defence and strategic partnership, the report said. Sharif underscored that Pakistan and China are All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners and trusted friends and highlighted that the deep-rooted ties between the two nations enjoy broad public, political, and institutional support in Pakistan, "making them indispensable for the progress and development of both countries." The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the deepening military-to-military exchanges and noted that the defence and strategic ties between Pakistan and China are vital for peace and stability in the region.

Malaysian ex-leader charged with sedition for mocking former king

AP n KUALA LUMPUR

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin was charged Tuesday with sedition over a speech he made that allegedly questioned the integrity of the country's previous king, Muhyiddin, who led Malaysia from March 2020 until August 2021, pleaded not guilty in a court in northeast Kelantan state. According to the charge sheet, Muhyiddin made the seditious remarks last month during a by-election campaign in Kelantan.

Nine ethnic Malay state rulers take turns as Malaysia's king for five-year terms under the country's rotating monarchy, which began when Malaysia gained independence from Britain in 1957. The monarchy plays a largely ceremonial role, but are revered by the nation's majority Muslims.

In his speech on August 14, Muhyiddin had questioned why then-King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah

didn't invite him to be prime minister following a hung Parliament in November 2022. Muhyiddin had claimed he had the backing of majority lawmakers.

Muhyiddin's Islamic nationalist bloc received stronger-than-expected support from Malays, who account for two-thirds of Malaysia's 34 million people. Sultan Abdullah appointed then-opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim as prime minister after Anwar cobbled up support from rival parties to form a unity government.

Sultan Abdullah from central Pahang state, who ended his reign on Jan. 30 this year, didn't comment on the case. But his son issued a strong rebuke to Muhyiddin, saying his remarks were dangerous and could divide the people and undermine the royal institution. Muhyiddin was questioned by police following complaints against him. He had denied insulting the royalty, saying his remarks were factu-

al and that he had handed in sworn oath of support by 115 lawmakers in the 222-member parliament.

Zaid Malek from Lawyers for Liberty, a human rights and law reform group, slammed the use of the colonial-era Sedition Act against Muhyiddin. He said questioning or criticizing the exercise of constitutional power by the king wasn't seditious. The law, introduced by the British in 1948, criminalizes speech or actions with an undefined "seditious tendency," including that which promotes hatred against the government and monarchy or incites racial discord. "The king is a constitutional monarch, and not a feudal ruler. His exercise of his power can thus be debated, questioned or criticized. This is the very bedrock of our system of constitutional monarchy," Zaid said. Anwar had backtracked on his pledge to repeal the Sedition Act, which has long been used to suppress dissenting voices, he added.

PM Sharif reiterates 'resolve' to root out terrorism from Pakistan

PTI n ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Tuesday strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in the restive Balochistan province as he reiterated the unwavering resolve of his government to root out terrorism from the country.

Heavily armed Baloch gunmen killed at least 37 people in separate attacks in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province on Monday, as insurgent attacks spiked in the region bordering Iran and Afghanistan.

Chairing a Cabinet meeting a day after violence in Balochistan stunned the country, Sharif strongly condemned the terrorist incidents that resulted in the death of innocent Pakistanis including the security personnel, state-run Radio Pakistan reported. He said the sacrifices rendered by the people and the Armed Forces of Pakistan in the war

against terrorism will not go waste. "The entire nation is committed for complete elimination of terrorism from the country," he said.

Prime Minister Sharif said all available resources would be provided to the Armed Forces to curb terrorism. He said time has come to eliminate terrorism. "We need to move forward towards this path with firm resolve," he said.

He said doors of dialogue are open for those who believe in Pakistan and its Constitution. However, no talks will be held with the enemies and terrorists, he added. Referring to the terrorist incidents, he said it is no secret now that the terrorists of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, operating from Afghanistan, are behind terrorist attacks. He said the government has already sensitized the Afghan government on the issue.

He said the terrorist acts being carried out in Balochistan are

aimed at creating anarchy and disturbance in Pakistan and to disrupt the steps being taken by the government for development of the country. However, their nefarious designs could not terrorize the people and disrupt the development process.

Prime Minister Sharif stressed the need for forging unity, saying such despicable designs are only meant to impede the country's progress, ongoing CPEC projects in Balochistan and undermine the time-tested friendship between Pakistan and China.

He announced to soon visit Balochistan to hold in-depth deliberations on the situation and decide on immediate measures to deal with it.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited

Balochistan on Tuesday to support the provincial government in its efforts to tackle militancy. "My aim to visit is to let you all and the people of Balochistan know that the federal interior minister is standing behind the Balochistan chief minister. Whatever decision he (chief minister Bugti) makes, we will support him," he told the media in Quetta flanked by Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti.

Naqvi ruled out any fresh operation, saying that a police station house officer was enough to tackle the law and order with proper and timely response.

"They are terrorists and our civil armed forces, armed forces, and the police know how to combat them," the minister said.

If anything happens to me, Army chief & DG ISI responsible: Imran Khan

PTI n ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday reiterated that the Army and the ISI are responsible for his condition and expressed fear for his life.

Khan, 71, lodged at the Adiala Jail since last year, also blamed the current dispensation for being averse to criticism, for deteriorating law-and-order situation across the country, and also for ruining Pakistan's cricket that is facing repeated defeats.

In a post on X from jail, Khan repeated claims about rigged elections and said only a government with a genuine mandate will be able to plan for fundamental reforms.

"The ISI controls all administrative matters related to my imprisonment. I'm saying it again: if anything happens to me, the Army Chief and DG ISI will be responsible," the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party said in a detailed post on X.

Khan's comments come two days after the Pakistan government said that the

former prime minister's trial in cases concerning the violence on May 9 last year might go to the military courts.

"The events and vandalism on May 9 last year invited the application of the Army Act since military installations were attacked and damaged," Government spokesperson for legal affairs Barrister Aqeel Malik had said. On May 9 last year, violent protests erupted after Khan's arrest by paramilitary Rangers from the premises of the Islamabad High Court in connection with an alleged corruption case.

His party workers allegedly vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Jinnah House (Lahore Corps Commander House), the Mianwali airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad. A mob also attacked the Army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

Khan's longish post on X started with "reminding" the nation of the two attempts on his life: first in Wazirabad, Punjab province and then again at the Judicial Complex in Islamabad.

The ISI stole the CCTV footage from

Wazirabad, and the night before the attack in Islamabad, the ISI had taken control of the area where it happened, he claimed.

"In their panic, they have made my conditions in jail even tougher. The staff assigned to ensure that my food isn't poisoned has been changed for the fourth time," he wrote.

He also described the conditions of his and his wife Bushra's cell — rats fall from the top when she prays — and said the court has been informed about it. Khan further said that he had already explained why the Islamabad rally was postponed and how it had nothing to do with "contacts with the establishment."

This entire government runs on lies; I don't even read the news about them. I have no contact with the establishment. If we do hold talks with them, it will only be for the sake of the country and the constitution," the PTI supreme added.

