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OPINION 6 HOW MEDIA SHAPES PUBLIC PERCEPTION

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MONEY 10

BHUBANESWAR, FRIDAY AUGUST 30, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹4

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Jammu or Kashmir, India will not spare Pakistani terrorists



A security personnel keeps vigil during pre-dawn cordon and search operation after reports of suspicious movement, leading to ar exchange of fire, in Rajouri district, on Thursday

MOHIT KANDHARI JAMMU

 $A_{\rm momentum\ across\ different}^{s\ electioneering\ gains}$ parts of Jammu and Kashmir in the run-up to the first round of polling on September 18, the terrorist handlers sitting across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan are hell-bent on disturbing the peaceful conduct of Assembly polls, being held after a

gap of 10 long years. On Thursday, the troops of the Indian army eliminated at least three terrorists while they were attempting to infiltrate inside the

the frontier district of Kupwara. These terrorists were gunned down by the alert troops in two separate anti-infiltration operations along the line of control in the Machhal and

Tangdhar sectors of Kupwara.

This is the second major incident involving terrorists after the announcement of the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir on August 16.

On August 19, a heavily armed group of Pakistani terrorists targeted an area domination patrol party comprising jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force Indian territory along the LoC in (CRPF) and Special Operations

Group of Jammu Kashmir Police (JKP) in the remote Duddu Basantgarh area of Udhampur in which one Inspector-rank CRPF officer sacrificed his life in the line of duty

Official sources said troops deployed along the LoC in the anti-infiltration grid could pick up the movement of the terrorists and neutralised them before they could breach the Anti-Infiltration Obstacle system (AIOS).

Meanwhile, efforts are being made to create a conducive atmosphere troops were still carrying out the for holding of election. The Centre has already rushed the presadditional companies of para-infiltrators.

ground zero to instill confidence among the voters.

During the recently held Lok Sabha polls the Union Territory witnessed over 58 per cent voter turnout across five Parliamentary constituencies. The Election Commission of India is aiming to further improve the voter percentage turnout during the Assembly polls.

In the Jammu region, security forces had also established initial contact with a group of foreign terrorists in the Kheri Mohra Lathi & Danthal areas under the jurisdiction of Budhal police station, Rajouri, past midnight. After a brief exchange of firing as the security forces rushed additional troops to cordon the area the terrorists, taking advantage of the inclement weather, may have fled the area. Residents in the area also claimed heavy firing in the Lathi area of Khwas around midnight. In Srinagar, Chinar Corps while confirming the killing of two terrorists in the Machhal sector of Kupwara posted on X, "Two terrorists have been eliminated in the ongoing anti-infiltration operation in general area Machhal, Kupwara. Two AK-47 Rifles, one Pistol, four Hand Grenades, and other war-like stores were recovered". The searches in the area to rule out the presence of more





Delhi drowns, yet again

SAUMYA SHUKLA NEW DELHI

Incessant rain since Wednesday midnight in Delhi and its neighbouring areas led to a complete collapse of city's drainage infrastructure causing severe waterlogging and traffic congestions in many parts of the national Capital.

There were reports of tree falling and power outages in several areas. According to reports from civic agencies, most of the low-lying areas underpasses were inundated with rainwater. Visuals showed vehicles struggling to negotiate heavily waterlogged roads and pedestrians wading through ankle to knee-deep water on most roads, with underpasses almost completely submerged. There was also the risk of an overflow of sewers in many

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) received a total of 34 calls regarding waterlogging and tree falling from different parts of the city in 12 hours till 6 pm. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the Safdarjung (IMD), Observatory, the city's primary weather station, recorded 77 mm of rainfall bringing the total rainfall for the monsoon season to 825.5 mm. This figure has already exceeded Delhi's annual

average rainfall of 762.3 mm. According to Mahesh Palawat of Skymet Weather Services, Delhi's annual average rainfall is 762.3 mm and the city has already received 825.5 mm so far. August has seen unprecedented rainfall as the number of rainy days shot up to 25 which is the highest number of rainy days reported for the month in the last 13 years, according to IMD record from 2011 to 2024.

There were 22 rainy days reported in August 2012, which is the second-highest mark in this period. Moreover, the month received

378.5 mm of rainfall, the city's highest in 12 years, according to the IMD, surpassing the previous high of 321.4 mm recorded in August 2013.

Gujarat flooded with merciless rains

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The situation in rain-battered Gujarat improved slightly on Thursday as the rainfall activity subsided, but Vadodara and some other parts of the State are still reeling under a flood-like situation due to overflowing rivers while the authorities continue the rescue and relief operations.

Rain-related incidents have claimed the lives of 26 people in three days till Wednesday, the authorities said earlier. More than 18,000 people have been relocated and around 1,200 people rescued from flood-affected areas in the state. In some cases, choppers were used by the security forces to take people to safer locations, State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) said in its latest update.

Vadodara, the worst-hit city due to recent downpour, heaved a sigh of relief as the water level of Vishwamitri river has come down from 37 feet to 32 feet in the morning. However, several low-lying areas are still inundated.

The river had crossed the danger mark of 25 feet on Tuesday morning following heavy rains and the release of water from Ajwa dam. In a post on X, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said, "Gujarat has been receiving incessant rains for the last three days. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called me up today on the second straight day and inquired about the situation. Modi spoke to Patel for the second consecutive day and took stock of the situation.

He also asked the CM to ensure that proper steps are taken to prevent the spread of diseases post floods.

Me Too travels from Kerala to Tamil Nadu

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN KOCHI

The MeToo controversy rocking the Malayalam film industry is set to spread over to Tamil Nadu. Vishal Reddy, popularly known as Vishal to fans, said on ay that the would start surfacing in the coming days. "This is not a phenomenon confined to Malavalam films alone. We have many skeletons in the cupboard which will tumble out soon," said Vishal in a brief interaction with media persons at Chennai. Vishal is the president of Tamil Film Producers Council.

Meanwhile, Siddique, veteran Malayalam actor who had to quit as general secretary of Association of Malavalam Movie Artists following allegations by some actresses that they were harassed by him, was in for a shock on Thursday as an young actress filed a complaint against him Thiruvaanthapuram Police for rape and physical assault.

"The incident took place in 2016 after the preview show of a Malayalam film. After the show was over Siddique asked me to accompany him to Mascot Hotel owned by State Tourism Development Corporation where he sexually abused and



assaulted me," said the actress in her complaint.

The police inspected the hotel and reportedly found that the actress and Siddique had stayed in the hotel on the day mentioned in the complaint. If proved correct, Siddique would imprisonment for seven years. Actor and the CPI(M) MLA Mukesh got a reprieve from the Ernakulam District and Sessions Judge who asked the cops not to arrest the actor till September 3. Mukesh had approached the court on Thursday morning claiming that the allegations were baseless and have been made with ulterior motives. CPI(M)'s Kerala leadership announced that there was no need for Mukesh to resign as the MLA.

"This is a mere charge and it

is for the police and court to prove the authenticity of the allegation. There were many serious allegations of rape and assault against Congress party leaders in the past and none of them had resigned. Why you are singling out Mukesh?" asked E P Jayarajan, convener, Left Democratic Front and one of the CPI(M)'s top leaders in Kerala.

CPI(M) ideologue MA Baby with interests in Malayalam film industry supported Mukesh on Thursday and other artists involved in the

Marxist leadership pointed out that Congress MLA Eldhose Kunnappillil had raped a schoolteacher in the capital city and had gone underground for weeks to evade arrest.

SAUGAR SENGUPTA KOLKATA Police that the place of The parents of the victim lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College Hospital rejected the claims of the

Kolkata Police that the portions of the seminar hall where the body of the said doctor was allegedly found in a semi-nude condition had been that the outsiders were not allowed to go near the place occurrence.

The lady doctor was allegedly raped and murdered in the early hours of August 9. "First of all we deny and reject

the claim made by the Kolkata

occurrence had been safely cordoned off because when we reached the place we found no such cordon," said parents of the doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered in the night of August 8, adding, "not only we were kept waiting for more than three hours before we could but also when we reached there we were told by the staff at that hospital that authorities were inspecting the area before which we could not be let in.

The mother of the victim said, "They kept us, the parents of



Womens participate in a rally to protest against the alleged rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor, in Kolkata, on Thursday

the only child who was dead, waiting for three hours but they allowed outsiders to vitiate the area leading to

Kolkata horror gets murkier

destruction of evidence... now we wonder what is left for the CBI to find on the sport that could shed light on the crime.

bed sheet that was used to victim's complaining how "the sheet was changed thrice."

The parents also referred to the

The mother of the victim doctor said, "My daughter had a red chaadar with her... which was changed to blue and then green... these three kinds of sheets were on her on three example of destruction of evidence... if it is now then what is.'

Meanwhile the audio tape of the telephone call that went to the victim's family for the first time from the hospital on August nine went viral

Rs 15 cr spent on Pandian's the CM said, "The previous Meanwhile, questions are

'BJD govt used total Rs 452 cr from exchequer for advertisements'

BHUBANESWAR

he previous BJD government spent Rs 15.26 crore from the State exchequer to use former 5T Secretary VK Pandian's pictures in various advertisements, informed Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in the State Assembly on Thursday.

Responding to a question from BJP MLA Laxaman Bag, BJD government spent Rs 452.96 crore from the State exchequer for advertisements in the last five years including Rs 15.26 crore to use photos of VK Pandian in the ads."

According to sources, the money was spent by the various departments of the government to use Pandian's photos in the ads.

While Rs 15.26 core was spent on print media ads for promoting Pandian, details about the expenses on electronic and digital media ads are yet to be known.

being raised about how and under whose directive such a huge amount of money was used for the promotion of a Secretary-level officer. Besides, it is also believed that the BJP may also launch an investigation into the expenses of the erstwhile BJD government in promoting Pandian through the ads. Earlier, the BJP government had also assured an

his chopper rides.

investigation into Pandian's whirlwind tours across Odisha after RTI query revealed that crores of rupees was spent on

Supreme Court reprimands Telengana CM

PNS NEW DELHI

Trked over Telangana Chief **▲**Minister A Revanth Reddy's comments towards alleged deal between the BJP and the BRS for securing bail for BRS leader K Kavitha in cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, the Supreme Court on Thursday reprimanded him, saying such statements might create apprehensions in minds of people. The top court asked why should they (politicians) drag the court in political rivalry?".
The reprimand came as a

three-judge bench of Justices

KV Viswanathan was hearing a plea seeking transfer of the 2015 cash-for-votes case against the Chief Minister to Madhya Pradesh. The petitioners argued he could influence witnesses and tamper with evidence. "Have you read in the

newspaper what he said? Just

read what he has stated.

What sort of statement is this

BR Gavai, PK Mishra, and

by a responsible chief minister. That might rightly create

apprehension in the minds of people. Is this a kind of statement which should be made by a chief minister.

What steps taken to reduce snakebite deaths?

NHRC seeks report from Odisha CS RAJESH BEHERA BHUBANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the Odish Chief Secretary to submit a detailed report regarding the steps being taken by the government to reduce deaths of people due to snakebites in the State.

The NHRC has also sought Action-Taken Reports (ATRs) from the district

Keonjhar to ensure the needful action on the incidents mentioned in a petition. The commission sought the reports from the authorities within eight weeks. The commission passed

Collectors of Subarnapur and

the order taking cognisance of the petition filed by advocate and human rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy.

The petitioner has quoted various incidents of snakebite reported in

schools, Anganwadi Centres,

residential homes and failure

hospitals, police stations,

of the State Government to ensure safety and security at public places, including the government offices. The petition mentioned

an incident of snakebite in a Sub-Divisional Hospital at Anandapur in Keonjhar district, where a person identified as Baju Champiya (23) was sleeping in the verandah of the hospital due to non-availability of bed and was bitten by a snake in

the hospital itself. The petition cited another incident that took place at the Birmaharajpur police

station in Subarnapur district

on June 24, 2024 when one Goura Kumbhar died due to Raising several unattended

issues with regard to snakebites, Tripathy contended that due to failure and negligence of the government more than 7,000 people died in last eight years in the State due to snakebites. The NHRC also sought to

know whether the monetary relief is being provided in a time-bound manner to the families of the deceased and whether snake venom is available in all the hospitals.

BJD members demand debate on dev works in blocks Assembly adjourned

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Opposition BJD members on Thursday disrupted proceedings in the Odisha Assembly demanding a debate on their Adjournment Motion regarding developmental works in the blocks.

and obstructed business dur-

ing Zero Hour in protest

Speaker Surama Padhy had to adjourn the House until 4 pm after the agitated BJD members stormed the Well of the House, shouted slogans,

against her decision to reject their adjournment notice. BID members Arun Sahoo

and Ganeswar Behera raised the issue, stating that despite their repeated demands for a discussion on the matter, the Speaker had consistently refused to accept their notice. They alleged that develop-

mental works in all 314 blocks of the State have come to a halt over the past two

ficials to cease all develop-

mental activities in the

Sahoo said it appears that the government has issued an unwritten directive to ofdiscussion on the issue through an adjournment The BJD members argued

blocks, and he called for a

that in the interest of people, the Speaker should accept the mit a discussion.

adjournment notice and per-When the Speaker declined to concede to their demand, they shouted slo-

gans, rushed to the Well and attempted to approach the Speaker's podium. Speaker Padhi explained her refusal, stating that the notice did not pertain to a

specific recent incident and

She urged the BJD members to return to their seats. Parliamentary Affairs

was not considered urgent.

Minister Mukesh Mahaling supported the Speaker's decision, emphasising that her judgment on whether to allow an issue for discussion is final. He called upon all members to respect the chair and participate in the proceedings. Despite the Speaker's appeal

for cooperation, the BJD members continued their protest in the Well, forcing another adjournment of the House at 12:10 pm until 4 pm.

BJP govt to provide lands to landless patta holders soon

Assures Minister Pujari

Land pattas have been provided to the landless persons in Odisha during the tenure of the previous BJD government. However, the beneficiaries have not yet been provided lands, informed Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari in the Assembly on Thursday.

BHUBANESWAR

"The previous government distributed land pattas like leaflets. However, the process that should have been initiated

A Plus Two student alleg-

edly hacked to death a man

after the latter objected to his

one-sided love in the

Bhubaneswar on Wednesday.

headed his crush's uncle with a

sword while the latter was re-

turning home by a motorbike.

from Suka Vihar area near

Jagannath Nagar under the

Khandagiri police station. The

deceased was identified as Jaga

According to sources, the

accused was infatuated with

the victim's niece. Despite

warnings to mend his ways,

the student refused to let go

The incident was reported

The accused minor be-

area

In city

Khandigiri

Mallick.



to provide them lands was not carried out. The files in this regard were not opened and nothing has been done to identify the persons to whom land pattas were distributed. No process was initiated to provide them lands," said Pujari.

"In some cases, father was provided land patta. How-

of his one-sided love affair and

In a pre-planned manner, he

was waiting for Jaga in a se-

cluded place with a sword at

around 12 am. Jaga was re-

turning home when the ac-

cused, who was hiding with the

Jaga died on the spot while

the accused was on the run.

The Khandagiri police rushed

to the spot and sent the body

After a manhunt, the ac-

cused was detained for inter-

rogation. A probe is on to find

out if he is indeed a minor or

not. "We are checking his edu-

cational qualifications and

looking for the date of birth

proof to confirm if his age,'

sword, beheaded him.

for postmortem.

decided to eliminate Jaga.

vided land despite having possession of the land patta," he

The Minister assured that the BJP government has already started a process to provide lands to the persons to whom land pattas have been distributed.

"Our government has

started a survey to identify the persons to whom land pattas have been distributed. They will be identified and lands will be provided to them soon. The matter will be solved within five years," said Pujari.



 $F_{
m ake\ doctor\ menace\ seems}$ to have gripped the capital city. Close on the heels of the arrest of a self-styled HIV, cancer and skin specialist doctor in Laxmisagar, another person was found selling fake medicines in Bhubaneswar on Thursday.

The person from West Bengal was selling Ayurvedic medicines at Suka Vihar area near Khandagiri. He was claiming to have medicines for diabetes, gastric, body aches and many other diseases.

"My owner is a doctor in West Bengal. I have been selling these medicines for the last two years. I used to sell



medicines worth around Rs 700 on a daily basis. The medicines are working very well for different kinds of diseases and we have received no complaints from anybody till now. Several people have been cured of different kinds of diseases by using these medicines. But I don't know about the com-

position of the medicines," said the medicine seller.

After being confronted by locals, the person fled from the

"Fake doctors are duping people. The government should take stringent measures against them," said a local resi-

INBRIEF

CM declares Nuakhai holiday on Sept 9

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has announced September 9 as a holiday on account of the Nua Khai festival. Notably, Nua Khai is scheduled to be held on September 8, but as it is a Sunday, September 9 will also be considered as a holiday. On this day, all government offices and executive magisterial courts as well as all educational institutions will remain closed.

Naveen Jindal meets CM Majhi

Bhubaneswar: Jindal Steel & Power chairman and MP Naveen Jindal paid a courtesy call on Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at the Lokseva Bhawan here on Thursday. The CM promised all necessary assistance for the company's ongoing



and future projects in Odisha. He proposed to Jindal for construction of a world-class stadium at Angul for promotion of budding sportspersons.

NALCO receives Biju Sports Award

Bhubaneswar: The NALCO has been conferred with the Biju Patnaik Sports Award for the year 2023 for best contribution to the promotion of sports and games. NALCO CMD Sridhar Patra



received the award from Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at a function here on the occasion of National Sports Day.

Baby female elephant's body found

Athagarh: A dead body of a baby female elephant of about nine months old was spotted by forest watchers near a pond in the Baniabandha Reserve Forest under the Khuntuni Range area of Athagarh Forest Division on Thursday. From



the circumstantial situation, Khuntuni Range Officer Nilamadhaba Sahu viewed that the elephant could have died in septicemia. The real cause will be revealed after the viscera

Dabur joins hands with BSF to promote herb cultivation

Bhubaneswar: Ayurveda major Dabur India Limited has joined hands with the Border Security Force (BSF) for a transformative



and biodiversity conservation. Around 1.2 lakh medicinal plants and herbs would be planted in nine BSF campuses across seven States of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal.

plantation project aimed at promoting ecological restoration

Quota in MBBS, Engg courses admission 38.75% for SC-ST, 27% for OBC-SEBC sought

MLA Kadam seeks Guv's intervention

BHUBANESWAR

Congress Legislature Party Leader Rama Chandra Kadam has flagged concerns over the denial of adequate reservation in admission to MBBS and Engineering courses to SC, ST and OBC students in the State, though the SCs, STs and OBCs constitute 94% of the population of Odisha.