Drawing a parallel to the situation that unfolded in Bangladesh, he also came up with a curt comment: "Cattle can be

herded in a desired direction, not humans" and said, "The Army Chief, Chief Justice, and Police Chief were all loyal to the Prime Minister (in Bangladesh), but when the people took to the streets, they won their rights."

Anyone critical of the regime is labelled a digital terrorist. When internet services were shut down, people protested, but those in power couldn't handle the criticism. No one is permitted to even voice their problems. The nation blames a specific institution for this," he added.

What are his qualifications? Under him, the law-and-order situation across the country is deteriorating," the PTI leader asked and described terror attack incidents in KP and Balochistan. The former cricketer-turned-politician rued about "the embarrassing defeat against Bangladesh" on Monday and said it set a new low.

He also lamented the current condition of cricket in Pakistan, saying: "The blame for all of this collapse falls on one institution."

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Tender Enquiry No. 1704/C&I/O&M/PC-2583 Dated: 23-08-2024
Chief Engineer/ O&M (P&P Cell-I), GHPT, Lehra Mohabbat, invites E-tender for the Procurement of RTDs and thermocouple for Slage-I & II Units, GHPT, Lehra Mohabbat. Quantity as per NIT. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 23-08-2024 at 17:00 Hrs. onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> GHTP-73/24

76155/12/3350/2023/37011 Dated CHD - 8/27/2024

M.P. MADHYA KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN COMPANY LIMITED
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)
Nishtha Parisar, Bijalae Nagar, Govindpura, Bhopal-23
Phone No. : 0755-2602033-36, Fax : 2589821, 2586636
Ref. : MD/MK/04/NIT/1410 Date : 27.08.2024

TENDER NOTICE
MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids from manufacturers through e-tendering :-

Tender Specification Number	Particulars	Approx. Value (Rs. Lakh)	Tender Fee including GST (in Rs.)	Date of Pre-Bid Conference	Date of Opening of Tender
MD/MK/04/1082	Rate Contract for 140 Kg 8 Mtr. Long PCC Pole	2808.30	23600	05.09.24 at 3:00 PM	17.09.2024 at 3:00 PM

Other details and full Tender documents would be available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. Website <https://mptenders.gov.in> shortly.
M.P. Madhyam/116105/2024 CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)

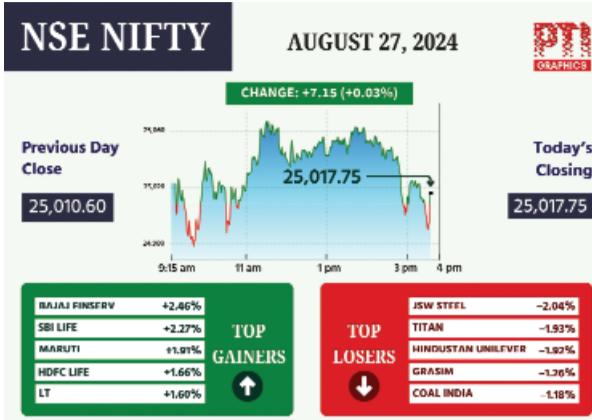
Markets settle almost flat

PTI n MUMBAI

Stock market benchmark Sindices Sensex and Nifty ended on a flat note after a volatile session on Tuesday due to the emergence of profit-taking near record high levels amid rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Ukraine.

The NSE gauge, however, hit a new lifetime peak of 25,017. According to traders, profit booking in metal, consumer durable and FMCG shares negated gains in telecom, tech and IT stocks. After oscillating between highs and lows, the 30-share BSE Sensex eked out a marginal gain of 13.65 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 81,711.76 — its sixth consecutive session of rise. During the day, it hit a high of 81,919.11 and a low of 81,600.51. The NSE Nifty ended almost flat, up 7.15 points or 0.03 per cent, at 25,017.75 — its ninth straight session of gains.

"The domestic market witnessed profit-booking near record highs. While the positive expectations regarding a potential rate cut by the Fed in September remain, the recent geopolitical tensions



and rising crude oil prices have made investors cautious amid high valuations. "Further, the recent shift in FII stance towards the domestic market and the anticipation that the RBI will align with the Fed's actions are expected to foster a positive outlook in the near term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. On the Sensex chart, Bajaj Finserv, Maruti, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers. In contrast, Hindustan Unilever, JSW Steel, Titan, NTPC and Tata Motors were

among the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.58 per cent, and smallcap index went up by 0.50 per cent. Among the indices, telecommunication jumped 1.13 per cent, tech (0.70 per cent), financial services (0.68 per cent) and healthcare (0.44 per cent). On the other hand, metal, consumer durables, power, commodities and consumer discretionary were among the laggards. Trading session lacked momentum due to weak investor participation on

account of Janmashtami and ended almost unchanged from its previous close. Weak US market cues and subdued Asian indices prompted local investors to book profit towards the fag-end, indicating that intraday volatility will continue amid growing geopolitical tensions and sluggish global growth," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

In Asian markets, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory, while Seoul and Shanghai ended lower. European markets were trading higher in mid-session deals. The US markets ended mostly lower in the overnight trade on Monday.

"There are both headwinds and tailwinds for the market now. Headwinds are coming from the escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and Ukraine. Brent crude has shot up above USD 81. The strongest tailwind comes from the expected rate cuts by the Fed which will spill over to other central banks, including the RBI," said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

GCCs offering up to 20 per cent higher salaries than IT services: Report

PTI n MUMBAI

Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in India are offering up to 20 per cent higher salaries as compared with the IT services, especially at entry and mid levels, a report said on Tuesday. According to the report by TeamLease Digital, India has over 1,600 GCCs employing over 1.66 million professionals. It is poised to welcome 800 new GCCs in the next 5-6 years, which shows the country's growing prominence as a global tech hub.

GCCs are centralized units established by multinational companies to manage specific business functions or processes, leveraging cost advantages, a skilled workforce, and favourable business environments in strategic locations worldwide. GCCs play a vital role in driving efficiency and innovation across sectors such as IT, finance, and research and development. On the other hand, IT products & services encompass development, production, and management



of hardware, software, networks, and services that enable organizations in the creation, management and optimization of or access to information and business processes. "GCCs are rapidly surpassing the IT sector in the talent market, especially at entry and mid levels. They offer salaries that are, on an average, 12-20 per cent higher than those in IT services and non-tech industries," TeamLease Digital CEO Neeti Sharma said quoting the report. This wage premium underscores the growing influence of GCCs as they attract top talent from the IT sector to fuel their expansion, signalling a shift in market dynamics where GCCs are emerging as the dominant

force, she added. The 'Digital Skills and Salary Primer for FY25' report is based on an analysis of 15,000 job roles from the 3 sectors, including GCCs, IT services and non-tech sectors. Currently, in GCCs, there are more opportunities for people with 0-10 years experience. The senior level has a wider salary gap for many of the functional areas, and the premium for niche skills is also higher.

The report further showed that there is a growing trend of setting up GCCs in tier-II cities like Kolkata, Ahmedabad, and Vadodara, which indicates a geographical diversification of tech opportunities across the country. Skills that are seeing an increasing demand in GCCs are PyTorch, AWS, DevOps, NLP, Kubernetes, Fabric, Hyperledger, Blockchain, Tableau, SQL, and ServiceNow, the report added. In GCCs, the percentage of women tech professionals is expected to increase to 35 per cent from the current 25 per cent by 2027.

Over 200 global players to take part in Bharat Battery Show 2025



PTI n NEW DELHI

Over 200 global players are likely to showcase cutting-edge battery and charging infra technologies at the Bharat Battery Show in January 2025. Industry body India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA), in a statement, said it is organising the Bharat Battery Show at the second Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025.

According to the statement, the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 led by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is set to be held on January 17-22, 2025, across three major venues — Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhoomi (IICC) Dwarka, and India Expo Center & Mart, Greater Noida.

IESA, as a key industry partner, has been entrusted with the organisation of the Battery Tech Pavilion, Recycling Pavilion, and Charging Infra Pavilion under the umbrella of the Bharat Battery Show. Bharat Battery Show — part of the Bharat Mobility — will be organised at the central Delhi venue Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, from 19 to 21 January 2025.

The Bharat Battery Show (an expo on batteries and charging) will feature cutting-edge technologies in battery storage, battery recycling, and charging infrastructure, reflecting IESAs commitment to driving the adoption of clean energy and sustainable mobility solutions in India.

IESA said that it is expecting 200+ global players to showcase their cutting-edge battery and charging infra technologies during this event. Some of the key firms already confirmed include Amara Raja, Replus Engitech, Epsilon Advanced Materials, Advik Hitech, Amphenol FCL, Bry-Air (Asia), Elcom International, EMO Energy, HENN Indo Pacific, Maestrotech Systems, Neenjas Electric, Polyprotic Chemicals, Huge Hippo Energy, MNE components, Hioki, Glida, Ipower batteries, and Molsynth, among others.

Rupee falls 5 paise to close at 83.92 against US dollar

PTI n MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated by 5 paise to close at 83.92 (provisional) against the American currency on Tuesday, on overnight jump in crude oil prices and a surge in commodity prices.

However, positive domestic markets and a soft US dollar cushioned the downside, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.91 and touched an intra-day low of 83.95 against the US dollar. The domestic currency finally settled at 83.92 (provisional), 5 paise lower from its previous close.

On Monday, the Indian rupee settled for the day 3 paise higher at 83.87 against the American currency. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on rise in global risk sentiments amid dovish Fed speak and



rising expectations of a rate cut by the Fed in September. "However, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and rising crude oil prices may cap sharp upside. Traders may take cues from US consumer confidence data," Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said. Forex traders said the rupee is likely to remain within a narrow range as the Reserve Bank of India has been actively intervening in the market, consistently absorbing inflows.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.05 per cent lower at 100.79. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.87 per cent to USD 80.72 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex rose 13.65 points, or 0.02 per cent, to close at 81,711.76 points. The Nifty closed 7.15 points, or 0.03 per cent, up at 25,017.75 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Monday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 483.36 crore, according to exchange data. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said the central bank is constantly working on policies, systems, and platforms to make the country's financial sector strong, nimble and customer centric.

India-Oman free trade pact talks at advanced stage: Official

PTI n NEW DELHI

Discussions for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between India and Oman are at an advanced stage and both sides hope to conclude the pact early, Indian Ambassador to Oman Amit Narang said on Tuesday.

The pact will give a significant push to bilateral trade and investment ties between the two countries, he said. The pact, officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), is expected to boost Indian exports to the west Asian country by eliminating duties, especially on petroleum products, textiles, electronics, pharmaceuticals, machinery, and iron and steel. "Discussions for a bilateral CEPA with Oman are at an advanced stage. We hope to conclude these discussions early and once this is done, this will be a significant push



to bilateral, not just trade, but also bilateral investment ties," Narang said. Addressing an event organised by Ficci here, the Indian Ambassador to Oman also highlighted the significant potential for enhancing direct shipping links between the two nations as a large part of Indian exports to Oman come not directly but through the UAE. He said the India-Oman bilateral trade, which crossed USD 12 billion in 2022-23, has moderated and settled at USD 8 billion in FY24. "Between 2021 and 2023 the

bilateral trade between India and Oman more than doubled... We went from USD 5 billion to cross USD 12 billion. "In the past financial year, the bilateral trade has moderated a little bit, it has settled to USD 8 billion... Moderation is mainly on account of over dominance of hydrocarbons in the bilateral trade," Narang said. "India imports a lot of oil and fertilisers from Oman and this decline in the value terms of the trade this year is a reflection of the decline in values of these two

commodities globally," Narang said. He pointed out that a large part of Indian exports to Oman come not directly but through the UAE and these are not reflected in the India-Oman bilateral trade but in India's trade with the UAE, adding that there is potential for enhancing direct shipping links. "Currently, I understand that there are two shipping lines... There is therefore huge potential for direct shipping to reduce cost of bilateral trade and that will have a significant impact in further improving our bilateral trade figures," Narang said. Addressing the event virtually, Indian Ambassador to the UAE Sunjay Sudhir said India will soon upgrade its political engagement with the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) as a whole in the very near future. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) brings together six Arab countries — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

India ranks 31st in JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index

PTI n MUMBAI

Global property consultant JLL on Tuesday said that India's top real estate markets have entered into a 'transparent' zone for the first time, driven by institutionalisation of commercial assets and improvement in data access. JLL has released its 'Global Real Estate Transparency Index, 2024', which showed that India's tier-I markets have entered into the 'transparent' zone for the first time with a composite score of 2.44. India ranks 31st in the list of 89 countries.

The consultant noted that "India has made a remarkable leap forward in JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2024, reaching the transparent tier for the first time." This progress is a result of institutionalisation in the commercial market and



improved access to diverse real estate data sets, it said. "India is the top global improver in the 2024 index, making significant strides in transaction processes and market fundamentals," JLL said, the country is leading the global front in enhancing transparency, with expanded data coverage and improved data quality across various property sectors. There are 13 countries featured in the high-transparency zone. The United Kingdom is at the top (with a score of 1.24) in

and Slovakia. The remaining countries are in 'semi-transparent', Low transparency and opaque zones. "India is the top global improver, with greater data coverage and quality across both core and niche property sectors — ranging from industrial to data centres - as institutionalisation in the market increases. "A more proactive financial regulator, new climate risk disclosure guidelines, streamlined building regulations and digitised land records have also contributed to its leading cities entering the 'Transparent' tier," the report mentioned. Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head-Research, India, JLL, said, "Increasing institutional participation, along with a push for transparency, has led to the adoption of best industry practices in India's commercial real estate

market." Notably, he said four existing listed REITs have driven growth in stabilised commercial assets, while standardised market valuation processes and REIT regulations have fostered market-based approaches. "Regulatory enhancements such as RERA and SEBI Code have improved investor protection, while digital land registry records and strict monitoring by RBI and SEBI have created a robust regulatory landscape," Das said. Karan Singh Sodi, Senior Managing Director (Mumbai MMR & Gujarat) and Head - Alternatives, India, JLL said, India's ascent to the transparent tier in JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index underscores the industry's cohesive efforts and governmental backing.