In a letter to Governor Raghubar Das, Kadam sought the former's intervention seeking to halt the ongoing MBBS admissions counseling that began on August 20 and the

In Sambalpur

Landakot Reserve Forest un-

der Rairakhol Forest Division

in Sambalpur district on Tues-

The accused were identified

as Jay Mahananda, Prafulla

Barla and Kumar Topno. The

forest officials also seized the

leopard skin and leopard meat

besides one country made gun,



commence from August 29, till 38.75% reservation for SC-ST and 27% for OBC-SEBC students is implemented in the State. Citing that 254 SC-ST students and 367 OBC students will be prevented from pursuing medical education in

2024-25 session, Kadam said

that this is a sheer injustice to

these students.

The Congress MLA said that while in employment, the reservation stands at 22.5% for STs, 16.25% for SCs, and 11.25% for OBCs, in higher education, particularly in technical courses such as MBBS and Engineering, STs receive only 12%, SCs 8%, and OBCs have no reservation at all

"The Department of Higher Education, through its circular No. 11710 dated June 1, 2015, mandated 22.5% reservation for STs and 16.25% for SCs. Unfortunately, this directive has not been fully implemented, and ST students continue to receive 12% and SC only 8% reservation in practice," stated Kadam.

In city 4-year-old girl raped by neighbour

Jilted minor lover

beheads crush's uncle

Accused detained BHUBANESWAR

In a deeply-shocking incident, a four-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour in a slum under the Airport police station in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday.

The accused called the girl on the pretext of giving her chocolates and allegedly committed the heinous crime, re-

The victim was rescued and admitted to a hospital. The Airfield police have detained the accused youth for interrogation.

police said.

The matter came to the fore after the girl's parents lodged a complaint with the Airport police.

In the evening, the girl was playing near her house when the accused called her on the pretext of giving her a chocolate. He then took her to his house, where he resides alone, and allegedly outraged her modesty. He then left her after giving more chocolates. The girl returned home and told the matter to her parents, police

3 poachers caught cooking leopard meat NIMAI CHARAN SAHU village. During the raid at Topno's house, the officials re-SAMBALPUR Forest officials caught three poachers red-handed while they were de-skinning and cooking leopard meat at Hiraloi village near the

five lead bullets, sharp objects and few other wildlife articles

from their possession. Acting on reliable information, a forest team on the direction of Rairakhol DFO Arvind Mohanty raided the houses of accused in Hiraloi covered the leopard skin, meat besides weapon and nabbed the three accused. The DFO said, "The leopard must have been killed before a

day. It was aged about 10 years. The poachers had already deskinned it when the team reached there and were cooking the meat. There are more people involved in this crime and efforts are on to nab them. Further investigation is also underway. The leopard skin is currently with us and we will send it to WII, Dehradun for examination."

SC judgement

Odisha to gain as States now can impose tax on minerals

nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme court in a 8-1 majority verdict on July 25, 2024 and in its followup ruling on August 14 recognized the rights of States to impose tax on minerals and mineral bearing land. Now the States can collect tax with retrospective effect from April 1,2005 and it is to be collected in installments within 12 years from April 1, 2026.

This is a historic decision in strengthening resource federalism which will boost the development of mineral bearing States, many of which are also otherwise known as backward like Odisha and Jharkhand.

The issues of legislative power of the States over minerals, mineral bearing land and mining activities have been raised many times by a number of States such as TamilNadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and Bihar, before the State High Courts ,and apex court and also before commissions on inter-state relations and mining, like Justice Sarkaria Commission 1983 and Anwar Huda Committee 2006 and finally in Par-



MANAS JENA

liament also. But it has been purposefully ignored by pressure of private mining lobbies and PSUs owned by the Central Government.

While land is a State subject, the minerals and mineral bearing land were being taken away under the plea of MMDR Act 1957 with just some royalty given to the States. The royalty was also fixed irregularly by the the Union Government which deprived States of their due share over

The judgement has overruled an established notion for the last 35 years that came out in case of Indian Cement v State of Tamilnadu that rovalty is tax. The judgement authored by the Chief Justice has very well clarified the fundamental difference between royalty and tax while recognizing the legislative power of the States under 7th schedule.

Odisha being a mineral bearing State has been substantially contributing to national growth while bearing all kinds of backlog effect of mining and mineral based industries but in return it has had no power to impose cess even for environment and developmental works. The mining companies used to be major beneficiaries of all kinds of available public infrastructure such as roads, railway line, sea port, electricity, water and other public utilities. Odisha's coal and thermal power plants are major source of energy for many States as well as its strategic mineral has been used for national growth and largely beneficial to private companies such as TATA and Birla for a long time.

non-metal, 10 metallic, 3 atomic and 55 minor minerals) produced in India ,Odisha has 58 varieties of major and 22 varieties of minor mineral deposits. In terms of share in national reserves, and production eral resources have been exploited without giving due share to the State and its locals in mineral bearing ar-

The freight policy of the Union Government in post-independence

SOCIAL CANVAS

of minerals, Odisha occupies a major share and contributes to the domestic needs and exports of India. Odisha has a natural advantage of foremost deposits of strategic major minerals, such as 98 per cent of chrome ore, 60 percent of bauxite and almost one third of coal and iron ore in the country. In 2021-22, the State has the highest share in the mineral production of the country among 19 States, contributing 45 percent of total production.

Mining activities date back to 1875 in Odisha when the first coal mining was started at Talcher. Mining activities took a giant leap in the Odisha is rich in minerals. Out of nineties with mechanization and lib-

period was not favorable for mineral-bearing States such as Odisha to set up mineral-based industries and make end-use of products here to generate employment and income. Rather, it was encouraged to sell out the minerals outside. As a result of which, odisha's minerals were used as raw materials for industrialization outside. It was told by the Prime Minister in 2014 that there would be a sunrise from the East and regional imbalances would be minimized and investment would be more in backward States such as Odisha, but a careful observation of the Union's resource allocations shows industrially developed States and metropolises have more capital investment than the mining States. Odisha remains a backward State, but the resources of Odisha are used for national growth and profit of PSUs and private companies. The mining lease holders here in Odisha are either the Central PSUs such as MCL, NALCO, NTPC, SAIL, RSP and NMDC etc or private companies, mostly owned by non-Odias.

Way back ,the first elected Government of Odisha in the independent India enacted the Odisha Mining Area Development Fund Act 1952. The purpose of the act was to constitute a mining area for the purpose of providing them with basic amenities, and for that to impose and collect a Cess not exceeding 5 percent of the valuation of minerals at the pit mouth, and to create a fund out of the cess collection for that purpose. And later the Odisha Cess Act 1962 was struck down by courts in cases of Hingir Rampur coal v State of Odisha and Odisha Cement Limited v State of Odisha and Tata steel v Odisha in 1980. The Odisha Runomic Development Act 2004 was struck down by the Orissa High Court in 2005. The restriction over cess led to a huge loss of revenue for the State and affected its development. It is to be noted that Justice MB Shah Commission of Inquiry on illegal mining of iron ore and manganese in Odisha in 2013 reported that if the value of public natural resources such as iron ore for only one year were given to the tribal families of Sundargarh and Keonjhar for their upliftment, the tribal would become rich approximately by Rs 9,43,000 per family. This was based on the calculation of the production and sales value of iron ore in the year 2009-2010. But unfortunately, the farmers, tribals, Dalits and other affected poor communities of all the mineral bearing areas are the poorest people because the mining income is not shared with them. On the contrary, they have been marginalised and uprooted by the operation of extractive industries.

ral Infrastructure and Socioeco-

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Chikiti liquor tragedy: 1 more arrested Subhadra Scheme also a jumla: Ex-MLA

Total arrests rise to 11 RAJEEV RATHAN

BRAHMAPUR

The number of arrests in connection with the Chikiti liquor tragedy in Ganjam district is rapidly increasing. So far, a total of 10 people have been arrested by the K Nuagaon police while another woman has been apprehended by the Excise Department.

On Thursday, one Sudam Mallik (35) from Sarkta vil-

police station, was arrested. Sudam was accused of brewing illicit liquor and several materials used for preparing alcohol were seized from him.

According to his confession, Samudi root was mixed into the country liquor before being sold to give added punch to the brew. However, the root has not yet been re-

Brahmapur DIG Dr Sarthak Sarangi said the exact substances mixed into the liquor would only be contest report.

Police are regularly conducting raids at various locations in Chikiti, Patrapur and Digapahandi blocks following allegations of sale of bootleg country liquor. In the past few days, 15 cases have been registered and hundreds of litres of country liquor have been seized and destroyed.

According to the DIG, five efit 2.25 crore women, only affected individuals are cur-70 lakh women will actually receive support. "This is just rently admitted to an ICU with two of them in critical another election 'jumla,' similar to previous promises like 2

bank accounts, "Ghadei said. Reacting to the Odisha

"Initially, it was promised Government's Subhadra that every woman would receive ?50,000 in two years, Ranjan Ghadei criticised it as but now only one out of an election gimmick and an three women will get the amount, and that too only He noted that while the ?5,000. Over five years, this totals ?50,000, which amounts to just ?10,000 per year. What can women do with such a small amount?"he

> asked. "The scheme's promise of Rs

50,000 per year was supposed to help women invest, but their plans have been thwarted," de added. Ghadei further criticised the current BJP Government, citing a significant loan burden on the State. "Under the present Government, the State's loan has reached Rs 42,000 crore. RS 5,000 every six months amounts to just Rs 833 per month or Ts 27 per day. What can a woman do with Rs 27 per day? With a female popu-

lation of 2.25 crore in Odisha, the scheme's limited reach to 70 lakh women represents an injustice," he said.

Ghadei further claimed that the money would be taken back from women with inter-

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi had earlier announced the approval of an initiative for women's empowerment, Subhadra, in the State Legislative Assembly. According to the CMO, the

Subhadra scheme will transform the lives of more than 1 crore women in the State. It will cover all eligible women aged 21 years or above and less than 60 years old. "A total of ?10,000 per annum will be paid in two installments of ?5000 each on Rakhi Purnima Day and International Women's Day (March 8). Thus, an eligible woman beneficiary will get Rs 50,000 in total in five years," the

Pradhan unveils Adarsha Vidyalaya in A'mallik



ATHAMALLIK

 $T_{
m he\ newly-built\ Odisha}$ Adarsha Vidyalaya at Banamalipur of Athamallik was inaugurated recently by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Pradhan as the chief guest inaugurated six projects including newly constructed OAV, a 100 beded girls hostel at Banamalipur and another girls' hostel at Raniakata at a cost of Rs 32. 96 crore. He also laid the foundation stone of other four projects at a cost of Rs 61.87 crore.

On the occasion, the Union Minister discussed about the New National Education Policy-2020.

School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond joined as one of the guests and informed that 800 schools in the State have been included in PM Shri Yojana. Gond informed that the State Government was going to build 1,600 new hostels and recruitment

Among the guests were former MLA of Athamallik Ramesh Chandra Sai, Angul MLA Pratap Chandra Pradhan, Chendipada MLA Augasti Behera, Athamallik MLA Nalini Kanta Pradhan and Zilla Parisada Chairman Babita Pradhan. District Magistrate of Angul Abdaal M Akhtar pre-

of 16,010 junior teachers in the State very shortly.

sided over the programme.

Seafood units protest tariff hike by Tata Power

Dub reclassification as large industry, rate of Rs 5.85 per unit as unjust SIBDAS KUNDU BALESWAR

The seafood exporters of the district under the banner of All India Seafood Exporters Association, Odisha chapter (SEAIOR), are up in arms against a power tariff hike by the Tata Power. As a token of protest, the processing units stopped their production for a day and demanded rolling back of the hike.

In 2008, the seafood exporting units were categorised under agro industrial consumers and subsequently in 2011 as allied agro industrial activities (AAA). The tariff rate fixed by OERC was Rs 3 per unit.

"Recently before the general and State elections, taking advantage of the political vacuum, Tata Power went ahead with its deliberately conceived strategy to reclassify seafood processing cold storage units from AAI category to LI (large industry with tariff of Rs 5.85 per unit). They sent inspection teams to several seafood processing units without prior intimation, with instructions to levy fines and penalty in crores of rupees under Section 126 of Electricity Act. Further, the representations for re-inspection were ignored in an illegal and unjust way and now, fines and arrears etc to the tune of crores of rupees were asked to be deposited with threat of discon-

nection notice," lamented All

India Seafood Exporters' Asso-

ciation State president

Yoiana, former Minister Priti

scheme was promised to ben-

injustice to women.

Sangram Das. This was immediately brought to the notice of the Deputy CM and Energy Minister, KV Singhdeo. Though on his intervention, Tata Power has stopped coercive actions like disconnection for the time being, but the company's stubborn attitude of not withdrawing notices under Section 126 and reclassification of categories has led to a situation of uncertainty, fear and confusion, he added.

"At present though the seafood export of Odisha has grown from Rs 350 crore in 2008-09 to Rs 4,500 crore in 2022-23, the industry is passing through a very tough time because of recession in EU countries because of the Russia - Ukraine war, tough competition from Ecuador, and various other geopolitical factors. In such a context, the action of Tata Power is uncalled for," said another member of the association.

He added that it is unfortunate to experience the exploitation of a private company

having 49 percent share and it is happening in a power surplus State like Odisha.

While the processing plants across Odisha including Bhubaneswar, Puri, Baleswar, Kendrapara, Malipada and Junkia etc observed the protest, they threatened to intensify the agitation ahead if Tata Power did not concede.

"We urge the Government to do the needful and provide respite from the monopolistic exploitation of the private company. If nothing happens, the 16 lakh employment created by the sector where more than 50 percent females have got employment will cease to continue as the exporters will be forced to close down their units or move to other States,

6 CUO students clear Japanese language test

 $S_{\rm ix}$ students from the Central University of Odisha have successfully passed the N5 level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT).

They are Rituparna Bala and Abhipsa Patra from the Department of Agriculture, and Prityam Kumar Dhal, Stuti Mahima Khora, Subham Dash, and Jagadish Sahu from the Department of Mathematics. Their accomplishment was recognized by the Vice-Chancellor of the University Prof Chakradhar Tripathi, who extended his congratulations to the students, their course coordinator, and faculty members for their outstanding performance.

The JLPT, administered

of Japan, assesses proficiency in Japanese language skills. The Central University of Odisha offered a one-year Japanese Language Certificate Course (JLCC) from October 1, 2023, to October 1, 2024. Out of ten students who took the N5 level examination, six achieved passing marks, demonstrating the effectiveness of the JLCC program.

Special commendations go to Stuti Mahima Khora and Abhipsa Patra, who excelled with scores of 120 and 112, respectively. The success highlights the dedication and support of the Course Coordinator, Dr Nirjharini Tripathy (Head of the Department of English Language and Literature); Prof Nabin Panda, faculty, Bithika Das and all the JLCC students.

annually by the Government

Coir Board files FIR against misuse of grants

The Union MSME Ministry gives grants under "SFURTI" programme for the promotion of traditional industries, artisans and producers all over the country. The Coir Board, under the MSME Ministry, is the nodal agency for promotion of traditional

tative of NAFO (Coir Board

Field Office) and utilise the grant.

industry in the coir sector. The scheme gives 90% Central Government grant and the beneficiary's contribution is 10%. The implementing agency (IA) has to open a joint account in a bank in its CEO's name along with the represen-

One Samaj Kalyan Foundation, which is headed by Kasinath Jena and located in the Gop area under Konark Coir

Cluster in the Puri district, received grant from the MSME Ministry and deposited it in Punjab National Bank, Gop branch. But during review, the Coir Board found that the organisation had forged the signature and the rubber stamp of NAFO and withdrew 11.50 lakh rupees from the bank in June 2024. An FIR has been filed in this connection at the Gop PS by the Regional Officer of Coir Board Bhubaneswar in August.



inked between KABIL &

For collaboration in projects & exploration

PNS BHUBANESWAR

 ${f A}$ n MoU was signed between Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) and Oil India Ltd at the NALCO Corporate Headquarters here on Wednesday. It was signed by Sadashiv Samantray, Director (Commercial), NALCO & CEO, KABIL and Ranjan Goswami, ED (BD), OIL in the presence of Sridhar Patra, CMD, NALCO and Chairman, KABIL.

The MoU aims at collaborating in existing and future projects of KABIL for fostering connections in the exploration and exploitation of critical minerals

Patra said the MoU opens a new chapter in the progress of KABIL because the strengths of KABIL and OIL would synergise for opening fresh vistas in critical minerals exploration and exploitation in the country and abroad.

The KABIL is a Joint Venture Company of the three government enterprises, NALCO, Hindustan Copper Limited and Mineral Exploration & Consultancy Limited under the aegis of Union Ministry of Mines.

Implement welfare measures for tribals, CM urged

Dr Jacob Tundyil, president of social organisation PFREM with Bidulata Huika, president of Odisha Tribal Manch met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at his residence at Bhubaneswar on Friday and held discussion with him on an array of issues relating to tribals, sources said.

During the meeting Dr Tundyil reportedly apprised the CM that in the tribal populated areas students must be ensured their rights to education since they are backward and belong to primitive community. In order to strengthen assured future their sustainability, the myriad welfare measures need to be initiated for the overall wellbeing,



he added

Besides, the State Government needs to identify the current state of basic amenities for the tribal population such as reopening of tribal schools which are currently defunct; distribution of forest land and its patta (RoR) to tribals; rehabilitation of tribals; imparting teaching in tribal language to tribal students; establishment

of tribal language institutions at the district level and enactment and implementation of PESA law. Though the above law has been enacted for the tribals since 1996, the State Government of Odisha did not make any effort to implement the same in the State, he added.