Auto majors to offer 1.5-3 per cent discount on purchase of new vehicles against scrappage certificate

PTI n NEW DELHI

Ahead of the festive season, several passenger and commercial vehicle manufacturers have agreed to offer discounts of 1.5-3 per cent on new vehicle purchase against scrapped old vehicles after a meeting with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, an official statement said on Tuesday.

The statement further said Mercedes Benz India has offered a flat discount of Rs 25,000, which will be over and above all existing discounts. Union Road Transport and Highways (RT&H) Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday chaired a meeting with the SIAM delegation at Bharat Mandapam, where he addressed pressing issues in the automobile industry. "During this interaction, responding positively to the advice of the minister RT&H



and recognising the importance of Fleet Modernisation and Circular Economy, multiple Commercial Vehicle Manufacturers and multiple passenger vehicle manufacturers have agreed to offer discounts for a limited period against a certificate of deposit (Scrappage Certificate)," the statement said. It said commercial vehicle manufacturers are willing to offer discounts for a limited period of two years and

passenger vehicle manufacturers are willing to offer discounts for a limited period of one year.

The statement noted that these discounts will further incentivise the scrapping of vehicles, thereby ensuring the plying of safer, cleaner and more efficient vehicles on roads.

As per the statement, passenger vehicle manufacturers namely Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hyundai Motor India, Kia Motors, Toyota Kirloskar Motor, Honda Cars, JSW MG Motor, Renault India, Nissan India and Skoda Volkswagen India, will offer discount of 1.5 per cent of the ex-showroom price of new car or Rs 20,000, whichever is less, against the passenger vehicle scrapped by the owner in the last 6 months.

Gold climbs `550 to `74,350 per 10 gm; silver rallies `1,200

PTI n NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 550 to Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday on the back of fresh demand from local jewellers.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 73,800 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday. Silver prices also rallied Rs 1,200 to Rs 88,200 per kilogram on Tuesday from Rs 87,000 per kg in the previous close, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped Rs 550 to Rs 74,000 per 10 grams.



Traders attributed the rise in yellow prices due to a pick-up in demand by local jewellers and retailers in the domestic market. The bullion markets were closed in New Delhi on Monday on account of Krishna Janmashtami. In the Asian trading hours, gold is trading at USD 2,543.90 per ounce, down USD 11.30 per ounce.

"Gold declined marginally on Tuesday, weighed down by better than expected US macro data and an uptick in US Treasury yields," Samuil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. According to Manav Modi, Senior Analyst, Commodity Research, MOFSL, gold prices fell but remained in sight of record highs it hit last week as the prospect of lower US interest rates battered the US dollar and presented a brighter outlook for metal markets. Further, bullion surged to record highs last week, as market participants welcomed

dovish comments from the Federal Reserve. Some safe haven demand also buoyed gold as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas yielded few results, while hostilities in the Middle East persisted, Modi added. Additionally, silver was quoted lower at USD 30.34 per ounce in the global markets. "Traders will focus on the US consumer confidence data going to be released later on Tuesday which will provide more insights on the direction of the bullion prices," Navneet Damani, Group Senior VP of Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services (MOFSL), said.

Coal India's contribution to Govt exchequer rises 2 per cent in April-July

PTI n NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Ltd's contribution to the government's exchequer rose 2.06 per cent to Rs 20,071.96 crore in the April-July period of the ongoing fiscal year. Coal India Ltd (CIL), which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output, paid Rs 19,666.04 crore to the government exchequer in the year-ago period, according to provisional figures of the coal ministry. Total levies paid to the government in July went up to Rs 4,992.48 crore from Rs 4,789.42 crore paid a year earlier.



The amount paid to the Centre and state governments include royalties, GST, cess on coal, and other levies. Coal production generates substantial revenue for both central and state governments. Of the total amount paid to the government exchequer in the first four months of FY24,

maximum amount of Rs 4,417.12 crore was made to the state government of Jharkhand, followed by Rs 4,319.67 crore to the Odisha government, Rs 3,950.41 crore to Chhattisgarh, Rs 3,526.27 crore to Madhya Pradesh, and Rs 2,086.35 crore to Maharashtra, among others.

State governments are entitled to receiving 14 per cent of royalty on the sale price of coal and 30 per cent of the royalty as contribution towards the proposed district mineral foundations (DMFs) -- which are meant to support people affected by various projects -- and two per cent of

NMET from dry-fuel produced by the coal companies and also the private sector.

In case of captive, commercial mines, states are also entitled to receiving the revenue share offered by the auction holder in a transparent bidding process.

Apart from this, state governments also benefit from increased employment, land compensation, increased investment in allied infrastructure like railways, road and several other economic benefits. Coal India is aiming to produce 838 MT of coal in the ongoing financial year.

PARALYMPICS

INDIA EYE RECORD HAUL WITH LARGEST EVER CONTINGENT IN FRAY AT PARIS

PTI ■ PARIS

Beaten by life but not by its many challenges, an 84-strong contingent of Indian para-athletes, the largest ever in the country's history and a heady mix of youth and experience, would be eyeing an unparalleled gold rush when the Paralympic Games begin here on Wednesday. India won a record 19 medals, including five gold, in the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021 for a 24th-place finish in the overall rankings. Three years on, the country's target is more than 25 medals with a double-digit haul in gold. What has fuelled this ambition is the size of the contingent and the exceptional performances in the past one year. India won a record 111 medals, including 29 gold, at the Hangzhou Asian Para Games last year. This was followed by unprecedented success at the World Para Athletics Championships in May where the country snared 17 medals, including half a dozen gold for a sixth-place finish in the overall standings. Several medal winners in Hangzhou are in this Paralympics team, including top stars like world record-



holding javelin thrower Sumit Antil (F64) and rifle shooter Avani Lekhara (10m Air Rifle Standing SH1). Both of them would be defending their gold medals won in Tokyo. The Games, as much a celebration of sporting skills as human endurance, club athletes with similar functional abilities in terms of movement, coordination and balance into various classifications. The "degree and nature of their eligible impairments" decide these groups. For India, the para-athletics team has been a major medal giver in the past and this time too, it is expected to be the

biggest contributor with as many as 38 names in fray. Other top medal contenders include the likes of para-archer Sheetal Devi, who shoots with her legs as she was born without arms, landmine blast survivors Hokato Sema (shot putter) and Narayana Konganapalle (rower) and several other accident amputees. India is competing in 12 sports this time, as against nine by a 54-member team in Tokyo. Shooter Manish Narwal and shuttler Krishna Nagar are also among those who would be looking to defend their gold medals won in Tokyo.

Antil, whose left leg was amputated owing to an accident when he was 17, had also won gold in the para world championships in May and he is hoping to cross the 75m mark in Paris at the same venue where his able-bodied counterpart Neeraj Chopra won an Olympic silver earlier this month. Lekhara was the best performer in Tokyo with one gold and a bronze and one of the two athletes to win two medals, the other being Singhraj Adhana (silver and bronze). Adhana, however, could not make the current team.

Lekhara was the first Indian woman to win a Paralympic gold medal. She is now primed to join the club of three medal winners in the Paralympics. Current Paralympics Committee of India (PCI) President Devendra Jhajharia, a javelin thrower, is the most decorated Indian Paralympian with two gold (2004 Athens and 2016 Rio) and a silver (2021 Tokyo). Joginder Singh Bedi won three medals in the 1984 Paralympics (silver in shot put, a bronze each in javelin and discus throw). Deepthi Jeevanji (women's 400m T20; intellectual disability), Rio Olympics gold-medallist Mariyappan Thangavelu (men's high jump - T63), whose right leg was disabled after being run over by a bus, and Yogesh Kathuniya (men's Discus Throw - F56), born with a neurological disorder that damaged his nervous system, would be also aiming to add to their existing Paralympic medal tally. Shuttler Krishna Nagar (men's singles SH6), who has overcome the disadvantage of his short height, is also looking good to defend his gold medal won in Tokyo, more so after winning the title in the World Para Badminton Championships in Thailand in

February. The other gold winner in Tokyo, Pramod Bhagat, is, however, serving suspension after whereabouts failure. Suhas Yathiraj (Men's Singles SL4 and Mixed Doubles SL3-SU5), who won a silver in Tokyo, will again be a medal contender. In para-archery, Sheetal and Harvinder Singh will be among the medal contenders. Harvinder had won a bronze in Tokyo in men's individual recurve open. Sheetal, the first and the only international para archery champion without upper limbs, bagged two gold medals in a stunning performance in the Asian Para Games in women's individual compound and mixed doubles, and a silver in the women's doubles compound event. In table tennis, after winning a silver in class 4 event in Tokyo, Bhavinaben Patel will hope to better the colour of the medal. The wheelchair-bound player is competing in women's singles S4 and women's doubles D10 events. Antil and shot putter Bhagyashri Jadhav, who won a silver in the F34 event in Asian Para Games, will be the joint flag bearers at Wednesday's Opening Ceremony to be held outside a stadium for the first time in the history of Paralympic Games.



US OPEN

16-year-old Californian Iva beats Magda in first round

AP ■ NEW YORK

Iva Jovic, a 16-year-old from California, became the youngest American to win a women's main-draw match at the U.S. Open since 2000, eliminating 2023 Australian Open semifinalist Magda Linette of Poland 6-4, 6-3. "Surprised, but not surprised," Jovic said on Monday about the result against someone who's been ranked in the top 20. "I just had a plan about what I was going to do before we started, and there weren't that many needs for crazy adjustments, because it was going well," Jovic said. "So just kind of sticking to that."

Just keep working. I'm on a good path, but there's a lot more to do." She earned a wild-card entry for the main bracket at the year's last Grand Slam tournament by winning the U.S. Tennis Association Girls' 18s national championship. She also paired with Tyra Grant there to take the doubles title, which gave them a wild card for women's doubles at Flushing Meadows; the USTA granted Jovic and another American teen, Kaylan Bigun, a spot in the mixed doubles field, too. Jovic and Grant teamed up to win junior doubles titles at the Australian Open in January and Wimbledon in July; they also were the runners-up at the French Open in June. Jovic's favorite players are 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic - he's Serbian, and so are her roots; after the English portion of her news conference concluded Monday, she answered questions in Serbian - and Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Belinda Bencic. Why? "Djokovic, I mean, do I need to say? We all know how great he is," Jovic responded. "And then Belinda, she just takes the ball so early and her footwork is very cutting the angle, so she just makes her opponents feel kind of suffocated. That's what I would like to try to do." Jovic would love the chance to have a conversation with Djokovic, but their lone interaction so far was when she asked if he would mind posing for a photo.

GRAND CHESS TOUR Gukesh holds Caruana; Firouzja consolidates lead



PTI ■ SAINT LOUIS (USA)

Grandmaster D Gukesh played out a hard-fought draw yet again, signing peace with top seed and local favourite Fabiano Caruana, while Frenchman Alireza Firouzja stretched his lead by a full point after the seventh round of Sinquefeld Cup, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour. The other Indian in fray, R Praggnanandhaa, drew his seventh game on the trot to remain on a fifty per cent score. Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia was happy with a quick draw as Praggnanandhaa decided to save his energy. With just two rounds to come, Firouzja, who put it across world champion Ding Liren of China, has five points in his kitty and Caruana continues to trail him a full point behind. As many as five players -- Wesley So of United States, Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa -- share the third spot on 3.5 points each. A half point behind are Liren and Nepomniachtchi while Dutchman Anish Giri is still at the bottom of

the table on 2.5 points. Besides Firouzja's victory, Abdusattorov halted So's party with a clinical performance. In the other game of the day, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave drew with Giri. Gukesh continued with his uncompromising play but found Caruana adequately prepared in an Italian opening game. The Indian was much worse in the ensuing endgame but Caruana missed out on his 39th turn when he could have gotten a real advantage. Exchanges at regular intervals thereafter ensured the draw for the Indian. Praggnanandhaa got nothing as white against Nepomniachtchi's Petroff defense and the Chennai-based player had to be content with repetition of moves very early in the middle game. The game lasted a mere 19 moves. The day belonged to Firouzja, who came up with fine resources in a complicated middle game against Liren. The Italian opening has been doing well for the Frenchman and he knocked down a couple of pawns when Liren erred in the middle game allowing the white to invade his camp. The rest was easy. Results round 7: Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 5) beat Ding Liren (Chn, 3); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3.5) drew with Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fid, 2.5); Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 3.5) beat Wesley So (Usa, 3.5); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 3.5) drew with Anish Giri (Ned, 2.5); Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 4) drew with D Gukesh (Ind, 3.5).