CM Majhi reportedly assured the delegation to do the

needful soon for the benefit of the tribals in the State Among others, Director of IDCO Guru Prasad, State advisor of Odisha Adivasi Manch Badal Kumar, State coordinator from Kandhamal Sudhir Diggal, convenor of Mayurbhaj unit Basant Singh, Ratan Mishra from Gajapati and Rabi Rath were

Man held for killing wife in Brahmapur

PNS BRAHMAPUR

One Rajendra Jena (58) of Rohigaon village under the Brahmapur Sadar police station was arrested on Thursday for allegedly killing his wife Jhunu (52).

The incident came to light after the deceased's brother Trinath Swain filed a complaint with the Sadar police. According to the complaint, the incident took place on August 28 when Rajendra, known for his habitual drinking, got into a heated argument with his wife. The altercation escalated, leading Rajendra to violently attack Jhunu with a crowbar, inflicting severe injuries. Jhunu suc-



Getting information, a police team, along with forensic experts, rushed to the scene, where they seized the bloodstained crowbar, the accused's and deceased's blood-stained clothing and other biological samples. Jhunu's body was sent to the MKCG Medical College Hospital in Berhampur for postmortem.

Rajendra during interrogation confessed to the crime, following which he was forwarded to court.

'Rotary Club of BBSR Meadows holds 'Rangatuli'

Inter-school art test participated by 550 students from 105 schools ■ BHUBANESWAR

he Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar Meadows organised the inter-school art competition "Rangatuli-2024." The 3rd edition of the event brought together over 550 young artists from 105 schools across the city, competing in two categories with the theme of 'Krishna's Magical Childhood' for students of Std. IV to Std. VII and 'The Heritage of Odisha' for stu-

dents of Std. VIII to Std. X. The competition, held at the Odisha State Museum, was inaugurated by renowned Sahitya Akademi award-win-



ning writer Dash Benhur, Superintendent of Odisha State Museum Bhagyalipi Malla and PDG Aswini Kar. The young participants demonstrated remarkable creativity and skill, creating artworks that reflected both their imagination

and artistic talent. The day's events culminated in a grand award ceremony at the Bhanja Kala Mandap. The dignitaries who graced the occasion included Puri MP Dr Sambit Parta as chief guest, MLAs Babu Singh, Ashrit Patnaik and Rotary District Governor (2024-25) Rtn. Yagyansis Mohapatra. Immediate past president

Rtn. Surj K Raj managed the award ceremony with the help of the core team of Rangatuli-2024. Club secretary Rtn. Ramakrushna Panda coordinated the publication of the club bulletin, "The Meadows", with the esteemed guest.

In Jharsuguda

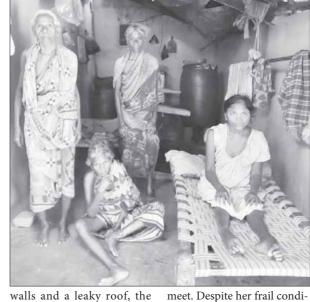
75-yr-old widow with 3 disabled daughters lives miserably

JHARSUGUDA

▲n a testament to a mother's unwavering love and resilience, 75-year-old Kisori Bhainsa of Bhanwarkhol panchayat under Lakhanpur Block, continues to take care of her three physically challenged daughters despite her advanced age and personal hardships

Widowed for the past 20 years, Kisori, who has poor eyesight, toils day and night to run her family which comprise her daughters, Laxmi (52), Tapaswini (50), who is mentally challenged, and Bidesini (43), who is also physically challenged.

Living in a dilapidated thatched house with crumbling



walls and a leaky roof, the family struggles to make ends tion, Kisori brings water from

her daughters, relying on Government rice and a stipend that barely lasts through the month. Their living conditions are dire, with the roof so deteriorated that they can see the stars through it. Any rainfall floods their

home, exacerbating their already precarious situation.

Despite her desperate need, Kisori has not received a pucca house under any Government scheme. She hopes for assistance from the district administration for better housing and medical care for her daughters.

Local authorities have taken notice of her plight. Sarpanch Mina Kumari Sahoo assured that steps would be taken to nancial assistance. Lakhanpur BDO Binay Kumar Patel and ABDO Gopal Krishna Mishra visited the family to assess the situation and promised immediate Government sup-They proposed relocating Kisori and her eldest daugh-

ter to the Gobindpur Old Age

Home, while her other two

daughters would be accom-

modated in a Shelter Home

for the Mentally Challenged at H Katapalli. However, Kisori wishes for her family to stay together in

one place, emphasizing the deep bond and love she shares with her daughters, even in the face of overwhelming challenges.

PM Modi to lay stone for ₹76,000 cr Vadhvan Port in M'rashtra today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday will lay the foundation stone of Vadhvan Port worth over Rs 76,000 crore during his visit to Maharashtra. It aims to establish a world-class maritime gateway that will boost the country's trade and economic growth by catering to large container vessels, offering deeper drafts, and accommodating ultra-large cargo ships. Giving details of his visit,

Office Minister's said here Thursday, Prime Minister Modi will visit Mumbai and Palghar in Maharashtra. He will address Global Fintech

World Convention Centre in Mumbai. Thereafter, Prime Minister will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of various development projects at CIDCO ground, Palghar. He will lay the foundation stone of Vadhvan Port. Located near Dahanu town in

Palghar district, the port will be one of India's largest deep-water ports and will provide direct connectivity international shipping routes, reducing transit times and

Equipped with state-of-thetechnology infrastructure, the port will feature deep berths, efficient cargo handling facilities, and modern port management



systems. The port is expected generate significant employment opportunities, stimulate local businesses, and contribute to the overall economic development of the

The Vadhvan Port project incorporates sustainable

minimizing environmental impact and adhering stringent ecological standards. Once operational, the port will enhance India's maritime connectivity and further strengthen its position as a

Prime Minister Modi will also

global trade hub.

foundation stone of 218 projects worth around Rs 1,560 crores, aimed at bolstering the sector's infrastructure and productivity across the nation. These initiatives are expected to generate more than five lakh employment opportunities in the fisheries sector. Prime Minister will launch

the National Roll Out of Vessel Communication and Support system at a cost of around Rs. 360 crores. Under project, transponders will be installed a phased manner on mechanised and motorised fishing vessels in 13 coastal States and Union Territories.

and support system is indigenous technology developed by ISRO, which will help in establishing twoway communication while fishermen are at sea and also help in rescue operations as well as ensure safety of our fishermen.

Other initiatives to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister include development of fishing harbours and Integrated Aquaparks, alongside the adoption of advanced technologies such as the Recirculatory Aquaculture System and Biofloc. These projects will be implemented across multiple States and will provide crucial infrastructure

enhance fish production, post-harvest improve management. and create sustainable livelihoods for millions involved in the fisheries sector. Prime Minister will also lav

the foundation stone for important fishery infrastructure projects development, including upgradation modernisation of fishing harbours, fish landing centres and construction of fish markets. This is expected to provide necessary facilities and hygienic conditions for post-harvest management of fish and seafood.

Prime Minister will address a Special Session of Global

jointly organised by the Payments Council of India. the National Payments Corporation of India and the Convergence Fintech Council speakers, Around

including policymakers, regulators, senior bankers, captains, industry academicians, from India and various other countries will address more than 350 sessions in the conference. It will also showcase the latest innovations of the fintech landscape. Over 20 thought leadership reports and white papers will be launched at GFF 2024, offering insights, and in-depth

Centre to unveil simplified pension form for its retiring staff: Official

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Centre will unveil a new simplified pension application form for its retiring employees on Friday, according to an official statement. The Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) had vide its notification dated July 16, 2024 released the simplified pension application 'Form 6-A", it said.

"This form will be available in Bhavishva/e-HRMS (online modules) to all the central Government employees who are going to retire in December 2024 and onwards. The retiring officials, who are on e-HRMS, will fill Form 6-A through e-HRMS (only superannuation cases) and the retiring officials, who are not on e-HRMS, will fill Form 6-A in Bhavishya," statement issued by the Ministry Personnel Thursday said.

According to the statement, this new form and its integration with Bhavishya/e-HRMS will be launched on August 30, 2024 by Union Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh. Form simplification has been an important initiative of the

"maximum governance-minimum Government" policy, it said. In this new form, a total of 9

Pension

Schceme

forms/formats have been merged, the statement said. This new form and related changes in the business process of Bhavishya will be a game changer as on the one hand it simplifies the pension form submission for the employee through "a single sign only" and on the other hand achieves the end-to-end digitisation of the entire process of pension processing till the start of pension payment after retirement, it added. "This paves the path towards paperless working in the whole process of pension, the statement said. It added that with a pensioner-friendly user interface, pensioners no

or might have missed. Ina related development, the Centre has organised a preretirement counselling (PRC) workshop for its employees to them aware retirement benefits, family pension, Income Tax rules and submission of digital life certificates among others, according to an official

longer need to worry about

the forms they have filled out

More than 750 retirees, who are going to retire up to March 31, 2025, benefitted hugely from this pre-retirement counselling (PRC) workshop held here on Wednesday, it said.

The Department of Pension Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW) will continue to hold such workshops as part of good governance to ensure a smooth and comfortable transition for the Central Government retirees, said the statement issued by the

Personnel Ministry.
The department is taking all efforts to keep them updated of the Government initiatives being taken so that they can avail all the benefits post retirement, it said. "During the 55th

retirement counselling (PRC) workshop, various sessions on BHAVISHYA portal, portal integrated pensioners portal, retirement benefits, family pension, CGHS process, ANUBHAV, digital life certificate, investment modes and Opportunities etc. Were conducted," the statement said. All these sessions have been curated to make the retirees aware of the process to be followed and forms to be filled pre-retirement and to provide information about the benefits available to them

post-retirement, it added.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Union Ayush Ministry is I mulling to soon launch a nationwide health screening and checkup programme to detect diseases at an early stage and help maintain people's well-being, said Union Minister of State for AYUSH Pratap Rao Jadhav on Thursday at the three-day 7th International Health and Wellness Expo launched here.

He also emphasised the importance of medicinal plants and announced the Government's goal to raise awareness about their benefits and encourage widespread plantation to make India selfreliant in this sector. After the inauguration, he visited several stalls, including the National Medicinal Plants Board's exhibit, where he gathered insights on various medicinal herbs. The mega expo which is a brain child of



Health screening, checkup programme by Ayush Ministry soon

Namo Gange Trust's features stalls by several State and Government Ministries, as well as private

participants include the Ministry of AYUSH, CSIR, MDES, ICAR, NRDC, CDB, the National Medicinal Plants Board, and Uttarakhand Forest Resource Management-JICA, said a

statement here. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister also highlighted that such expos significant opportunities awareness about health and wellness among the public. In

inaugural Minister Jadhav stated that promoting a healthy India is a agenda Government. According following various initiatives

taken by the Government in recent years, the AYUSH market in India has witnessed exponential ballooning from a mere USD 2.85 billion in 2014 to a staggering USD 24 billion in

India, South Africa

review naval ties,

operational synergy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

strengthen

Passport portal to stay shut for four days for maintenance: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

The online platform for passport applications will be closed for the next four days for a maintenance activity, Ministry of External Afffairs (MEA) said in a statement. As a result, no fresh appointments can scheduled during the period, the statement added.

However, the already booked appointments rescheduled. "Passport Seva portal will be down for technical maintenance from 29th August 2024, Thursday hrs IST 20:00 to 2nd September, Monday 06:00 hrs IST. System will not be available during this period



for citizens and for all MEA/RPO/BOI/ISP/DoP/Pol ice Authorities. The already booked appointments for 30th August 2024 will be suitably rescheduled and informed to applicants," the statement read. Contingency plans have reportedly been set in place to keep any public inconvenience at bay.

The Passport Seva portal is for booking appointments at centres across India, whether for new applications or passport

Two YSRCP Rajya Sabha MPs resign

partner,

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Two YSRCP members of the Rajya Sabha Beedha Mastan Rao Jadhav and Venkataramana Rao Mopidevi have tendered their resignation from House membership, parliamentary sources said on Thursday.

They said Vice President and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Dhankhar has Jagdeep accepted their resignation. Mastan Rao, whose term was to end in June 2028, had

switched from the TDP to the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP). He is likely to go back to the Telugu Desam Party (TDP). Mopidevi, whose term was till June 2026, may also join the TDP, the sources said.

Following



resignations, the strength of Tndia and South Africa here the YSRCP in the Upper Lreviewed their defence ties House of Parliament has and ways to further strengthdipped from 11 to nine. The en Navy to Navy collaboration during the 12th India-South TDP, which is a key NDA has Africa Navy Staff Talks on representation in the Rajya Tuesday and Wednesday, navy said on Thursday. Sabha. It has been learnt that Giving details, officials said Mastan Rao could be fielded by the TDP in the bypoll, but the talks were co-chaired by Mopidevi is not keen on entering the Rajya Sabha again. In the resultant bypolls, the TDP could get

Rear Admiral Nirbhay Bapna, ACNS (FCI) of the Indian Navy, and Rear Admiral David Maningi Mkhonto, Chief Director Maritime Strategy of the South African Navy. The talks underscored mutual commitment to strengthening naval ties and operational synergy. In laying the groundwork for

operational training improving readiness efficiency; establishment of secure information exchange protocols between platforms. Additionally, explored operational interactions to address the evolving complexities in the maritime domain, through continued exchanges and

future cooperation, the talks this year focused on several

facilities

India's second indigenously built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine commissioned

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

India's second indigenously designed and built nuclearpowered ballistic missile submarine INS Arighaat was commissioned on Thursday thereby adding to country's nuclear deterrence capabilities and boosting operational readiness. The first nuclear powered submarine INS Arihant was commissioned in 2016.

The second Arihant-Class submarine 'INS Arighaat' was commissioned into the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Defence Ministry said here.

Defence In his address, Rajnath Singh Minister exuded confidence that 'Arighaat' further will strengthen India's nuclear enhance

deterrence, help establishing strategic balance and peace in the region, and play a decisive role in the security of the country.

He described it as an achievement for the nation and a testament to Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government's unwavering resolve to achiev 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence. achieve

defence minister commended the Indian Navy, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Industry for their hard work and synergy in achieving this capability. He termed this self-reliance as the foundation of self power. He appreciated the fact that the country's industrial sector, especially MSMEs, have



have been created. Prime Recalling former Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's political will which put India on a par with a nuclear weapon state, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said, "Today, India is surging ahead to become a developed country. It is essential for us to develop rapidly in every field, including defence, especially especially MSMEs, have in today's geopolitical received a huge boost through scenario. Along with with this project, and more economic prosperity, we need employment opportunities a strong military. Our strong military. Our

Government is working on mission mode to ensure that our soldiers possess topquality weapons platforms made on Indian

The construction of INS Arighaat involved the use of advanced design manufacturing technology, detailed research development, utilisation of special materials, complex engineering and highly skilled workmanship. It has the distinction of having the

systems and five indigenous equipment which were conceptualised, designed, manufactured and integrated by the Indian scientists, industry and Naval personnel. technological advancements undertaken indigenously

submarine make significantly more advanced than its predecessor Arihant. The presence of both INS Arihant and INS Arighaat will enhance India's capability to deter potential adversaries and safeguard its national

The second submarine INS Arighat was commissioned in Visakhapatnam at Ship Building Centre (SBC).

interests.

The submarine was launched in 2017 at its manufacturing base, Ship Building Centre (SBC), Visakhapatnam. In fact, the SBC is building

nuclear powered submarines. While Arihant is already operational and Arighat commissioned on Thursday, work is now on the remaining two submarines. They are in advanced stage of construction, it was learnt.

INS Arighat is 111.6 meters long and weighs 6,000 tonnes. It plays a crucial role in India's nuclear triad, enabling the nation to launch nuclear missiles from land, air, and

Powered by an 82.5 MW pressurized light water reactor developed with Russian assistance, INS Arighat can achieve a top speed of 24 knots submerged and 10 knots on the surface on the surface.

Its primary armament consists 12 K-15 Sagarika submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), each with a exceeding

kilometers. These missiles are housed in four large vertical launch system (VLS) tubes and are a testament to India's indigenous development capabilities.

seats in the Rajya Sabha. As a

result, the ruling NDA will

have two more members on

The submarine is divided into seven compartments, housing propulsion and combat management systems, a platform management center, and a torpedo room. Additional safety measures include two standby auxiliary engines and a retractable thruster for emergency power

and mobility.

INS Arighat follows in the footsteps of INS Arihant, India's first SSBN, which was commissioned in 2016. A third, yet-to-be-named SSBN was launched in 2021, further solidifying commitment to developing a credible sea-based nuclear

exercises. The dialogue included opportunities for exchange of best practices in Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Defence including Damage Control (NBCD); and Diving support, through Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE). A strong emphasis on personnel exchanges, and the potential for availing advanced training courses at respective training

Healthy lifestyle can mitigate Type 2 diabetes side-effects, says study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Type 2 diabetes and prediates are associated with faster brain aging, causing dementia and Alzheimer's, according to a recent study published in Diabetes Care. However, good news is that adopting a healthy lifestyle can potentially mitigate these effects.

This finding is particularly relevant for India, which has become the Diabetes Capital of the world. The WHO estimates that India has around 77 million people over 18 suffering from Type 2 diabetes and nearly 25 million with prediabetes. The number is expected to surge to 124.9 million by 2045. to 124.9 million by 2045. age.

According to yet another The study found that lead author. "On a positive onset of dementia."



report, one in seven diabetic adults globally lives in India, and one in three households has diabetic patients.

Researchers from Karolinska Institutet in Sweden analysed data from over 31,000 individuals aged 40 to 70 from the UK Biobank who had undergone brain MRI Using machine learning, they assessed brain age relative to chronological

corresponded to brains that were 0.5 and 2.3 years older than their actual age, respectively. In those with poorly managed diabetes, the brain appeared more than four years older. Additionally, the gap between brain age and chronological age grew slightly over time in diabetic individuals. These effects were less pronounced among those who were physically active and avoided smoking excessive and

prediabetes and diabetes

alcoho consumption. "An older-appearing brain relative to chronological age may indicate deviations from

normal aging and could be an

early sign of dementia," explained Abigail Dove, from

seems maintaining a healthy lifestyle can positively influence brain health in people with diabetes," she added.

While repeated MRI data were available for only a small number of participants, ongoing follow-up scans aim to further explore the link between diabetes and brain aging over time.
"With the rising prevalence of

Type 2 diabetes, our research aims to help prevent cognitive decline and dementia in people with diabetes and prediabetes," stated Dove. The research suggests that

managing diabetes effectively and living healthily may help protect against brain aging and potentially delay the

SHe-Box portal to enhance workplace safety for women unveiled

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

A mid growing chorus for safety of women in the country, Union Women and Child Development Minister Annapurna Devi on Thursday launched a centralised platform designed to make workplaces safer for women by addressing and managing complaints of sexual harassment.

'This initiative is a critical step forward in providing a more efficient and secure platform for addressing workplacerelated sexual harassment complaints. It furthers the Government's commitment to creating a safer and more inclusive working environment for women across India," said the Minister. She expressed confidence that the portal will ensure that complaints can be safely registered without personal information being publicly accessible.

The SHe-Box portal is a significant advancement in the Government's ongoing efforts to safeguard women in related to internal committees and local



the workplace. The launch event in Delhi also witnessed the introduction of a revamped ministry website.

Emphasising the importance of the initiative in creating a more secure and inclusive working environment for women, Annapurna Devi maintained that the portal would function as a centralised repository for information

committees across the country, covering both the Government and private sectors. The portal will allow women to file complaints, track their status, and ensure that the grievances are processed in a timely manner.

It also features a designated nodal officer to enable real-time monitoring of complaints, thereby providing a streamlined and assured redressal

process, the statement said. The launch of the SHe-Box portal aligns with the Government's broader vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, with a strong emphasis on women-led development.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, serves to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace and address their grievances. In line with this commitment, the new SHe-Box portal represents a significant step forward in addressing and managing complaints of workplace sexual harassment," said an official from the Ministry.

Assam passes Bill to abolish Muslim marriages, divorce Act

The Assam Assembly on Thursday passed a Bill to repeal a law to register marriages and divorces of

and Disaster Management Minister Jogen Mohan had on August 22 tabled The Assam Repealing Bill, 2024 in the Assembly to abolish The Assam Moslem Marriages and Divorces Registration Act, 1935 and the Assam Repealing Ordinance

Taking part in the discussion, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said: "Our aim is not only to abolish child marriages, ... Also to do away with the Kazi system. We want to bring registration of marriages under government system.

He said that registration of all marriages has to be done as per a Supreme Court order, but the state cannot support a private body like that of Kazis for this purpose

Mohan in the Statement of Object and Reasons of the Repealing Bill said, "There remains a scope of registering marriages of intended person below 21 years (in case of male) and 18 years (in case of

It hardly had any provisions



implementation of the Act throughout the state and it attracted huge amounts of litigation in the court, he

"There is a scope of misuse by both authorised licensee (Muslim marriage Registrars) as well as by citizens for underage/minor marriages and forcefully arranged marriages without the consent of the parties," Mohan said. Besides, the registration of marriages and divorces were

not mandatory, and the registration mechanism was informal that left a lot of scope for non-compliance of the norms, he added.

"It is a pre-independence Act adopted by British India government for the then Province of Assam for Muslim religious and social arrangements," the minister

said. The Assam government on Tuesday introduced The Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriage and Divorce Bill,

Last month, the Cabinet had approved the Repealing Bill to abolish The Assam Moslem Marriages and Divorces Registration Act and Rules of 1935, which permitted underage marriages under specific conditions.

The Assam Cabinet had approved the decision to repeal the Act on February 23, in a bid to end the social menace of child marriage in the state.

The opposition parties had decried the decision, terming it "discriminatory against the Muslims" brought in to polarise the voters in an

Journalists booked over plaint by Union Minister Suresh Gopi

PTI ■ THRISSUR (KERALA)

Acase has been registered against media persons by Union Minister Suresh Gopi alleging that the journalists blocked his way when he exited the Thrissur Ramanilayam government guest house.

The case was registered on Wednesday night under sections 329(3),126(2),132 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), police said. While Section 329(3) of the BNS deals with trespass, 126(2) deals with wrongful restraint, and 132 deals with account or and 132 deals with assault or criminal force to deter a public servant from discharge of his duty. According to the of his duty. According to the FIR, the reporters trespassed and blocked Gopi from entering his vehicle and obstructed the duty of his security officer. On Tuesday, when Gopi, the first BJP Lok Sabha MP from Kerala, was asked by reporters about the allegations allegations of sexual harassment against CPI(M) MLA M Mukesh, he replied, "You (media) are not only making people fight each other for your own gains you other for your own gains, you are also misleading public perception. "The complaints are in the form of allegations



at the moment. What are you telling people? Are you the court? You are not. The court will decide. Let the court decide." Later the same day, when scribes tried to get his reaction over BJP state chief K Surendran's comments that the party's stand is to seek Mukesh's resignation, the actor was seen angrily pushing away some of them. According to the videos, some of the reporters approached Gopi as he was trying to get into his official vehicle, and into his official vehicle, and he pushed them away, saying, "What is this? My way is my right. Please." Thereafter, he got inside the car and left without answering any of the reporters' queries. However, police were yet to register any case on a complaint filed by Congress leader and former Congress leader and former MLA Anil Akkara against Gopi over his conduct towards media persons in

No report of influx of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Nagaland: DyCM Patton

Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton on Thursday told the state Assembly there is no report of influx of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants following the political crisis in the neighbouring country. Patton said this while responding to NPF MLA Achumbemo Kikon raising concern in the Zero Hour of state Assembly on possible state Assembly on possible influx following the political

crisis in Bangladesh.

Kikon said the North East region which shares international border with Bangladesh is the most vulnerable and expressed fear of illegal immigrants entering Nagaland through other states.

In this, he sought the measures adopted by the state government to curb the influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

In his response, Patton, who holds the Home portfolio, said India shares 4,096 km long border with Bangladesh with West Bengal having the longest border of 2,217 km and Assam having the least 262 km.

Besides three other states -Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura share borders with Bangladesh but not Nagaland, he said.



to the state. guards down but it is closely Adequate measures specific to the district have been monitoring the situation in proximity initiated to stop illegal influx, intelligence and he said.

agencies.
"To ensure that no unnatural influx happens and to remove any anxiety of the people, we have taken steps district The commissioners have also been asked to coordinate with their counterparts in Assam for cooperation and regular updates on the including directing the matter, and also to intensify Inner Line Permit checking administrations sharing the border with Assam to conduct regular and closely monitor interstate check posts, he said. security coordination meetings with other security forces," Patton

The state police have been directed to be on a high alert along the 13 interstate borders and be vigilant round the clock besides conducting intensified vehicle checking and also keeping a watch in the places of worship, he said.

Kannada actor Darshan shifted to Ballari jail amid tight security



PTI ■ BENGALURU

∕annada actor Darshan Kannaua actor who is currently in judicial custody in the Renukaswamy murder case, was on Thursday shifted Central prison here to a jail in Ballari, amid tight security. The 24th Additional Chief

Metropolitan Magistrate court here on Tuesday granted permission to move Darshan to a jail in Ballari, after a photograph of him hanging out with three others, including a rowdy-sheeter, on the lawns of the Bengaluru jail had gone viral on Sunday, sparking an uproar.

The court has also permitted shifting of other co-accused in the murder case to various prisons in the state, and a few of them were relocated today. In the picture, the actor is seen in a relaxed mood, sitting on a chair and holding a cigarette and a coffee mug. Also, a purported video of Darshan speaking to a person over a video call from the prison too had surfaced on social media According to police sources,

Darshan was escorted to Ballari jail via the Andhra Pradesh route for security reasons and crowding of fans.

Parappana Agrahara Central Prison in a police SUV and then moved into a police van near Chikkaballapur on the way to the district headquarters town of Ballari. Escorted by police officials, Darshan was seen wearing a black t-shirt with a sun glass hung to its neckline and blue jeans, and carrying a water bottle and some clothes on reaching Ballari jail.

A few scenes of the 2017 Kannada movie 'Chowka', in which Darshan had appeared in a cameo role, was shot in the Ballari jail.

A Bengaluru court on Wednesday extended till September nine the judicial custody of Darshan along with his friend Pavithra Gowda and 15 others, who accused in the Renukaswamy murder case.

HC junks CBI plea against State's withdrawal of consent in DA case against Shivakumar

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday held as "non-maintainable" a petition filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) challenging the Congress government's Congress government's decision to withdraw consent to it for investigating a disproportionate assets (DA) case against Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar. A division bench, comprising

Justices K Somashekar and Umesh M Adiga, also dismissed the the plea State challenging the State government's December 26, 2023 order referring the Rs 74.93 crore DA case to the Lokayukta for investigation. In a 67-page judgment, the High Court stated that the issues raised in the petition



should be addressed by the Supreme Court.

The bench had reserved its judgment on the matter on August 12.

The CBI had earlier alleged that Shivakumar amassed assets disproportionate to his

known sources of income between 2013 and 2018. He was a minister in the previous Congress government during this

previous government had granted sanction to the CBI to Shivakumar, prosecute following which an FIR was lodged against him and investigation undertaken on charges of disproportionate

The current Karnataka cabinet headed by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on November 23 held that the previous BJP government's move to give consent to the CBI to investigate the DA case against Shivakumar was not in accordance with law and decided to withdraw the

meetings with apex tribal bodies **PTI** ■ KOHIMA

PAC of Nagaland Govt to hold

district

district-level

Informing the House that to

date there are no reports of

influx of illegal Bangladeshi

immigrants in the aftermath

of the recent crisis in that

country, the Deputy CM

The Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of Nagaland government has decided to hold consultative meetings with apex tribal bodies and civil society organizations on taking forward the Naga Political

The decision to this effect was taken during the state government's PAC meeting held here on Wednesday in the presence of Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and the two MPs of the state, said Nagaland government spokesperson and Parliamentary Affairs minister, K G Kenye at a press conference after the meeting. The Rio government had constituted the PAC on Naga Political Issue in November 2023 to facilitate an early solution to the vexed issue.

It is composed of the 60 members in the state members in the state Assembly of eight political parties - NDPP, BJP, NCP, NPP, NPF, RPI(A), LJP (RV), JD(U), Independent MLAs and also the Congress MP. Kenye said the Centre has been holding separate

been holding separate negotiations with NSCN-IM and Working Committee of the Naga National Political

Groups.
He said despite all the stakeholders appealing to different Naga groups to come together and be one for the negotiations, they don't seem to be coming together and are not even able to see each

Two major agreements -Framework Agreement with NSCN-IM and Agreed Position with WC NNPGs



Agreement which have not been divulged and come to public domain whereas the Agreed Position has been made open, he said. The parallel stand they are maintaining is detrimental to

the negotiation with the reason for the delay in the final solution, he said Kenye said the PAC felt that the state government should

approach peoples' organisations, civil societies, tribal bodies and the apex bodies and invite their views and opinions on how to go about resolving the issue confronting the Naga society

for so long. Asked when would the consultative meeting commence, Kenye said that the resolution of the Naga Political Issue is the top agenda of the present state government because of which 60 members have come together and formed the opposition-less government therefore consultations would be held at

In the past government, the

PAC used to approach the Naga negotiators to press for an early solution but this time, the PAC would first seek the opinion of the general public on how to go ahead, Kenye said. In the second session of the meeting, he said the PAC deliberated on the ongoing dialogue between the Centre and Eastern Nagaland Peopl (ENPO) on the latter's for demand Nagaland Territory.

With the change of guard in the ENPO, the new executives apprised the PAC on the latest developments in the ongoing dialogue.

Accepting that the Centre has given a draft of its proposal to resolve the ENPO demand to the state, he said the state government would first deliberate on the proposals with Eastern Nagaland Legislators' Union having 20 MLAs in the state after which further steps would be taken. He said that PAC is optimistic that the new team of ENPO officials would extend cooperation to the state government and momentum will pick up for the tripartite talks for early resolution of

their problem.

Andhra Pradesh CM launches indigenous Monkeypox RT-PCR kit

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday launched an indigenous Monkeypox (Mpox) RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) kit here.

The kit was developed at Andhra Pradesh Medtech Zone in Visakhapatnam by Transasia Diagnostics. It was validated by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and the Central Drugs Standard Control Drugs Organisation (CDSCO).



"Proud to launch India's first indigenous monkeypox RT-

PCR Kit..The lyophilized components in the kit are designed to be suitable for shipping and even use in remote areas," said Naidu in a post on 'X'.

According to the CM, the kit enhances epidemic preparedness manifold with precise, reliable and accessible diagnosis.

Further, he noted that it reflects the 'Make in AP (Andhra Pradesh)' tag on the world stage, including demonstrating India's leadership in healthcare innovation

Five railway cops taken off field duty over beating of woman, her grandson in MP

 $F_{\text{duty}}^{\text{ive cops were taken off field}} \\ \text{connection} \\ \text{with the alleged}$ beating of a woman and her grandson by Government Railway Police (GRP) Railway Police (GRP) personnel in Katni district of Madhya Pradesh, a senior official said. The action was taken after the state Congress a day before shared a video purportedly showing a woman GRP official beating up the woman and her grandson with a stick.

The opposition party also claimed that the victims belong to the Dalit community. The incident had taken place in October 2023 when the woman and the minor were summoned to the police station for questioning in connection with an absconding criminal, police said. Earlier on Thursday, the



concerned police station was "line-attached" or taken off field duty. "Four more cops including a head constable been attached....There was a person named Deepak Vanshkar against whom 19 cases are

registered, and who was absconding. He was also externed from the district. His family members had been called to the police constable and three constables station last October for

regard," Superintendent of Police (GRP) Simala Prasad told PTL "The video of the questioning

went viral. Cases had also been registered against the woman and minor in Katni. All the police personnel visible in the video have been lineattached," SP Prasad added. Besides the woman in-charge of the police station, a head were shunted out.

Jilted lover kills woman for avoiding him, later attempts suicide in Hyderabad After receiving information, a

Aman allegedly attacked and killed a 26-year-old woman from West Bengal here after she started avoiding him and later attempted to end his life, police said on Thursday.

The victim was stabbed multiple times by the

multiple times by the accused. police said, accused, police said, describing the gruesome attack.

The accused from Bidar district in Karnataka, went to the woman's room on Wednesday late night and attacked her with a knife and also attacked three of the roommates when they tried to rescue her, a police official at Gachibowli Police Station

police team rushed to the spot and shifted the woman and three other injured persons to a hospital where the doctors declared the woman dead, the official said. The accused, who earlier worked in Bengaluru, and the woman, who was beautician, knew each other and were allegedly in a relationship, police said based on investigation. preliminary

The woman had subsequently shifted to Hyderabad and for the past over one month she had been avoiding him and he also suspected that she was "closely" moving with another man, and he bore a grudge and attacked her, the official said.

Coast Guard gets ₹2,500-crore vessel to fight pollution

the earliest.

PTI ■ PANAJI

A^{Rs} 2,500-crore pollution control vessel built by Goa Shipyard Limited for the Indian Coast Guard was launched on Thursday, with Union minister Sanjay Seth asserting that it would be an asset for the maritime

security agency. The Union Minister of State for Defence launched the newly built Pollution Control Vessel, GSL Yard 1267, for the Indian Coast Guard in a ceremony held at Vasco in

'This ship is 72 per cent atmanirbhar' and has the capability to fight coastal pollution,' Seth reporters.

The Union minister said the ship will be an asset for the Indian Coast Guard, which patrols "our shores to keep



elements"

eth said that during his last 85 days as minister of state for defence, he spent much time learning about "our" forces. "After learning about our forces, I can say that the Indian defence sector robust," he said.

He called the launch of the pollution control vehicle a significant step forward in the efforts to protect the country's marine environment and mitigate oil pollution.
"Equipped with cutting-edge technology, this vessel will play a vital role in preserving marine life," he said.
Seth said the additional and mitigate and and miti

Seth said the achievement is a testament to the country's progress towards becoming Atmanirbhar Bharat' (selfreliant India). "I am proud to say that our Indian Coast Guard is among the best in the world, and this vessel will further enhance capabilities," he added.

The ship, built at Rs 2,500 crore, was launched in the presence of Inspector General of the Indian Coast Guard Bhisham Sharma, Commander Coast Guard Region (West).

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

A close contest!

The rural-urban divide and the Jat-non-Jat paradigm could be crucial in deciding the Haryana assembly elections

s Haryana gears up for its upcoming elections, the state's political landscape is rife with complexities that reflect broader societal uiviues. Control of the classical outcome. The recent request by the Bharatiya a crucial role in determining the electoral outcome. The recent request by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to change the polling date has added another layer of intrigue to an already charged atmosphere. Haryana's political fabric is deeply influenced by the rural-urban divide, a reflection of the state's socioeconomic disparities. The urban areas, particularly key centres like Gurugram, Faridabad, and Rohtak, have traditionally been BJP strongholds. These cities, with their high migrant populations, represent a significant voter base for the BJP. However, the upcoming election is complicated by the timing of the polling date. Scheduled for October 1, the date falls within a period that could easily be extended into a six-day holiday, thanks to over-



lapping weekends and public holidays. The BJP fears that urban voters, particularly those in the NCR, may choose to use this extended break to travel, thereby potentially lowering voter turnout in areas where the party has a stronghold. Historically, rural turnout in Haryana has been higher than urban turnout, which could tilt the scales against the BJP if urban voters

Another crucial factor in the upcoming elections is the Jat-non-Jat divide. Jats, who form a dominant social group in Haryana, have traditionally been aligned with the Congress, especially in rural areas. The BJP, on the other hand, has found support among the non-

Jat communities, particularly in urban regions. This division was evident in the 2024 general elections, where the BJP won all five Lok Sabha seats in non-Jat dominated areas. The BJP's support base in rural areas has been eroded, particularly among Jats, who have been disillusioned by the central government's response to their protests. The Congress is working to capitalise on this discontent by consolidating a Jat-Dalit-Muslim alliance in rural areas, which could pose a significant challenge to the BJP. In light of these challenges, the BJP's request to change the polling date has sparked controversy. The party argues that the potential for a long weekend could lead to lower voter turnout, particularly in urban areas where it has a strong base. The Congress has dismissed the BJP's request for date change as a sign of nervousness. The Election Commission's decision on the date change will be crucial, as it could influence the electoral outcome in a state where every vote counts. With ten years of incumbency and a narrowing margin of victory, the BJP is leaving no stone unturned to secure a favourable result. Whether the ECI will accommodate the BJP's request remains to be seen, but the upcoming elections in Haryana are shaping up to be a closely contested battle.