Coco begins her US Open title defense with an easy win after a two-match losing streak

AP ■ NEW YORK



The chant rang out in cavernous Arthur Ashe Stadium at the U.S. Open before Coco Gauff's first service game of her first match of her first Grand Slam tournament as a defending champion: "Here we go, Coco! Here we go!" Coming to Flushing Meadows off a series of early exits at other events, Gauff already was down 1-0 to Varvara Gracheva on Monday, having dropped the match's initial game at love by making four groundstroke errors. What followed was a tough, tight game, featuring 14 points across eight minutes and three break chances for Gracheva. The important part, of course, was that Gauff saved all of those break points, claimed that game, and suddenly was in complete control on the way to a 6-2, 6-0 victory that not only

put the 20-year-old American in the second round but also told her - and everyone else - that her game is in better shape than it appeared lately. "The last couple of weeks were tough, and I was like, I have to do this and do that, but I don't have to prove anything to anyone except myself. So ... (these) two weeks are just about proving all the

expectations that I have on myself," the No. 3-seeded Gauff said. "I have many more years coming back here and I'm not going to win every year. Just that perspective and just having the belief that I can - but not the expectation that I should." Day 1 at the year's last Grand Slam tournament went about as well as possible for Gauff

and another young American featured in Ashe, 13th-seeded Ben Shelton, a semifinalist a year ago who beat 2020 champion Dominic Thiem 6-4, 6-2, 6-2. It was the last U.S. Open match for Thiem, who turns 31 next week and is retiring after this season. "Obviously she plays with a lot of passion," Shelton, 21, said about Gauff. "You could tell that she cares out there. She's into it every time that she's on the court. I think that's something that the people love." Gauff was not the only past U.S. Open champ on Monday's schedule: The night session in Ashe began with 2017 winner Sloane Stephens blowing a huge lead against Clara Burel and losing 0-6, 7-5, 7-5 after taking the first nine games, followed by Novak Djokovic - whose collection of 24 Slam titles includes last year's in New York - against Radu Albot.

India to face West Indies, South Africa in Women's T20 World Cup warm-up matches

PTI ■ DUBAI

India will take on West Indies and South Africa in their two Women's T20 World Cup warm-up fixtures in Dubai, the International Cricket Council announced on Tuesday. India will take on West Indies on September 29 while Harmanpreet Kaur and Co. Are slated to play South Africa on October 1. All 10 teams that have qualified for the Women's T20 World Cup will participate in the practice games, with every side playing two warm-up games each. The warm-up fixtures will start on September 28 with Pakistan taking on Scotland and Sri Lanka facing Bangladesh.

Defending champion Australia will face arch-rival England on September 29, followed by West Indies on October 1 in Dubai. The warm-up fixtures will be 20 overs per side and will not have international T20 status, allowing teams to field all members of their 15-player squad. No two sides who belong to the same group will take on each other in the warm-up round. India has been clubbed in group A alongside Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka while group B comprises England, South Africa, West Indies, Scotland and Bangladesh. The competition, starting October 3, was moved to the

UAE by the ICC following the ongoing political unrest in Bangladesh, the original host. **WARM-UP FIXTURES:** September 28: Pakistan v Scotland (Sevens, Dubai) September 28: Sri Lanka v Bangladesh (ICCA1, Dubai) September 29: New Zealand v South Africa (Sevens, Dubai) September 29: India v West Indies (ICCA2, Dubai) September 29: Australia v England (ICCA1, Dubai) September 30: Sri Lanka v Scotland (Sevens, Dubai) September 30: Bangladesh v Pakistan (ICCA2, Dubai) October 1: West Indies v Australia (Sevens, Dubai) October 1: England v New Zealand (ICCA2, Dubai)

Nigeria hires German coach Bruno in bid to get World Cup qualifying back on track

PTI ■ LAGOS (NIGERIA)

Nigeria hired German coach Bruno Labbadia on Tuesday to lead the men's national soccer team in a bid to get its flagging World Cup qualifying campaign back on track. "The appointment is with immediate effect," said Mohammed Sanusi, the general secretary of the Nigeria Football Federation. The 58-year-old Labbadia has been out of work since April 2023 when he was fired by Stuttgart after failing to arrest its slide to the bottom of the Bundesliga. Nigeria is second from bottom in its 2026 World Cup qualifying group after failing to win any of its opening four

games. The Super Eagles drew 1-1 with both Lesotho and Zimbabwe in November last year before Portuguese coach Jose Peseiro led the team to the final of the Africa Cup of Nations. Nigeria lost the final to the host nation Ivory Coast in February. The NFF promoted Peseiro's assistant, Finedi George, to the top position in April after the Portuguese departed. But, the former right winger was unable to improve the team's fortunes in World Cup qualifying. George oversaw a 1-1 draw with South Africa followed by a 2-1 defeat in Benin in June. George then reportedly resigned after not being told of the NFF's plans to appoint a

technical advisor to oversee his work. The NFF did not publicly acknowledge the resignation. Labbadia only oversaw two wins from his 12 games in charge of Stuttgart during his second stint at the club - one each in the league and German Cup. His successor, Sebastian Hoeneß, ultimately saved Stuttgart from relegation and led the team to a club-record points total last season. Labbadia previously coached Hertha Berlin, Wolfsburg, Hamburger SV, Bayer Leverkusen and Darmstadt. As a goal-scoring forward, he helped Bayern Munich and Kaiserslautern win Bundesliga titles in the 1990s.

Duleep Trophy: Indisposed Siraj ruled out, Jadeja allowed more rest

PTI ■ MUMBAI, AUG 27 (PTI)

Seamer Mohammed Siraj will miss the Duleep Trophy's first round games due to illness while veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has been allowed an extended period of rest by the BCCI's national selection committee, which announced a few changes to the participating squads on Tuesday. The first round of the Duleep Trophy, comprising two matches, will be held from

September 5-8 with India A taking on India B at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru and India C facing off against India D at the Rural Development Trust Stadium A in Ananthapur. Siraj, who was a part of India's last away assignment in Sri Lanka, along with Umran Malik have both been ruled out of the first round games and have been replaced by Navdeep Saini and Gaurav Yadav respectively. "Both Siraj and Malik are



suffering from an illness and are not expected to be fit in time for their Duleep Trophy fixtures," the BCCI informed in a release. "All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has also been released from the Team B squad," the board added. Jadeja was last seen in action in the T20 World Cup final in June against South Africa and was rested from the ODI series in Sri Lanka. The 32-year-old Yadav, who hails from Madhya Pradesh, took 41 wickets in seven

matches for Pondicherry in the last season of Ranji Trophy to finish as the second highest wicket-taker in the country's premier domestic competition. **REVISED SQUADS:** **India A:** Shubman Gill (c), Mayank Agarwal, Riyan Parag, Dhruv Jurel (wk), KL Rahul, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Tanush Kotian, Kuldeep Yadav, Akash Deep, Prasad Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Avesh Khan, Vidwath

Kaverappa, Kumar Kushagra, Shaswat Rawat. **India B:** Abhimanyu Easwaran (c), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (wk), Musheer Khan, Nitish Kumar Reddy*, Washington Sundar, Navdeep Saini, Yash Dayal, Mukesh Kumar, Rahul Chahar, R Sai Kishore, Mohit Awasthi, N Jagadeesan (wk). **India C:** Ruturaj Gaikwad (c), Sai Sudharsan, Rajat Patidar, Abishek Porel (wk), Suryakumar Yadav, B Indrajith, Hrithik Shokeen,

Manav Suthar, Gaurav Yadav, Vyshak Vijaykumar, Anshul Khambhoj, Himanshu Chauhan, Mayank Markande, Aryan Juyal (wk), Sandeep Warrier. **India D:** Shreyas Iyer (c), Atharva Taide, Yash Dubey, Devdutt Padikkal, Ishan Kishan (wk), Ricky Bhui, Saransh Jain, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Aditya Thakare, Harshit Rana, Tushar Deshpande, Akash Sengupta, KS Bharat (wk), Saurabh Kumar.