Visitors at India Gate enjoy the rains in New Delhi

How media shapes public perception



In a world where sensationalism often trumps substance, it's time to rethink how we engage with the news and what it says about the society we've built.

he last few weeks have seen some major convulsions at the basic level of the Indian society The listing can be long, depending upon the predisposition and values of the person making a list, or indeed brief if this person wants to strike a judgmental posture on what he considers important. This debate can merit its own resolution but the common-sense approach would make it obvious that the NEET examination and the Kolkata rape and murder episode have touched a very large number of minds and people who are in touch with the media.

This itself raises another basic question. That has to do with the role of the media in attributing to an episode both circulation and importance. The reach and mode of the media become critical in identifying an issue and formulating it. One of the farthest reach of a media is through the radio. By and large, the radio is controlled by governmental agencies. This is followed by television, which is controlled both by the government and by some powerful private media houses. Both clusters claim a popular following, and both are accused of biases.

Hence, to a fairly complicated question on what constitutes much of the news, there is a plausible answer: that which the media of the day decides to project and sustain as news. Thus it is that the role of governance/ownership of the mode of the media, in the identification of news, and sustaining it becomes critical. This brings us to a basic ques-

tion: what constitutes news and how is it maintained at the frontlines?

What is projected in so-called news is impossible for a private citizen to verify. That raises the question of the creditability of a channel. The creditability of the channel is itself a matter of popular perception, and it is also nurtured by reputation and gravity and implications of the statements and exposures above, which both of these cases conviction. To understand the one has to realize that news is have received, is this the both essential and dependent only news which affected



worthwhile debate to consider what constitutes news: origin, sustenance, and dissemination of news has certain standards across the globe. These, are like many things in life, having largely acknowledged standards without much vagouness. These are considered givens of a civil society. Hence the conclusion that if

dards and credibility, of reach

Hence, whereas it may be a

and sustenance.

the general media projects something, it must be the truth, or at least the truth in good faith. Reference has been made

above to the NEET episode and the Kolkata murder and rape case. The jury is out on both cases, and a conclusions are awaited. The civil society is maintained on such pillars. However, two questions



THE BASIC TRUTH IS ALSO THAT IT IS NOT SOME INTRANSIENT STRENGTH AND

WEAKNESS OF THE MEDIA THAT SUSTAINS ITS LIFE BUT THE ECONOMIC FORCES WHICH **NURTURE ITS EXISTENCE**

the wellbeing of the people, and is there a question of the proportion and inter-se importance of news? To debate the importance of both of the two episodes mentioned above would be a pointless exercise. However, by the same token, it is true that there are other activities effecting every-day living and have been, in a manner

Hence, after resolving the concerns related to creditability arises an issue of the relative importance of the items being reported. It would be a common place to say that sensational news spreads faster and catches more attention than routine news, no matter how important it may be. Good news travels slower and catches less attention.

of speaking, overlooked.

The healthiness of a society needs to be assessed against objective indicators of health, and clearly one of them would be how much mileage does a positive news get as compared to the mileage a negative news gets.

The strength of a society comes not only from handling the unhappy episodes which lead to news but also from giving positive news the importance that it deserves. It is here again that the media need continuous help in introspection. The basic truth

is also that it is not some intransient strength and weakness of the media that sustains its life but the economic forces which nurture

its existence. As indicated above, if the media disseminates sensational information, it is because that kind of information is read more widely and followed more avidly. The problem therefore originates not just with the media but with the people who use the media. Further, it becomes a question of mass contact and mobilization of mass opin-

The time has come when one needs to revisit what constitutes a civil society and how a civil society exercises its choices and preferences. The economic and financial flows merely run in the channels which have been created with such efforts. Essentially, therefore, a question is: what is the kind of society which one has given to oneself and how do its norms get modified and operated, also,

through the media? As indicated above, this is merely the sub-structure to a much larger edifice that the society has built for itself.

(1 ne writer is a weii-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are

Emotional intelligence: The secret of outstanding leadership



As the next era of leadership unfolds, the demand for emotionally intelligent leaders has never been clearer—are you ready to rise to the challenge?

doday's corporate climate is fast-paced and continually evolving. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the secret weapon that distinguishes great pioneers from average ones; it is accompanied by a long list of excellent technical qualifications. But what precisely is this elu-

sive talent, and why is it becoming a defining characteristic of outstanding leaders?It is the ability to control our emotions and understand and empathise with others. It forms a link between self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

To speak more specifically to leaders, emotional intelligence is not only desirable but even more crucial for leaders than the desire to influence others and inspire their teams to greatness. This is where EI comes into play, somewhat like the oil that keeps the motor of leadership running. Emotionally intelligent leaders express ideas with clarity and empathy, make judgements based on both logic and emotion and maintain strong team morale and productivity.

storm rather than be tossed by it, and instead look to harness it for growth and innovation.But how do aspiring leaders cultivate this crucial

It begins with reflection. Frequent self-analytical practices, such as journaling or meditation, may promote insight. Encouraging feedback—even the difficult kind—and viewing failures as opportunities for improvement are also important com-

The most critical aspect is empathy and listening to others rather than simply hearing them. This final trait will propel a good leader to new heights. Take, for example, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella. Since the beginning of his term in 2014, he has been They prefer to ride out the considered as the driving

force behind the company's cultural shift from fierce competitiveness to collaborative innovation. So, what's the magic? A leadership style relies mostly on emotional intelligence. Empathy-driven continuous learning and development mindset not only rebuilt Microsoft's reputation but also its financial performance to unprecedented heights. Another excellent example is Jacinda Ardern, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Ardern's leadership style, which includes speaking with compassion, making clear tough decisions, and uniting the country in the face of tragedy, highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in political leadership. Looking ahead, it is clear that one aspect of good lead-

ership will remain central: emotional intelligence. While the next wave of technology will undoubtedly replace occupations in the future, leaders in any area will need to possess increasingly humane qualities such as empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation.The message is clear: to be an effective leader in the twenty-first century, we must continue to improve our emotional intelligence alongside our technical proficiency. Whether you aspire to be an established CEO or a team leader, investing in your emotional intelligence can pay you in terms of career success and personal fulfilment.

Remember that developing emotional intelligence is a lifetime journey that promises to improve not only your leadership style but also your overall approach to life and relationships. As leaders, we commit to leaving a legacy based on how we make others feel and the relationships we build. The future of leadership is in emotional intelligence: isn't it time you took the initiative?

The author is a freelance writer, views are personal)

A STATUE OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY Madam — The recently collapsed stat-

ue of Shivaji in Maharashtra, is a grim reflection of political expediency. That a statue of one of the most revered and respected figures of Maharashtra has collapsed barely nine months after its inauguration, speaks volumes about the malpractices that must have gone into the installation of a statue that was expected to last a good part of a centu-

Instead of expressing remorse and regret, the political class is doing what it knows best — ducking responsibility and pointing fingers. The pedestal and all that remains of the statue ought to be cordoned off, and preserved as a reminder of the gross failure of the present day dispensation. Near it, a stone plaque should read — This site is an admission of the government's failure to do justice to the memory of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, whose statue collapsed just nine months after it was dedicated to the people of Maharashtra.

We promise that this will never happen again. We hope to be forgiven by the people of the state with whose money the statue project was commissioned. To atone for our grave mistake, another statue is being constructed nearby. We assure you that it will last many many years and be a fitting tribute to a historical figure who is so dear to our hearts. I know too well that the shameful episode will soon be forgotten by our netas as well as the public.

Avinash Godboley | Dewas

IMPLEMENT MISSION SHAKTI

Madam — Many people are prone to depression due to the harsh realities of life like low income, pollution, bad relationships, lack of education, etc. During this post-depression, if a person does not hope to become well, then it is a sign of mental illness. The consequences of inaction are dire. Without effective support systems, women in the country are left vulnerable to violence, harass- action to fully implement initiatives like

The logic of Changing election date

THE EDITOR



■ aryana BJP's State Election Management Committee has logically put forward the view that there is a weekend holiday before the assembly election date on October

ment and exploitation. Every day, stories emerge of women who have been failed by the very systems that were supposed to protect them. These are not just isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a much larger problem – a systemic failure to prioritise women's safety. It's time that the country wakes up to the harsh realities and takes a hard look at where we stand and acknowledge that we are failing our women. The outrage over the incident in Kolkata should serve as a wake-up call for the nation. We cannot afford to delay any longer. We need immediate action to fully implement Mission Shakti in a broader sense and

ing women must be a priority. In conclusion, addressing the root causes of depression and systemic failures is crucial to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of women in our country. The recent incident in Kolkata is a stark reminder that we cannot continue to ignore the harsh realities faced by women daily. It's time for collective

the narrow minded approach of neglect-

1 and there are some holidays after that. INLD has also agreed to postpone the assembly elections. Opposition parties are hell-bent on condemning every aspect of the ruling party. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar has expressed concern over low voting percentage where people use long weekend holidays

on the day of polling. Shifting the election dates will definitely help in increasing the voting percentage. Earlier also, the dates of elections were changed in Rajasthan, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, the change of date is not important but the change of mind of voters will be more meaningful. The election Commission is a statutory independent body and should remain firm on its stand rather than bowing to the political pressure which often times is self serving than for the public good.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

Mission Shakti and move beyond narrow-minded neglect. Only by prioritizing women's safety and mental health can we hope to create a society where every woman is protected, respected, and empowered. The time for change is

K Subramaniam | Mumbai

REVIVAL OF VIVACITY

Madam — As an avid reader of The Pioneer, I am delighted to see that Vivacity is being published regularly for the past few months. I always enjoy reading Vivacity and Agenda, the reviews about art exhibitions, culture and movies being my personal favourites. Your past few features have been great, especially the Rakshbandhan one. Today, I read about the Heritage Walk and I will definitely visit Purana Qila now. The food review section is and has always been

Atharv Singh | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneér@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

UKRAINE: INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC TIGHTROPE

PM Modi's historic Ukraine visit signals new foreign policy approach



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

rime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ukraine, last week, comes at an interesting churn of events on the geopolitical landscape. The visit, a first, by any Indian PM since Ukraine was first carved out as an independent sovereign nation, had many layers of interpretations regarding India's new foreign policy approach. The timing was significant as this trip came barely six weeks after PM Modi's state visit to Moscow. The Russia trip was widely criticised by India's strategic ally US, primarily due to the timing.

Even as PM Modi was in Moscow, the NATO leaders were huddled together in Washington, discussing military aid for Ukraine. Meanwhile, Russia bombed a children's hospital in Ukraine leading to the loss of lives for civilians and children. President Zelenskyy had condemned India's PM's first visit to Russia during his third term and the US State Department had also issued stern statements regarding the trip. Indian PM had also avoided participating in the Peace Summit organised in June, to find a political solution to the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The recent visit by PM Modi to Ukraine, even as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was in Washington DC was a statement regarding India's fine balance diplomacy in times of war. President Biden, called up the Indian PM soon after his visit to Ukraine to apprise him of the prevailing situation.

The readout released from the White House read "President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. spoke today with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to discuss the Prime Minister's recent trip to Poland and Ukraine, as well as the United Nations General Assembly meetings in September. The



President commended the Prime Minister for his historic visits to Poland and Ukraine, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in decades, and for his message of peace and ongoing humanitarian support for Ukraine, including its energy sector. The Leaders affirmed their continued support for a peaceful resolution of the conflict by international law, on the basis of the UN Charter." Interestingly, the Indian PM also spoke to President Biden regarding the ongoing crisis in Bangladesh and expressed concern regarding the safety of minorities, especially Hindus, which was highlighted in the Indian statement after the telephone conversation.

The Bangladesh situation omission from the White House readout did create some murmurs across Delhi corridors. India is now making efforts to have its own Europe policy, which is not curated with a Russia factor in mind. For several decades post-independence, the Cold War era, the block approach mostly guided India's foreign policy, especially where Russia was involved. Russia has been a long-standing ally of India and is also one of the biggest exporters of defence equipment.

While maintaining silence on sensitive Russia-related topics has been India's long-standing approach, things began to change in the past few years. There is a growing sense of having an independent need-based foreign policy, amongst the top policymakers. PM Modi initiated the concept of "not a time for war" at multilateral platforms such as G20, which started finding global resonance when vocalising concerns regarding Ukraine and Russia. He upped the narrative with his clear message to Russia during his Moscow visit that permanent solutions could not be found on the battlefield. The joint statement issued post PM Modi's meeting with President Zelenskyy read

The Indian side reiterated its principled position and focus on peaceful resolution through dialogue and diplomacy. Prime Minister Modi reiterated the need for sincere and practical engagement between all stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that will have broad acceptability and contribute towards early restoration of peace." The message to global leaders, particularly the US and Russia that the recent PM Modi visit highlighted was that India is willing to engage with any nation, even if they may be in opposite camps, to find the best possible outcomes

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

Prospects of privatisation of PSUs are bleak



UTTAM GUPTA

As the Modi government shifts its strategy towards 'prudent public wealth management' the prospect of privatising PSBs are increasingly unlikely.



nnouncing Modi - government's policy on disinvestment of central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) in her Budget speech for FY 2021-22 the Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman had talked of privatizing two public sector banks (PSBs) and one insur-

A CPSU is an undertaking in which the Central government has majority share holding of more than 50 percent. Disinvestment refers to sale of its shares to private investors. When, such sale results in reduction of the government's shareholding in the CPSU to below 50 percent and concomitant transfer of ownership and management control to

private entity, this is termed as privatization. The disinvestment plans have met with disappointing results so far.

During 2021-22, against a target of Rs 175,000 crore, the actual proceeds from share sale of CPSUs were a meager Rs 15,440 crore. During 2022-23, against a target of Rs 65,000 crore, the actual was Rs 31,059 crore. For 2023-24, the actual was Rs 14,564 crore against a target of Rs 30,000 crore which itself was watered down from the budget estimate (BE) of Rs 51,000 crore. privatization, except for the safe of Air India to the Tata Group during 2021-22, the government has little to show. Apart from offloading 3.5 percent of its shareholding in the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), it is selling its stake in the IDBI Bank. The process of selling the latter that started in May 2021 is likely to get consummated during the current FY.

However, it can't be termed as privatization as already the bank was operating as a private lender even as the Centre became its passive shareholder consequent to capital infusions to manage former's bad debt losses. Currently, the government and the LIC collectively own 94.72 per cent of IDBI Bank with shareholding of 45.48 percent and 49.24 percent respectively (the remaining 5.28 percent is with Public shareholders). Of this, the Centre plans to sell a 60.7 percent stake, comprising 30.5 per cent of its own and 30.2 percent of LIC's. Will the Centre take up selling of PSBs and

an insurance company - as promised in the 2021-22 budget?

It seems unlikely. If, that were to be the case,



AS FOR PRIVATISATION, **EXCEPT FOR THE** SALE OF AIR INDIA TO THE TATA GROUP DURING 2021-22,

GOVERNMENT HAS LITTLE TO SHOW. APART FROM **OFFLOADING 3.5** PERCENT OF ITS SHAREHOLDING IN THE LIFE **INSURANCE CORPORATION**

(LIC), IT IS SELLING ITS STAKE IN THE IDBI BANK.

the government ought to have set a target for 'receipts from disinvestment in its budget for 2024-25. But, it hasn't even as the FM has made a provision for Rs 50,000 crore under the head "miscellaneous capital receipts". This has happened for te first time in a decade. Second, Team Modi is reviewing its

strategy to shift its focus from selling CPSUs to what it euphemistically describes as 'prudent public wealth management (PWM), supporting not-for-profit enterprises, and ensuring strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors'. Banking, insurance and financial services (BIFS) were one of the four strategic sectors mentioned by Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech for 2021-22.

BIFS also qualifies for not-for-profit enterprises categorization espe-cially when it comes to PSBs which are expected to contribute to realizing social objectives such as reaching out banking services to remote and inaccessible areas; making concessional credit available to small and marginal farmers and other vulnerable/deprived sections of the society; funding infrastructure development particularly in areas (for instance, rural roads, housing for the poor etc) where private banks may not be so keen to come.

Modi - government's commitment to a strong presence of state-run firms in strategic sectors juxtaposed with support for not-for-profit enterprises clearly signals that it has lost interest in privatizing PSBs and insurance companies.

Third, unlike the previous two terms when BJP had an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha on its own, in the third term, it depends on the support from its major allies namely TDP and JD (U) for implementing far reaching decisions such as privatization. Moreover, in the current political environment wherein even a small move such as 'lateral entry' of specialists from the considerations other than merit private sector (the sole intent and got them ever-greened (taking

behind this step was to deliver more effective governance in sync with contemporary challenges) is opposed by the opposition parties forcing the government to retreat, it wouldn't be inclined to make a big move such as privatization of

About a decade back, many of PSBs were on the brink. The present dispensation has made a lot of efforts to them pull back. These included amongst others capital infusion, enactment of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) for expeditious resolution of non-performing assets (NPAs), banks consolidation into fewer entities for achieving scale and greater efficiencies, computerization of bank branches and so on. Today, they are robust and healthy even as the performance of some of them is even better than private banks. this is fine.

But, we shouldn't miss the big picture. Fundamentally, most of the ills associated with the functioning of CPSUs including PSBs have a lot to do with their continued majority ownership (share holding of more than 50 percent) and control by the government. This brings them under a plethora of controls and monitoring/surveillance/vigilance and has the effect of shack-

ling its management.

Armed with it, the political establishment makes all board level appointments viz. CMD/MD etc and deputes bureaucrats on a bank's board to represent its overwhelming ownership. In other words, the entire board is geared to listen to his master's voice (read the political bosses) when it comes to taking policy decisions or even in its day-to-day running. In the past, meddling in the affairs of PSBs took the form of what came to be known as the cult of 'crony capitalism'.

The businessmen patronized by the ruling class managed loans on

a new loan to payback the earlier one). Neither, the banks insisted on repayment, nor the defaulters had any sense of fear as those who were expected to take action, chose not

In the past, the political brass also rode piggy back on PSBs for absorbing losses/liabilities created by populist policies such as supplying power to farmers and households at subsidized rates, (or even free in some states). Be it a spate of bail-outs given to power distribution companies (discoms) or loan waivers given to farmers etc, these inflicted heavy loss on PSBs. zhe idea of disinvesting PSBs

should be seen as a befitting response to the dire need for reducing bureaucratic interference and granting autonomy to their management for speedy decisions and improved functioning. It was first mooted by the NDA - dispensation under the then, prime minister Vajpayee (1999-2004). It had proposed reduction in government's shareholding in PSBs to less than 50 percent initially and eventually to 33 ercent.

In 2015, a RBI committee headed by P Nayak recommended setting up of a bank investment company (BIC) where all government shares in PSBs will be vested and divestment of its shareholding in all PSBs to below 50 percent. It also proposed setting up of an autonomous Bank Boards Bureau (BBB) to select their top manage-

ment. In 2020, the RBI recommended reduction in the shareholding of the government in six top PSBs to 51 percent. In a follow up meeting, it went a step further to recommend reduction in government's stake to 26 percent. The 2021-22 budget announcement to privatize two PSBs was a good step forward, though belated. To put it on the backburner now doesn't bode well for banks' health in the long-term.

(The writer is a policy analyst;

Global interference and India's economic sovereignty

As India rises to become a global superpower, it faces challenges not only from within but also from international entities that aim to disrupt its economic and political stability

⊣he prosperity and progress of a nation hinge on the efficiency of its governance, particularly in upholding the rule of law by those in top constitutional, administrative, and judicial positions. This also involves the transparency and accountability of regulatory regimes across various sectors of law and economy. In our modern era, characterized by freedom, equality, and democracy, many developing countries have emerged from the shadows of colonialism. Despite independence, the remnants of colonialism persist in governance and social structures, and former colonial powers often carry a lingering sense of superiority. This is evident in their interventions in other countries, where they create



political and economic crises under the guise of promoting cosmopolitan values.

These interventions are particularly harmful to independent and dynamic leaders in Third World countries. A recent example is the destabilization of the Hasina Wazed government in Bangladesh, fueled by agitation with foreign backing. In recent years, such external forces have formed an

referred to as the "deep state." This group, supported by a segment of religious extremists and a political elite, acts against their own country's interests for selfish reasons.

This insidious influence is spreading to stable democracies like India. Direct military intervention is difficult in modern times, so these forces resort to destabilizing social, political, and economic fabrics with the help of internal col-They present themselves as the

arbiters of morality, creating narratives to discredit certain groups, undermine social harmony, and ultimately destabilize economies. Their goal is to generate public unrest and overthrow democratically elected governments by erodinternational cartel, often ing the state's capacity to man-

age public welfare. This is a fallout of globalization and an attempt to reassert hegemonic control. One prominent example is

the Hindenburg Research firm, which targeted Adani Enterprises last year, leading to a severe crash in the Indian stock market and a major political storm just before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Congress party seized the

opportunity, and the Supreme Court ordered an inquiry, which eventually discredited Hindenburg's report. However, this month, Hindenburg targeted the SEBI Chairperson, accusing her of investing in Adani companies abroad. Both SEBI and Adani Group denied any wrongdoing, explaining that the investments were made before she took on her



role at SEBI. Similar uproar was seen when the Rafale aircraft deal was signed in 2015. When Hindenburg first targeted Adani, it made a profit of \$4 million, while Adani lost \$153 million in market value. However, this time, the public saw through the ruse, dismissing it as the tantrum of a disgruntled entity.

It is common for companies to role in India's ambition to

establish subsidiaries abroad, and such activities are always under regulatory surveillance, operating within the law.

Historically, India lacked a robust private sector, with Tata being the only notable corporate entity during the era of the "license raj." However, thanks to economic liberalization under the Narsimha Rao government, the private sector has grown significantly and now contributes around 27% of the country's GDP. The Indian private sector is now a crucial engine for employment, service delivery, capital flow, and industrial growth. The public sector, on the other hand, focuses on activities serving the general public, funded by tax revenues. Gautam Adani's conglomerate plays a central

become the third-largest economy, with its involvement in key sectors like electricity, port management, mining, natural gas, and infrastructure.

Among the top taxpayers in 2022-2023, only the State Bank of India (SBI) was a public sector entity, with Reliance Industries leading the list, followed by SBI and HDFC. The GDP at constant prices in May 2024 was tentatively estimated by the Indian Statistical Office at Rs173.82 lakh crore, with real Gross Value Added at Rs158.74 lakh crore for 2023-24, marking an 8% increase over the previous year. Various private sector industries played a pivotal role in this growth. Adani Group dominated the list of top value gainers in 2022, adding Rs 8.42 lakh crore to investor wealth.

When any country challenges the supremacy of these foreign powers, they attempt to destroy it by spending vast sums of money. The 'Make in India' initiative is gradually positioning Adani as a global industrial leader, alongside other Indian giants like Ambani, Tata, and Mahindra. India's technological advancements and the so1cietal contributions of companies like Tata are gaining recognition. This is precisely why foreign forces forge alliances with frustrated leaders and antinational elements, funding them to gain control over governance. The current government must take stronger actions rather than merely offering rhetoric.

(The writer is a former civil servant; views are personal)



Israel kills prominent militant |EU urged to rethink ties

AP TULKAREM

The Israeli military said it killed five more militants, including a local commander, early Thursday in the West Bank as it pressed ahead with what appeared to be the deadliest military operation in the occupied territory since the start of the war in Gaza.

Israel says the simultane ous raids across the northern West Bank — which have killed a total of 16 people, nearly all militants, since late Tuesday – are aimed at preventing attacks.

The Palestinians see them as a widening of the Israel-Hamas war aimed at perpetuating Israel's decades-long military rule over the territory

The Islamic Jihad militant confirmed that Mohammed Jaber, known as Abu Shujaa, was killed during a raid in the city of Tulkarem. He became a hero for many Palestinians earlier in the year when he was reported killed in an Israeli operation, only to make a surprise appearance at the funeral of other militants, where he was hoisted onto the shoulders of a cheering crowd. The military said he was

killed early Thursday along with

four other militants in a shootout with Israeli forces after the five had hidden inside a mosque. It said Abu Shujaa was linked to numerous attacks on Israelis, including a deadly shooting in June, and was planning more. The military said another militant was arrested in the operation in Tulkarem, and that a member of Israel's paramilitary Border Police was lightly wounded.

Israel launched a large-scale operation in the West Bank overnight into Wednesday. Hamas said 10 of its fighters were killed in different locations, and the Palestinian Health Ministry reported an 11th death, without saying whether he was a fighter or a civilian The overall toll of 16 killed

in less than two days would make it the deadliest Israeli operation in the West Bank since Hamas October 7 attack out of Gaza ignited the war there. The Palestinian Health Ministry says over 650 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the war. Most appear to have been militants killed in gunbattles during Israeli operations like the one this week, but civilian bystanders and rock-throwing protesters have also been

killed, and the territory saw a surge of settler violence. Israel says the operations are required to prevent attacks on its citizens which have also risen since the start of the war. Israel captured the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war, and the Palestinians want all three territories for their future state.

The 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under seemingly open-ended Israeli military rule, with the Western-backed Palestinian Authority administering towns and cities. Over 500,000 Jewish settlers, who have Israeli citizenship, live in well over 100 settlements across the territory that most of the international community considers illegal.

The raids have focused on refugee camps that date back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation, in which around 700,000 Palestinians fled or were driven out of what is now Israel. Many of the camps are militant strongholds.

Hamas repeated its calls for Palestinians in the West Bank to rise up, calling the raids part of a larger plan to expand the war in Gaza. The militant group has called on security forces loyal to

the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which cooperate with Israel, to "join the sacred battle of our people". Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has also condemned the Israeli raids, but his forces were not expected to get involved.

The war in Gaza erupted when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel and rampaged through army bases and farming communities, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. The militants are still holding 108 hostages, around a third of whom are believed to be dead, after most of the rest were released during a November cease-fire.

Israel responded with an offensive that has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were militants. Around 90 per cent of Gaza's population has been displaced, often multiple times, and Israeli bombardment and ground operations have caused vast destruction.

The United States, Qatar

and Egypt have spent months trying to mediate a cease-fire that would see the remaining hostages released.

with Israel over Gaza

AP BRUSSELS

The European Union must The European Chical rethink its relations with Israel as the death toll mounts in Gaza and the West Bank and impose sanctions on some Israeli government ministers accused of fomenting racial hatred, Ireland and the bloc's top diplomat said on Thursday.

At a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels, Ireland's foreign minister accused Israel of deliberately targeting civilians as well as Hamas militants with the military campaign it launched almost 11 months ago.

"This is a war against Palestinians not just against Hamas. The level of civilian casualties and dead is unconscionable," Micheal Martin told reporters. "It's a war on the population. No point in trying to fudge this."

Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed over 40,000 people, according to local health officials, displaced 90 per cent of the population and destroyed its main cities. Hamas has lost thousands of fighters and much of its militant infrastructure.

Violence has also surged in the

West Bank since Hamas' October 7 attack inside southern Israel ignited the war there. Israel launched a large-scale operation in the West Bank this week, in which Hamas said 10 of its fighters were killed in different locations.

Martin said a legal opinion issued by the International Court of Justice that Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank is unlawful obliges the EU to take action. The Palestinians have hailed it as "a watershed moment for Palestine, for justice and for international law'

'It cannot be business as usual," Martin told reporters. "It is very clear to us that international humanitarian law has been broken." Ties between the EU and Israel – which are major trading partners – are governed by a socalled Association Agreement. Ireland and Spain have been pressing their EU partners to examine whether Israel has broken the rules. The EU is the world's top provider of aid to the Palestinians but holds little leverage over Israel, notably because the 27 member countries are deeply divided in their approach. Austria, Germany and Hungary are staunch backers of Israel, while Ireland and Spain are more vocal in their support for the Palestinians. Nonetheless the bloc does have credibility as a European project founded on

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, with the backing of Ireland, urged the ministers to consider imposing sanctions on certain members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing cabinet over their remarks about the war in Gaza. 'Some Israeli ministers have been launching hateful messages, unacceptable hateful messages, against the Palestinians and proposing things that go clearly against international law and is an (incitement) to commit more crimes," Borrell said.Borrell did not name the ministers, but earlier this month he criticised Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich for suggesting that the starvation of Gaza's population of more than 2 million people "might be just and moral" until hostages captured in the October 7 attack are

HK court convicts two journalists in landmark sedition case

Hong Kong (AP): A Hong Kong court convicted two former editors of a shuttered news outlet on Thursday, in a sedition case widely seen as a barometer for the future of media freedoms in the city once hailed as a bastion of free press in Asia.

Stand News former editor-inchief Chung Pui-kuen and former acting editor-in-chief Patrick Lam were arrested in December 2021. They pleaded not guilty to the charge of conspiracy to publish and reproduce seditious publications. Their trial was Hong Kong's first involving media since the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Stand News was one of the city's last media outlets that openly criticised the government amid a crackdown on dissent that followed massive pro-democracy protests in 2019. It was shut down just months after the pro-democracy Apple Daily newspaper, whose jailed founder Jimmy Lai is fighting collusion charges under a sweeping national security law enacted in 2020.

Chung and Lam were charged under a colonial-era sedition law that has been used increasingly to crush dissidents. They face up to two years in prison and a fine of 5,000 Hong Kong dollars (about USD 640) for a first offense.

Best Pencil (Hong Kong) Ltd., the outlet's holding company, was convicted on the same charge. It had no representatives during the trial, which began in October 2022. Judge Kwok Wai-kin said in his written judgement that Stand News' became a tool for smearing the Beijing and Hong Kong governments during the 2019 protests. He said a conviction is deemed proportional "when speech, in the relevant context is deemed to have caused potential damage to national security and intends to seriously undermine the authority of the Chinese central government or the Hong Kong government, and that it must be stopped". The case was centred on 17 articles. Prosecutors said some promoted "illegal ideologies", or smeared the security

Iran gas leak kills 2, hurts 10

AP DUBAI

gas leak caused the death of Agas leak caused are are.

Transan others at an Iranian Revolutionary Guard centre, Iranian state television reported Thursday. The leak occurred on Wednesday night at a workshop belonging to the Guard in Isfahan province, and the injured people were transferred to a hospital for treatment, it

The Isfahan Provincial Guard identified the dead as Capt. Mojtaba Nazari and Lt. Col. Mokhtar Morshedi, the report

The Guard's statement did not say if the two senior officers died from being asphyxiated by gas or if the gas leak caused an explosion. It did not say how the people were injured or give other details

A number of deadly explosions at Revolutionary Guard facilities have in recent years. The most notable came in 2011, when a blast at a missile base near Tehran killed 17 people including Commander Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam, who led the paramilitary force's missile

Initially, authorities described the blast as an accident, though a former prisoner later said the Guard interrogated him on suspicion that Israel caused the explosion.

Tensions have remained high since Hamas' top political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was killed on July 31 in the Iranian Iran accused Israel of killing

Haniyeh, but Israel has not taken responsibility. Iranian top officials vowed to retaliate against Israel for the death of

Israeli officials rarely acknowledge operations carried out by the country's secret military units or its Mossad intelligence agency. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has long considered Iran to be the biggest threat his nation

In April, Iranian air defences at a major air base and at a nuclear site near the central city of Isfahan were employed against an assault in retaliation for Tehran's unprecedented droneand-missile assault on Israel In January 2023, bomb-carrying drones struck a defense fac tory in the central city of Isfahan, while in April 2023, the country's air defence systems shot down a drone strike on an Isfahan defence factory.

Tehran faces challenges as its nuclear programme rapidly enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels since the collapse of its atomic accord with world powers.

Iran's central Isfahan province has been of interest to Israel because many of Iran's nuclear facilities are located there. The underground Natanz nuclear facility, located in the province, is the country's main uranium enrichment facility. There, centrifuges rapidly spin uranium hexafluoride gas to enrich ura-

Iran sees Israel as a prime suspect in launching a series of attacks on Iran, including an April 2021 assault on its underground Natanz nuclear facility that damaged its centrifuges. In 2020, Iran blamed Israel for a sophisticated attack that killed its top military nuclear scientist.

to avoid differences over Taiwan and other issues from

Top Chinese general tells US to stop colluding with Taiwan in meeting with security adviser

A top Chinese military offi-cer, in a rare meeting with a visiting American official, demanded Thursday that the United States stop "collusion" with Taiwan, the selfgoverning island that China says must come under its

Gen. Zhang Youxia, one of two vice chairs of the Central Military Commission, told White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan that promoting what China calls the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland is the mission and responsibility" of the military, according to a statement from China's Defence Ministry.

Sullivan was wrapping up a three-day trip to China, his first as national security adviser and one aimed at maintaining communication

spiralling into conflict. Both governments are eager to keep relations on an even keel ahead of a change in the US presidency in January.

Your request to meet with me shows the value you attach to military security and the relationship between our militaries," Zhang said in brief opening remarks. Sullivan said "it is

rare that we have the opportunity to have this kind of exchange" and underscored 'the need for us to responsibly manage US-China rela-The meeting came one day

after the White House said that both countries would plan for a phone call between Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Joe Biden in the coming weeks. There was no indication whether the two leaders might meet in person before Biden leaves the Oval Office.

The announcement followed Sullivan's main talks on this

trip, a day and a half of meetings with Wang Yi, the foreign minister and the ruling Communist Party's top foreign policy official. The US doesn't recognise Taiwan as an independent country but is its main supplier of arms for its defence. China and Taiwan split in 1949 at the end of a civil war that brought the communists to power in China. The rival Nationalists fled to Taiwan, where they set up a government on the island about 160 kilometres across the Taiwan Strait from the Chinese coast. "China demands that the United States stop military collusion between the US and Taiwan, stop arming Taiwan and stop spreading false narratives about Taiwan," the Chinese Defence Ministry statement said, without elaborating on what the false narratives are. A White House statement said the two had "recognised the progress in sustained, regular military-military

past ten months" and noted an agreement announced the previous day to hold a tele phone call between commanders at the theatre-level in the near future. On Taiwan, the US statement said only that Sullivan had raised the importance of cross-Strait peace and stability. China suspended communication between the two militaries and in a few other fields after a senior US lawmaker, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, visited Taiwan in August 2022. Talks were only gradually resumed more than a year later, after Xi and Biden met outside San Francisco in November. A theatre-level call would be between Adm. Samuel Paparo, who heads the US Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii, and his Chinese counterpart, said Danny Russel, a vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute in New York.

law and law enforcement offi-

Harris, Walz will sit down for first major TV interview

Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, will sit down Thursday for their first major television interview of their presidential campaign as the duo travels in southeast Georgia on a bus

The interview with CNN's Dana Bash will give Harris a chance to quell criticism that she has eschewed uncontrolled environments, while also giving her a fresh platform to define her campaign and test her political mettle ahead of an upcoming debate with former President Donald Trump set for September 10. But it also carries risk as her team tries to build on momentum from the ticket shakeup following Joe Biden's exit and last week's Democratic National Convention. Joint interviews

during an election year are a fixture in politics; Biden and



Harris, Trump and Mike Pence, Barack Obama and Biden — all did them at a similar point in the race. The difference is those other candidates had all done solo interviews, too. Harris hasn't vet done an indepth interview since she became her party's standard bearer five weeks ago, though she did sit for several while she was still Biden's running mate. Harris and Walz remain somewhat unknown to voters, unlike

Trump and Biden of whom voters had near-universal

awareness and opinion. The CNN interview, airing at 9 pm EDT Thursday, takes place during her two-day bus tour through southeast Georgia campaigning for the critical battleground state, a trip that culminates Thursday with a rally in Savannah. Harris campaign officials believe that in order to win the state over Trump in November, they must

holds across the state. Harris, during her time as vice

president, has done on-camera and print interviews with The Associated Press and many other outlets, a much more frequent pace than the president - except for Biden's late-stage media blitz following his disastrous debate performance that touched off the end of his

campaign. Harris' lack of media access over the past month has become one of Republicans' key attack lines. The Trump campaign has kept a tally of the days she has gone by as a candidate without giving an interview. On Wednesday, Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Trump's former press secretary, suggested Harris needed a "babysitter" and that's why Walz would be there.