HOPEFULLY, WE WILL BREAK FINAL BARRIER IN T20 WC: HARMANPREET

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur remained optimistic that India can grab their maiden global title in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup, and said conditions in the UAE could work to their advantage. The International Cricket Council has recently shifted the showpiece, to be held between October 3 and 20, to the UAE from Bangladesh owing to the political unrest in the latter nation. "Whenever we play on this kind of stage (World Cup), we always want to do well. We have always done well in the past as well, and hopefully, this time we will break that final barrier and go all the way," Harmanpreet told PTI videos. Harmanpreet was on Tuesday appointed as the captain of the Indian team for the T20 World Cup. The 35-year-old did not read too much into the venue shift, and said the conditions in the UAE are quite similar to India. "We have not played much cricket in the UAE. But the conditions in the UAE are going to be similar to Indian conditions."



"We will see how the conditions play out (there) and try to adjust ourselves to the conditions as soon as possible," said Harmanpreet, who led India to the final of the 2020 T20 World Cup. Irrespective of the playing conditions, she wanted the team to dish out a "positive" game in the World Cup. "As a team, we learn from our defeats and break those barriers that are pushing us back. Hopefully this time we can express ourselves in a more positive way in the World Cup," she said. Harmanpreet also backed the Indian bowlers, who floundered in the recent Asia Cup final against Sri Lanka, to deliver in the World Cup. "The bowlers are working really hard as a team and, hopefully, in this World Cup we tick all the boxes." Harmanpreet, who led Mumbai Indians to WPL victory last year, said the key to winning the World Cup will be to keep themselves in the present. "It is always important for us to play good cricket, keeping ourselves in the present. Whatever the situation is in front of us...we go there and evaluate (it) as soon as possible," she signed off.



Jeev, Jyoti among Indian stars to compete in country's inaugural Legends Tour

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Indian golfing greats Jeev Milkha Singh and Jyoti Randhawa will be among 64 international players vying for top honours in the inaugural HSBC India Legends Championships to be played at Jaypee Greens course at Greater Noida from August 30 to September 1. The first Legends Tour tournament in the country, which will have USD 0.5 million as prize purse, will also see 2005 US Open champion Michael Campbell of New Zealand in action. The winner of the HSBC India Legends Championship is set to take home USD 74,250, while the runner-up will receive USD 49,000. The third-place finisher will pocket USD 32,700. The event will be played over 54 holes and it will be preceded by a star-studded Pro-Am event on August 28 and 29, which will see top golfers play alongside amateurs. The Legends Tour is a professional golf tour for male golfers aged 50 and over, run by the PGA European Tour. It began as European Senior Tour in 1992 and was rechristened as Legends Tour in 2020. Jeev is the host of the tournament, co-sanctioned by the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI). The event will see a participation from 17 countries. Randhawa qualified after winning the Legends Tour's tough and challenging Qualifying School finals in Turkey. "Since I am the host, I will ensure that I don't win the tournament this weekend," the 52-year-old Jeev joked at the press conference to launch the tournament. "It's great for the country's golfers and for world golf in general. Golfing career is over when you are 40 or 45. But with the Legends Tour, you can have a second innings after reaching 50 years." "Now, you can play golf as a career till 60." Randhawa, also 52, said not only the money, a golfer can also maintain the competitive spirit by continuing to play in the Legends Tour. "It's good for the budding Indian golfers and amateurs. They will now know that a golfer can play another 10 years after retirement," he said. "By playing in the Legends Tour, you are keeping your golfing passion and competitive spirit intact as well as keeping yourself fit." Jeev (twice Asia No. 1 in 2006 and 2008) and Randhawa (once Asia No. 1 in 2002) are well-known names around the world with numerous appearances in Majors too. Jeev has won four times each on the European and Japan Tours, one on the Korean Tour besides six times on the Asian Tour. Randhawa has won eight times on the Asian Tour and once in Japan. Jeev, who has played all four Majors, was the first Indian to tee up at the Masters at the Augusta National in 2007. He was a former captain of Asia in EurAsia Cup (Europe vs Asia team event). He has five top 10 finishes on the Legends Tour since 2022. Besides Jeev and Randhawa, there are other seven Indians in the fray. They are Mukesh Kumar, Digvijay Singh, Harmeet Kahlon, Vijay Kumar, all past winners on the Asian Tour, Amandeep Johl, Vishal Singh and Sanjay Kumar. The 55-year-old Campbell, who has also won 15 other tournaments around the world, said, "I started playing golf when I was 10. My grandmother told me that time when I achieve success, I should remember I have two hands, one for receiving and another for giving back," he said. "Legends Tour is great in that way. You keep playing after retirement and inspire youngsters to take up the game. We have to give back to the game."

US OPEN

Djokovic starts his bid for record 25th Grand Slam title with straight-set win

AP ■ NEW YORK
Novak Djokovic began his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam title and tied Roger Federer with his 89th match win at the U.S. Open by defeating qualifier Radu Albot of Moldova 6-2, 6-2, 6-4. The second-seeded Djokovic, again wearing a gray sleeve over his surgically repaired right knee, was competing for the first time since claiming an Olympic gold medal three weeks ago at the Paris Games, the last significant achievement that was missing from his resume. "It's always challenging to start, particularly when you haven't played on this surface for five, six months,

and coming off an Olympic gold and playing on clay. I haven't had any official matches before the U.S. Open. So I'm expecting to be probably challenged a little bit more in the opening rounds," he said. "Hopefully, I can play better each day." He said his knee, which was operated on in early June, feels fine. Djokovic, a 37-year-old from Serbia, improved to 18-0 in first-round matches at Flushing Meadows and is now 89-13 overall at the hard-court tournament, which he's won four times, including a year ago. He's never lost earlier than the third round at the U.S. Open; Albot never has been past the third round in 30 appearances at majors.



The retired Federer went 89-14 in New York, with five consecutive championships from 2004 to 2008. He's the most recent man to win the U.S. Open at least twice in a row. Among men, only Jimmy Connors, who went 98-17, won more matches than Djokovic and Federer at the event. Djokovic never has lost a Grand Slam match to someone ranked as low as No. 138 Albot. And Albot is now 0-12 against opponents ranked in the top 10. Next up for Djokovic is a countryman, familiar opponent and friend, Laslo Djere, who advanced with a 6-7 (7), 6-1, 6-7 (7), 6-4, 6-2 victory over Jan-Lennard Struff. A year ago, Djokovic

met Djere in the third round at the U.S. Open; Djere took the first two sets before Djokovic came through in five. "It's a guaranteed third round for one of the Serbian guys. Hopefully it's going to be me. But Djere is a guy that really likes playing on a big stage. I think he also loves the conditions here. It's a bit quicker. Ball stays low. He has a very flat backhand particularly and very good serve, great return. He's physically as fit as anybody," Djokovic said. "I remember very well our match. It was a very tough match. I'm going to try to analyze that and hopefully do some things even better than I did last year."