"They know Kamala Harris can't get through an interview all by herself. There is not a lot of confidence in somebody to

world and ask people to make her president of the United States when she can't even sit down (for) an interview," she said on "Fox & Friends."

Trump, meanwhile, has largely steered toward conservative media outlets when granting interviews, though he has held more open press conferences in recent weeks as he sought to reclaim the spotlight that Harris' elevation had claimed. After the CNN interview, Walz will peel off and Harris will continue the bus tour alone, heading to a rally before going back to Washington. On Wednesday, the duo visited a high school marching band to the delight of students, and stopped by a Savannah barbecue restaurant. Harris campaign communications director Michael Tyler said bus tours offer an "opportunity to get to places we don't usually go (and) make sure we're competing in all communities."

UK's Starmer confirms that his govt mulling crackdown on smoking from the NHS. will be raised by one year,

AP LONDON

Pritish Prime Minister Keir Starmer confirmed on Thursday that his government is looking at introducing tougher anti-smoking measures, which could potentially see a ban on smoking in outdoor spaces, including at pubs and restaurants. His confirmation came after a report in the Sun newspaper that the government was mulling a ban in pub gardens and outdoor restaurants, as well as outside facilities such as hospitals, universities and sports grounds.

Smoking in the UK has been banned inside pubs, restaurants and most workplaces since 2007. Still, smokingrelated illnesses remain a drain on the National Health Service, costing it over 2.5 billion pounds a year in England alone, according to figures

My starting point on this is to remind everybody that over 80,000 people lose their lives every year because of smoking," Starmer said in Paris while visiting French President Emmanuel Macron. "So, yes, we are going to take decisions in this space, more details will be revealed, but this is a preventable series of deaths and we've got to take action to reduce the burden on the NHS and the taxpayer.

ment, which was elected in July, has already said it will reintroduce the former Conservative administration's legislation to outlaw the sale of tobacco to anyone born on or after January 2009.

Starmer's Labour govern-

Under that plan, which didn't become law because the election was called early, the legal age that people in England can buy cigarettes

every year until it is eventually illegal for the whole population. The number of people who smoke in the UK has declined by two-thirds since the 1970s, but some 6.4 million people in the country — or about 13 per cent of the population — still smoke, according to official figures. In 2007, the legal age of sale for tobacco was raised from 16 to 18 alongside the smoking ban indoors. While health professionals broadly welcomed the prospect of a smoking ban outdoors, others argued that it is a further unnecessary intrusion by the state on people's lifestyle choices and another potential burden on businesses still struggling to recoup the losses during the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent surge in energy costs following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Suspects in foiled plot to attack Taylor Swift shows aimed to kill 'thousands'

AP BERLIN

The suspects in the foiled plot to attack Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna earlier this month sought to kill "tens of thousands" of fans before the CIA discovered intelligence that disrupted the planning and led to arrests, the agency's deputy director said. The CÍA notified Austrian authorities of the scheme, which allegedly included links to the Islamic State group. The intelligence and subsequent arrests ultimately led to the cancellation of three sold-out Eras Tour shows, devastating fans who had travelled across the globe

to see Swift in concert. CIA Deputy Director David Cohen addressed the failed plot during the annual Intelligence and National Security Summit, held this



'They were plotting to kill a huge number — tens of thousands of people at this concert, including I am sure many Americans — and were quite advanced in this," Cohen said on Wednesday. "The Austrians were able to make those arrests because the agency and our community provided them information about what this ISIS-connected group was planning to do. Austrian officials said the

main suspect, a 19-year-old Austrian man, was inspired by the Islamic State group. He allegedly planned to attack outside the stadium, where upwards of 30,000 fans were expected to gather, with knives or homemade explosives.

Another 65,000 fans were likely to be inside the venue. Investigators discovered chemical substances and technical devices during a raid of the suspect's home.

The 19-year-old's lawyer has said the allegations were "overacting at its best", and contended Austrian authorities were "presenting this exaggerin order to get new surpartners in the intelligence veillance powers. Swift broke

her silence about the cancellations last week after her London shows had concluded "Having our Vienna shows

cancelled was devastating," she wrote in a statement posted to Instagram. "The reason for the cancellations filled me with a new sense of fear, and a tremendous amount of guilt because so many people had planned on coming to those shows." She thanked authorities "thanks to them, we were grieving concerts and not lives'

ed to speak until the European leg of her Eras Tour concluded to prioritise safety. "Let me be very clear: I am not going to speak about something publicly if I think doing so might provoke those who would want to harm the fans

who come to my shows," she

she wrote — and said she wait-

Denmark has record 25 govt mins after major reshuffle

AP COPENHAGEN

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on Thursday appointed six new ministers in a major reshuffle of her threeparty centrist government, bringing the number of ministers to 25 — the largest ever in 30 years. One of the ministers will head a new government office of emergency preparedness, climate change and cyber crimes.

'The world has become more troubled," Frederiksen said as she announced that Torsten Schack Pedersen will be in charge of the new ministry, after the reshuffled cabinet was formally presented to King Frederik X. Denmark now joins Sweden to have such a department. Besides the new emergency office, the government

now has two other new ministries, bringing the total to 25, the largest since the 1993-1994 Cabinet of Social Democratic Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen who had 24 minis-

Marie Bjerre left her job as minister for digitalisation and gender equality, to become in charge of the European Union affairs, ahead of Denmark's rotating EU presidency in the second half of 2025.

Jeppe Bruus, the outgoing taxation minister, was brought in to head a brand new ministry, which will be coordinating Denmark's green policy. The Scandinavian country has a goal of 70 per cent emissions reductions by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2050.

sisting of her centre-left Social Democrats, the centre-right Bruus was replaced by Rasmus Liberal Party and the newly cre-Stoklund while Bjerre's previous ated centrist Moderates party.

job was given to Caroline Stage Olsen, who became the digitalization minister. The gender equality portfolio was handed over to Environment Minister Magnus Heunicke. In one of the major surprises

Copenhagen mayor Sophie Hæstorp Andersen was appointed as minister in charge of social affairs instead of Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil who left the government. Frederiksen, who is the leader of the Social Democratic Party,

announced Wednesday that she was doing a government reshuffle and creating three new min-In 2022, she presented the current majority government, con-

has clashed with de Moraes earlier this year over free speech, accounts associated with the far-right and misinformation, and it claims to be a victim of censorship. Earlier this month, X said it was

Brazil's top

to suspend **X** operations

court threatens

Rio de Janeiro (AP): A Brazilian

Supreme Court justice has

threatened to shut down the local

operations of X, formerly Twitter,

unless its billionaire owner Elon

Musk names an in-country legal

representative within 24 hours.

The order from Justice

Alexandre de Moraes on

Wednesday is the latest develop-

ment in an ongoing feud with

Musk's platform. The company

removing all remaining Brazil staff in the country "effective immediately," saying de Moraes had threatened its legal representative with arrest.

Russia continues heavy missile, drone bombardment of Ukraine

 $R_{\text{aerial}}^{\text{ussia}} \ \text{conducted} \ \text{a} \ \text{heavy} \\ \text{for the third time in four days}$ Thursday, again launching missiles and scores of drones that mostly were intercepted, Ukraine's air force said.

Russian forces fired five missiles and 74 Shahed drones at Ukrainian targets, an air force statement said. Air defences stopped two missiles and 60 drones, and 14 other drones presumably fell before reaching their target, it said

Authorities in the capital, Kyiv, said debris of destroyed drones fell in three districts of the city. causing minor damage to civilian infrastructure but no injuries. Russia's relentless and unnerving long-range strikes on civilian areas have been a feature of the war since it invaded its neighbour in February 2022.

Ukrainian officials have recently become more vocal in their long-standing insistence that Western countries supporting their war effort should scrap restrictions on what Ukraine is allowed to target inside Russia with long-range weapons they have provided. Ukraine President Volodymyr

Zelenskyy renewed his pleas for Western allies to untie his hands in deciding what to strike on Russian soil

"All our partners should be more active - much more active — in countering Russian terror," Zelenskyy said late Wednesday. "We continue to insist that their determination now — lifting the restrictions on long-range strikes for Ukraine now — will help us to end the war as soon as possible in a fair way for Ukraine and the world as a whole.

The European Union's top diplomat on Thursday backed Zelenskyy's push for international backers to end their limits. Ukraine has deployed domestically produced drones to strike Russia.

The Russian military said on Thursday it had thwarted an overnight attack on Crimea. The Russian Defence Ministry said its forces destroyed three Former Russian defence official detained suspected of fraud

Aformer Russian defence official was ordered detained on fraud charges on Thursday in the latest high-profile arrest of a senior mili-tary official in what appears a sweeping investigation into abuse of office in the top echelons of the military leadership. Former Deputy Defence Minister Pavel Popov faces up to 10 years in prison if he is to 10 years in prison if he is charged and convicted after being detained on suspicion of committing fraud, Russian state news agencies reported on Thursday.

The case against Popov relates to business activities at a sprawling park in Moscow sometimes called Russia's "military Disneyland."

Patriot Park, a pet project of former Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, is designed to inspire patriotism in Russia's younger generations and showcases Soviet and Russian weaponry. It has a firing range, air base, museums and conference center and a massive, khaki-colored Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces, which features mosaics of Soviet and Russian soldiers. Russian President Vladimir Putin personally donated money to commission the main icon for the church, according to the Kremlin.

Popov is now the eighth top military figure to be arrested on charges of fraud, bribery or abuse of office in recent months, including Deputy Defence Minister Timur Ivanov, who was arrested for bribery in April and later dismissed from his position. The

the Black Sea peninsula that Moscow annexed from Ukraine

The Russia-installed governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev added that four Ukrainian aerial drones and



Putin replaced long-time defence minister Sergei Shoigu with an economist, Andrei Belousov. Analysts suggest the arrests are a sign that the most egregious corruption in the defense ministry will no longer be tolerated.

Former deputy defence minister Popov was responsible for developing and maintaining Patriot Park and is accused of renovating his own properties in the Moscow region at the park's expense, Tass said. He is accused of fraud alongside the director of the park and Maj. Gen Vladimir Shesterov, deputy of the Defence Ministry's innovations department, both of whom have already been detained.

Popov forced companies that had contracts with Patriot Park to do work on his "out-of-town apartments without paying for them," Svetlana Petrenko from Russia's Investigative Committee told state news agency Tass.

In addition to a plot of land with houses outside Moscow, Popov and his family own "numerous properties in prestigious areas of Moscow, the

three sea drones were destroyed

"at a significant distance" from

In the meantime, Ukraine's

Army General Staff acknowl-

edged Thursday Ukraine's

the peninsula's shore.

the ministry had said that he was taking another job, the move was seen as punishment for flaws in supporting operations in Ukraine. on oil depots deep inside Russia, where blazes broke out. The attacks in the Rostov and

Kirov regions were part of Ukraine's effort to disrupt logis-

tical infrastructure supporting

Russia, Petrenko said. The

properties are worth a total of

500 million roubles (\$5.5 mil-

lion) and investigators are establishing whether they were

acquired legally, Petrenko told

Popov was a deputy defence minister from 2013 to June this

vear when he was dismissed by a presidential decree. His arrest

comes shortly after that of Former Deputy Defence Minister Gen. Dmitry Bulgakov who was detained in

According to Tass, Bulgakov is

charged with large-scale

embezzlement. He reportedly

oversaw the creation of a sys-

tem to supply low-quality food

rations to Russian troops at

inflated prices. If found guilty,

he faces up to 10 years in

prison. Bulgakov was deputy

defence minister from 2008 to

September 2022, when he was

dismissed. He was in charge of

logistics at the time, and while

Moscow in July.

EU envoy ramps up pressure on Ukraine's backers to permit strikes inside Russia

Brussels (AP): The European Union's top diplomat on Thursday ramped up pressure on Ukraine's international backers to lift restrictions on the use of weapons they provide the conflict-ravaged country to allow its armed forces to strike targets inside Russia.

The LIS restricts the use of

The US restricts the use of long-range ballistic missiles it provides to Ukraine and some EU members also limit the use of their weapons. Ukraine is desperate to target airfields and other military installations inside Russia that are used to stage attacks on its armed forces and civilians. "We need to lift restrictions on the use of weaponry against Russian military targets, in accordance with interna-tional law," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said as the bloc's foreign ministers gathered in Brussels to discuss Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"The weaponry that we are providing to Ukraine has to have full use, and the restrictions have to be lifted in order for the Ukrainians to be able to target the places where Russia is bombing. The Weapon Chapter is a sombing them. Otherwise, the weaponry is useless," Borrell told reporters.

Speaking alongside Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, Borrell condemned Russia's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. "Russia wants to bomb a European country into full capitulation," he said. Kuleba said that Ukraine's backers would only have themselves to blame if Russia wins.

'The success of Russia depends on one thing: on the preparedness of partners to make bold decisions. If decisions are taken, Ukraine is successful on the ground. If they are not taken, then do not complain on Ukraine, complain on yourself," he said. Kuleba insisted that Ukraine only wants to attack 'legitimate military targets' inside Russia. "If we are supplied a sufficient amount of missiles, if we are allowed to strike, we will significantly decrease the capacity of Russia to inflict damage on our critical infrastructure and we will improve the situation of our forces on the



'Over 1,000 killed during protests in Bangladesh'

PTI DHAKA

Over 1,000 people have been killed during the protests against the Sheikh Hasina-led government in Bangladesh while more than 400 were blinded by police fire, with some of them losing sight in one or both eyes, a top adviser of the interim gov-

ernment said on Thursday. Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum disclosed this during a visit to the Central Police Hospital in the capital's Rajarbagh where she interacted with the police personnel injured in clashes and spoke to those at the surgical department to ask about their condition. "So far 1,000 people have been killed and more than 400 students and members of the general public have lost their sight. Many have been blind in one eye, while others are blind in both," Nurjahan was quoted as saying by the bdnews24.com news portal. An anti-discrimination student movement against the government started in mid-July over a controversial quota system in jobs. The protests turned violent after crackdown by the forces. Several protesters were killed and injured during clashes with have lost vision in their eyes or the police in different parts of the are having eye-related issues. country. The protest movement then transformed into an antigovernment movement, demanding prime minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation. Hasina resigned and fled to

India on August 5 following the mass movement against her government. An interim government replaced her regime and 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was named its Chief Adviser - a position equivalent to prime minister. Nurjahan told the media that many police personnel who had sought treatment had injuries on their heads and legs.

She said they were speaking to an American-based institution called Sheba regarding the treatment of those who had lost vision in their eyes. A list of

those having eye issues had been provided to them. We have given the Sheba Foundation a list of those who

They said they would send doctors to our country as soon as possible. They would be treated at the Ispahani Islamia Eye Institute, the National Eye Science Institute and Hospital, the Chattogram Eye Hospital, and in Dinajpur," she said. She said the government has taken responsibility for the fam-

ilies of those who have died and to provide free treatment for the injured. "Some have had severe leg injuries and even had to have their legs amputated. We are in discussions with various donor organizations and the World Bank to bring in a team of doctors from abroad for proper treatment. We are making efforts in this regard," she said.

SCS aggression: US forces ready with 'range of options'

Awith a "range of options" to deal with increasing acts of aggression in the disputed South China Sea if ordered to carry them out jointly and after consultations with treaty ally the Philippines, a US admiral said on Thursday.

US Indo-Pacific Command chief Adm Samuel Paparo, who heads the biggest number of combat forces outside the US mainland, refused to provide details of the contingency

Paparo's comments came when asked at a news conference what the longtime treaty allies could do to deal with China's socalled gray-zone tactics in the disputed waters.

The "gray-zone tactics" refer to types of assault, like water cannon fire and the blocking and ramming of rival ships in the disputed waters, that are under the threshold of an actual armed attack and wouldn't allow the Philippines to invoke its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty with the US. The treaty obligates either

range of options and USIN-DOPACOM stands ready, if so called, after consultations in accordance with the treaty to execute those shoulder to shoulder with our ally," Paparo said. Detailing those US military options would allow "the potential adversary" to "build a countermeasure to those," he said. Paparo held a joint news conference with Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen Romero Brawner Jr, after both led an annual meeting in the northern Philippine mountain city of Baguio to discuss security challenges and military plans. They include the Balikatan — Tagalog for shoulder to shoulder — the treaty allies' largest combat exercises, which in April involved more than 16,000 American

In response to a question, Paparo repeated that the US military is open, after treaty consultations with the Philippines, to escorting Philippine ships in the South

and Filipinos forces and were

partly staged in the South China

tilities between Beijing and Such a prospect would risk putting US Navy ships in direct collisions with those of China. Washington and Beijing have been on a collision course over China's increasingly assertive actions to defend its territorial claims in the South China Sea, and Beijing's stated goal of annexing Taiwan, by force if nec-

> Brawner said the Philippines could still fend for itself in the disputed waters, where hostilities with the Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships have alarmingly spiked

> since last year. "If we exhaust all the options and nothing works, then that's the time we can ask for help," Brawner told reporters. When Filipino forces in the disputed waters "are at the verge of dying," because food supplies were being blocked by Chinese forces, "then that's the time that we are going to seek the help of the United States," Brawner said, but added that "we still have a lot of

Typhoon lashes Japan with torrential rain and strong winds

rain and strong winds Thursday, causing at least three deaths as it started a crawl up the length of the archipelago and raised concerns of flooding, landslides and extensive damage. Typhoon Shanshan made landfall in the morning on the southern island of Kyushu and about 60 centimetres of rainfall had fallen in parts of Miyazaki prefecture, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. That 24-hour total was more than the August rainfall average and swollen rivers were threat-

ening floods, it said. The typhoon was forecast to bring strong winds, high waves and significant rainfall to most of the country, particularly the southern prefectures of Kyushu. Around midday, Shanshan was moving north at 15 kph and its winds had weakened to 126 kph, JMA said. More than a dozen people were injured in Miyazaki, many of them thrown to the ground. One each was also injured nearby Kumamoto and Kagoshima

Tokyo (AP): A typhoon lashed prefectures on their way to Management Agency said.