New Champions League format promises more

AP ■ GENEVA
The new Champions League format this season will see more teams playing more games for more prize money. On Thursday, the Union of European Football Associations makes the draw in Monaco for the match schedule of the new single-standings league phase that replaces the traditional group stage. The first new Champions League format since 2003 promises more of almost everything that Europe's wealthiest and most influential clubs wanted from UEFA. There are four more places in a 36-team lineup; at least eight games each instead of six; Champions League games scheduled in January for the first time; a prize money rise of at least 25% to a minimum of 2.5 billion euros (USD 2.8 billion). There also was more evidence, at UEFA's European Championship this summer, that constant expansion of international competitions is leaving players tired and unable to perform at their best year-round. The new league phase in European club soccer's marquee event will have 144 total games compared to 96 in the group stage last season. The "key aims," UEFA said, is to "improve competitive balance and sporting interest and in the process increase the number of meaningful matches - matches with



something at stake for both sides - throughout the competition." In the eighth and final round, all 36 teams play on the same January 29 evening to finalize the standings which will decide which eight teams advance directly to the pre-quarterfinals - and with what seedings in a tennis-like knockout bracket - as well as which 16 go into a new knockout playoff round in February, and which 12 are eliminated. "We simulated that qualification should be possible with an average of 7.6 points, which means two victories and two draws," said UEFA's head of competitions strategy, Stéphane Anselmo.

Money, mostly, though that's not the only reason. The Champions League in Europe has for the past 32 years showcased the highest quality play in world soccer. It let UEFA steer billions of euros (dollars) of prize money to clubs that pay the highest transfer fees and salaries. Still, influential officials at the European Club Association (ECA) got bored of the group stage, saying it was too repetitive and lacked drama. They wanted more games against stronger opponents that would be more valued by broadcasters, viewers and new fans worldwide. Their leverage over UEFA was potentially launching their breakthrough competition. The road to agreeing on the format was rocky. A controversial first proposal in

2019, favoring storied clubs, was stopped by a backlash from mid-ranked clubs and domestic leagues. There was intense turmoil sparked by the failed Super League launch in April 2021 by most of the same club officials who negotiated Champions League reform with UEFA. Final format approval came in May 2022 - when Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus were exciled from the talks and still pursued UEFA in court - and it was broadly what the rebel Super League clubs had negotiated. **What is the new format?** Out goes the group-stage format played for 21 seasons where 32 teams were put into eight groups of four teams from a seeded draw. The top two in each group advanced to the pre-quarterfinals. Groups gave each team six games from September into December, playing each rival once at home and once away. In comes a single-standings league - 36 teams each playing eight games against eight different opponents through January. The top eight in the standings go directly to the pre-quarterfinals in March. Teams ranked ninth to 24th go into the knockout playoffs in February. The bottom 12 teams are eliminated. In the playoffs, teams ranked Nos. 9-16 are seeded in the draw to play second legs at home against unseeded teams Nos. 17-24.

Who gets the four extra places? Two for countries whose teams collectively had the best record in UEFA club competitions in the previous season. That was Italy and Germany so the fifth-placed teams in Serie A and the Bundesliga qualified: Bologna and Borussia Dortmund. The fifth-ranked national league (based on five years of results in UEFA club competitions) gets a third direct entry. That is currently France and Brest was third in Ligue 1. An extra place goes to the qualifying rounds path for national champions from lower-ranked countries. They now play for five total qualifying places instead of four last season. **How will the draw be done?** The 36 teams come out of four seeding pots graded by each team's "UEFA club coefficient" - its ranking by results in five years of European competitions. The top-seeded pot contains recent Champions League winners and beaten finalists, plus Leipzig and Barcelona. When a team's ball is drawn, its slate of eight opponents - two from each seeding pot, one to play at home and one away - will be allocated by a software program and displayed within seconds. Match dates will be confirmed Saturday, to avoid city clashes with Europa League and Conference League games

being drawn Friday in Monaco. Those lower-tier competitions also are a 36-team single-standings league. Conference League teams play just six games.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I AMLAN GOURAV MOHAPATRA S/O ASHOK KUMAR MOHAPATRA R/O Tulasi Vatika Mathasahi Tulasipur Cuttack Sadar Odisha-753008 changed my name to ADI RATAN. PD(708)A

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Invitation for Bids

Bid Identification No. 230 /EE-TPS/BDA/2024-25 Date: 23.08.2024
Executive Engineer, TP Scheme, BDA on behalf of Bhubaneswar Development Authority, Bhubaneswar invites percentage rate bids in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for civil works as mentioned below:

1. Nature of works	: Civil Work
2. Total No. of works	: 01 (One) No.
3. Amount put to tender	: Rs. 13.80 Lakh
4. Class of Contractor	: 'D' & 'C' Class
5. Period of Completion	: 1 (One) Calendar months
6. Cost of Bid Documents	: Rs. 8000.00 + 18% GST (Online transfer by the last date & time for receipt of bids)
7. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	: 1% of estimated cost put to tender. (Online transfer by the last date & time for receipt of bids)
8. Availability of Tender	: From 27.08.2024 to 5.00 PM of https://tendersodisha.gov.in/
9. Date of opening of Tender	: DL.09.09.2024 at 11.30 AM
10. Place of opening of Tender	: Olo - Executive Engineer, TP Scheme, BDA, Bhubaneswar.

Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in/>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. Executive Engineer TP Scheme, BDA
OIPR-19333/11/0122/2425

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, RANPUR
P.R & D.W. DEPARTMENT
Tender call Notice
E-mail-ori-ranpur@nic.in
Tender Call Notice No. online 01/2024-25
Letter no: Dated: 22.08.2024
Bid Identification No. B.D.O., Ranpur-Online 01/2024-25

The Block Development Officer, Ranpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bids in SINGLE COVER SYSTEM in ONLINE MODE for eligible contractors for construction of Building works as detailed in the table below:

1. Nature of Work	: Building Works.
2. No of Work	: 6 Nos
3. Tender Cost & EMD	: As mentioned in DTCN
4. Class of Contractor	: As mentioned in DTCN
5. Available Bid Document in	: From DL.27.08.2024, 11.00 AM DL.09.09.2024 the Website up to 5.00 P.M
6. Date of opening of Bid	: DL.10.09.2024 at 11.00 AM
7. The have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website: https://tenderodisha.gov.in/ . Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.	

Sd/-
Block Development Officer Ranpur

OIPR-19124/11/0001/2425