Nearly a quarter million households were without power across Kyushu, most of them in the Kagoshima precture, the Kvushu Electric Power Co. said Ahead of the typhoon's arrival, heavy rain caused a landslide that buried a house in the central city of Gamagori, killing three residents and injuring two others, according to the city's disaster management department. On the southern island of Amami, where the typhoon passed, one person was injured by being knocked down by a wind gust while rid-ing a motorcycle, the FDMA said. Weather and government officials are concerned about extensive damage as the typhoon slowly sweeps up the Japanese archipelago over the next few days, threatening floods and landslides. The typhoon's impact was yet to be felt in the Tokyo region, where business was as usual and heavy rain was predicted later this

Thai court hands YouTube chef life sentence for murder

AP BANGKOK

court in Thailand on AThursday found Daniel Sancho Bronchalo, a member of a famous Spanish acting family, guilty of premeditated murder and sentenced him to life in prison, in a lurid case that involved the victim being

dismembered. The Koh Samui Provincial Court issued an initial sentence of death for Sancho, but in its ruling commuted it to life imprisonment due to his cooperation during the trial, Police Col Paisan Sangthep, deputy commander of the Surat Thani Provincial Police, who attended the hearing, told The Associated Press.

Sancho, a 30-year-old chef with a YouTube channel, had been charged with the murder of Edwin Arrieta Arteaga, a 44-year-old plastic surgeon from Colombia, when both were vacationing on the Thai holiday island of Koh Pha-ngan in August last

on December 20, 2006. 'Pak has no plans for talks with TTP'

convention on forced disappearances

Bangladesh signs int'l

PTI DHAKA

 $B_{\text{signed the UN convention}}^{\text{angladesh on Thursday}}$ against forced disappearance, two days after it formed a commission to trace and identify "each and every" case of forced disappearance during deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's nearly 16-year regime.

"It is a historic occasion," the press wing of the interim government chief Muhammad Yunus quoted him as saying after he inked the Instrument of Accession to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

The development comes a day ahead of the UN-declared International Day for the Enforced Victims of Disappearances, observed on August 30, for the convention adopted by the United Nations

"Now, therefore I, Professor Muhammad Yunus, Chief

Adviser, declare that the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, having considered the above-mentioned Convention, accedes to the same and undertakes faithfully to perform and carry out the stipulations therein contained," the instrument

reads. Yunus, 84, who comes from the development sector, took over as the Chief Adviser of the interim government in the country on August 8 after Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India on August 5 after protracted violent demonstrations. Later, Yunus posted on X from his official account of the Chief Adviser of the Government of Bangladesh: "Bangladesh on Thursday signed the instrument of accession to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, demonstrating its commitment to investigate each and every case of

enforced disappearances."

SL Prez offers continuity for eco recovery in election manifesto

Colombo (PTI): Sri Lankan Ranil Wickremesinghe on Thursday offered the continuation of his economic recovery path with the cash-strapped island nation's international partners as the cornerstone of his election manifesto for the presidential election scheduled for next month. The 75-year-old incumbent president is in the fray for reelection in the September 21 polls to continue the recovery programme with his legacy of ending mileslong queues for essentials and guaranteeing livelihoods in a painful reform process. "We must operate within the framework of these agreements," Wickremesinghe, also the finance minister, said, referring

to the economic bail-out agree-

ment with the International

Monetary Fund, the official

creditor committee comprising 17 countries, China, the World and the Asian Development Bank.

Sri Lanka's bankrupt economy has recorded positive growth under Wickremesinghe's leadership after the island nation reported six quarters of negative growth following the unprecedented economic crisis caused by massive forex shortages in 2022. The public protests due to shortages of essentials, power and cooking gas led to the ouster of Wickremesinghe's pre-decessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa who resigned following mass protests in 2022. The IMF-led reform programme has made the president unpopular, resulting in the lead of other front runners — Sajith Premadasa and Anura Kumara Dissanayake in unofficial polls.

PTI ISLAMABAD

Dakistan on Thursday said it **I** has no plans to hold talks with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and asked Afghanistan's Taliban government to take "robust action" against these terror groups and prevent their activities.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that the presence of terror groups, including the Tehreek--Taliban (TTP),

Afghanistan was confirmed by multiple international reports including the United Nations. We expect the Afghan authorities to take robust action against these terror groups and prevent their activities that endanger Pakistan's security, she said at the weekly press

briefing here. "Pakistan has no plans to engage in any talks with the TTP," she added.

She said Islamabad has repeatedly raised concerns about the use of Afghan territory against Pakistan. She added that Pakistan also provided intelligence to Afghanistan on terrorism but refused to disclose the details of the intelligence-sharing arrangements.

Pakistan has repeatedly called on the Afghan government to prevent its soil from being used against it by the TTP and other terrorist groups - a claim denied by Kabul

There has been an uptick in the incidents of terrorism in Pakistan since the Taliban took over the government in Kabul in 2021, dashing hopes in Islamabad that a friendly government in Afghanistan would help to tackle militancy. Relations between the two countries have lately become strained, largely because of the TTP but also due to frequent border skirmishes

In March, Pakistani air force jets carried out air strikes against terrorists in the border regions of Khost and Paktika inside the neighbouring country. Baloch said that Pakistan's decision to recognise the Afghan Taliban government would be made in consultation with regional part-

Separately, in a statement issued on the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, the Foreign Office paid tribute to those who lost their lives in counterterrorism efforts and reiterated Pakistan's firm stance against the TTP

The spokesperson also condemned the recent terrorist activities in Balochistan, reaffirming the government's commitment to ensuring the safety of its citizens.

She also said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was a transformational project that had contributed positively and transparently to Pakistan's national development. She said the corridor project enjoys support and popularity in all provinces and across the political divide in Pakistan. She clarified that Pakistan's total public debt relating to the CPEC projects is a small percentage of its total debt. Moreover, she said that the public debt obtained from China has a longer maturity period with low interest rates.

The spokesperson reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to provide full security to all Chinese nationals, projects and institu-

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जरपास ामावदाय अभारहाय कारणा राज्य उसर आनारत ामावदा दिनाय 07.09.2024 की सांग्र हा० बजे तक निविदा अपलोड किए जाने हेतु विस्तारित किया जाता है, जिन्हें दिनॉक 09.09.2024 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे खोली जायेगी ोष नियम व शर्ते यथावत रहेंगी। वरिष्ठ प्रबन्धक (वि०) उ०प्र०रा०औ०वि०प्रा०, गाजिर

ne pioneer

Sensex, Nifty scale all-time high levels

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit their all-time high levels on Thursday, driven by a rally in majors Reliance Industries and Tata Motors. The 30-share BSE Sensex

jumped 349.05 points or 0.43 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,134.61, extending winning momentum to the eighth day in a row. During the day, it soared 500.27 points or 0.61 per cent to hit a lifetime intraday peak of 82,285.83.

Rallying for the 11th straight session, the NSE Nifty surged 99.60 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,151.95. During the trade, the benchmark climbed 140.55 points or 0.56 per cent to hit a fresh record intra-day peak of 25,192.90.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Tata Motors jumped over 4 per cent, followed by Bajaj



Finserv, Bajaj Finance, HCL Technologies, ITC, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, Maruti and State Bank of

Reliance Industries climbed nearly 2 per cent after Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of the firm, said the board of the company will meet on September 5 to consider

ratio of 1:1.

'When Reliance grows, we reward our shareholders handsomely," Ambani said. Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, JSW Steel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Infosys and Tata Steel were among the biggest laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul,

issuing bonus shares in the

Tokyo and Shanghai settled

in the negative territory while Hong Kong ended

European markets were trading in the positive zone. The US markets ended lower on Wednesday.

Institutional Foreign Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,347.53 Wednesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.60 per cent to USD 78.27 a barrel.

Rising for the tenth straight session on Wednesday, the NSE Nifty went up by 34.60 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,052.35. The benchmark surged 111.85 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a fresh intraall-time peak 25,129,60.

Extending its winning run to the seventh day in a row, the BSE benchmark climbed 73.80 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at 81,785.56.

SEBI proposes mandatory UPI block mechanism facility for secondary marketing trading

Capital markets regulator Sebi has proposed mandating Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) to offer the facility of trading in the secondary market using the UPI-based block mechanism to their clients, similar to the ASBA facility. In the UPI block mechanism,

clients can trade in the secondary market based on blocked funds in their bank accounts, instead funds the transferring upfront to the trading member. The facility is currently optional for currently optional for investors, and not mandatory for Trading Members (TMs) to offer as a service to clients. Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)-like facility already available for the primary market which ensures that money from an investor gets moved only when an allotment happens.

In its consultation paper on Wednesday, Sebi has suggested that QSBs must provide the facility of trading using the UPI block mechanism in the cash

segment for their clients individuals and HUFs with an appropriate glide path for implementation. Also, it has been suggested that QSBs can offer a "3-in-1 trading account facility" as an alternative to making the ASBA-like facility mandatory.

In the case of 3-in-1 trading accounts, the clients would have their funds in their account. earning interest on the cash balances. In addition, the 3-in-1 facility would be available for cash as well as derivatives segment, without amount restrictions, while

the facility of trading using the UPI block mechanism at present shall be available only for cash segment with some restrictions on number of blocks allowed on a daily basis, Sebi said.

"However, compared to UPI facility, the facility of 3-in-1 trading accounts provide albeit adequate, protection to the clients, considering that the pay-in and pay-out of funds are routed through the TMs," it added.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) sought public comments September 12 on the

proposals. Trading Members are classified as Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) based on factors such as the size and scale of their operations, including the number of active clients, the total assets held by clients with the TM the end-of-day margin of all clients, and the trading volume of the TM.

Being designated as a QSB, brings with it enhanced responsibilities obligations. Further, QSBs also subjected to enhanced monitoring by Infrastructure

Institutions. The regulator had introduced the use of RBI-approved Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with the facility of blocking of funds, as a payment mechanism for retail investor applications submitted through intermediaries for public issues such as IPO from

The Beta version of trading through block mechanism for secondary markets was launched on January 1, 2024, for individuals and HUFs and was made applicable only to the cash segment.

January 2019

India plans repairability index for mobile, electronics to tackle e-waste

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $I_{\text{repairability}}^{\text{ndia}} \stackrel{\text{is planning}}{\underset{\text{index}}{\text{index}}}$ planning mobile phones and electronic products to address the growing e-waste problem and encourage manufacturers to more repairable items, officials said on Thursday. Affairs Consumer

Ministry is spearheading the initiative, which will provide a score on key parameters to inform consumers about the ease with which a product can be repaired, the officials said at a national workshop on the

Addressing the workshop, Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare said: "As India emerges as the third largest economy in the world, we should have a vibrant and tech-savvy repair system." She also added, "India can become a repair hub for the

The proposed index will be



similar to initiatives in other countries, such as France's repairability index. It will rate products on criteria including availability of technical documents, ease disassembly, spare parts

availability and pricing. The workshop was aimed at establishing a consensus among industry stakeholders "key parameters for accessing and evaluating repairability index" besides longevity promoting product design, democratizing repair enhance information to consumer experiences in reusing the mobile and he said.

electronics products they

Additional Secretary Bharat Khera emphasized the need for transparent and affordable repair solutions, increased consumer awareness, and support for local repairers. Joint Secretary Anupam Mishra highlighted concerns

about the lack of genuine spare parts in local markets, compatibility issues with product components, and the absence of information for consumers to repair their own devices. He also mentioned that the

Repairability Index of France rates products on five criteria, while the EU has additional parameters.

HCL Technologies Founder Ajai Chowdhry called for legislation to drive change. Today, most products are not repairable. We need to design products which can be repaired.... Unless we create a law, things will not change,"

Infosys, NVIDIA expand partnership to develop GenAl-powered solutions

Infosys on Thursday said it expanded its expanded partnership with American chipmaker NVIDIA to GenAI-powered develop solutions telecom operators.

The IT major has developed three generative AI solutions powered by its AI-offering Topaz, which make use of NVIDIA NIM inference microservices, NVIDIA NeMo Retriever embedding models, and NeMo Guardrails to customise and deploy generative AI telco domain-specific largelanguage models.

It has also used NVIDIA Riva real-time allow transcription and translations call centre agents, according to a regulatory

"Telcos are increasingly adopting generative solutions to improve the productivity with smarter businesses networks, more efficient operations, and enhanced customer service.

"Leveraging NVIDIA's fullstack accelerated computing and AI platform, Infosys Topaz is delivering a suite of domain-specific solutions that will help telcos accelerate and streamline their adoption of generative AI," Ronnie Vasishta, Senior Vice President of Telecom at NVIDIA, said. These generative-AI solutions

cent lower latency and 22 per cent absolute improvement in accuracy, the filing said. Shares of Infosys settled 0.35 per cent lower at Rs 1,932.40 apiece on the BSE.

have resulted in up to 61 per

Rupee rises 10 paise to close at 83.87 against US dollar

The rupee appreciated 10 paise to close at 83.87 (provisional) against the American currency on Thursday, supported by easing crude oil prices and a firm trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the market is awaiting cues from the US GDP and the US Personal Consumption Expenditure (PCE) inflation data, as this data point is crucial since it could sway the Federal Reserve's decision on whether to implement a 25 or 50 basis point rate cut at its September meeting. At the interbank foreign

exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.92 and touched an intra-day high of 83.84 against the US dollar. The domestic currency finally settled at 83.87 (provisional), 10 paise higher from its previous close On Wednesday, the rupee

depreciated 4 paise to close at 83.97 against the American curr ency. According to Jateen Trivedi, Research Analyst,

Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, the rupee gained 10 paise, as expectations of interest rate cuts continue to provide support, preventing the rupee from falling below 84.00. "The strong demand around

84.00 keeps the rupee buoyant, with resistance seen at 83.75. The rupee is expected to trade in a positive

84.00-83.70, Trivedi said. Meanwhile, dollar index, which gauges strength against a currencies, was trading 0.11 per higher at 101.20.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.34 per cent to USD 78.38 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex rose 349.05 points, or 0.43 per cent, to close at 82,134.61 points. The Nifty closed 99.60 points, or 0.4 per cent, up at 25,151.95 points. Foreign institutional investors

(FIIs) were net sellers in the markets capital Wednesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,347.53 crore, according to exchange

Final guidelines on project loans likely in 2-3 months: RBI official

The final project loan guidelines are likely to be announced in the next two to three months, a senior RBI official said on Thursday. The norms regarding the

Expected Credit Loss (ECL)based provisioning are in an advanced stage of discussion, the official told reporters The Reserve Bank of India

has proposed to set aside 5 per cent of the total exposure to a project till the construction of the project is

Fearing a hit to profits, banks have been asking for a relook into it, as per reports. The RBI official said up to 60

responses have been received on the project loans draft, and the central bank is going

Gold prices slipped Rs 100 to Rs 74,250 per 10 grams

in the national capital on

Thursday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal had ended at Rs 74,350 per 10

grams in the previous trade. Silver prices also plunged by Rs 600 to Rs 87,200 per

kilogram, extending the

losses in the second straight

session on Thursday from the previous close of Rs 87,800

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also declined Rs 100 to Rs 73,900 per 10 grams

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold slips ₹100;

silver plunges ₹600



through all the suggestions. When asked about the timelines by when the final guidelines will come in, the official said it will take "at least 2-3 months", but did not give a specific answer on whether the guidelines will be implemented from April 1 next year onwards.

To a question on the ECL framework, the official said the norms are in the "advance stages" of discussion.

The official admitted that there is an "overlap" on both the ECL and project finance norms, but seemed non-

on Thursday. It had settled at

Rs 74,000 per 10 grams in the

Traders attributed fall in the gold prices due to reduced demand by jewellers in the

On the global front, comex gold is trading at USD 2,555.10 per ounce, higher by

USD 17.30 per ounce or 0.68

previous trade.

local markets.

committal on whether both the guidelines will come in

These are two concurrent

streams running together, the official said, assuring that the intent of the RBI is to be non-disruptive and take into account all the impact of the guidelines before finalising guidelines before finalising. Meanwhile, on reports of higher delinquencies in microloans, the official said there is no systemic risk and entry-specific concerns are discussed bilaterally as part of

the supervisory framework. some regulatory interventions are required, they are also initiated, the official said, citing the November 2023 regulations hiking risk weights on unsecured leading.

unsecured lending.
There is "nothing on the table" right now on the MFI

If any action is taken, it will be for the entire sector and not entity-specific, the official clarified

Speaking at the annual GFF here, RBI's chief general manager Vaibhav Chaturvedi asked financiers to be more "responsible" while engaging in their core lending activities and the industry to take steps towards this aim.

The offerings need to be transparent and the regulated entities' dealings need to be fair, he underlined.

At the same conference, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research professor Ashima Goyal said the credit deposit ratios in India are much lower than in other countries and the government borrows a lot of

Green hydrogen firm Ohmium bags financial aid for 137-MW capacity under SIGHT scheme

 $G^{reen\ hydrogen\ firm}_{Ohmium\ on\ Thursday}$ said it has secured financial assistance for setting up a 137-MW electrolyzer electrolyzer manufacturing capac under the SIGHT scheme. capacity

Electrolyzer is a device that uses electricity to split water into hydrogen and oxygen through a chemical process called electrolysis. Ohmium International

(Ohmium) has been selected for the second time as a SIGHT Incentive Program award winner by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), a company statement said.

"Our selection for this award demonstrates both Ohmium commitment to excellence as well as to decarbonization in India and across the globe," said Arne



Ballantine, Ohmium CEO in the statement.

This award is a continuation of Ohmium's success in Tranche I of the SIGHT program. The tenders, implemented by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) are intended to incentivize 1.5 GW of electrolyzer domestic manufacturing capacity in support of India's India's support sustainability goals.

"India has ambitious green hydrogen goals, and this program supports India's

evolution as a global Energy hub. These funds will accelerate the expansion of Ohmium's Gigafactory in Bangalore as well as support future local manufacturing facilities", noted Ballantine. Ohmium is the PEM electrolyzer leader in India, with partnerships with industry leaders such as

NTPC and Tata Projects. The company has an active green hydrogen project pipeline of over 2 GW across green four continents, serving a diverse range of customers across energy, transportation, steel production, and heavy industry.

Headquartered in the United States with manufacturing facilities in India and operations worldwide, Ohmium has a global green hydrogen project pipeline exceeding 2 GW across three continents.

India rating at BBB with stable outlook PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fitch retains

Global rating agency Fitch on Thursday affirmed India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook. India's rating has remained unchanged at 'BBB-', the lowest investment grade, since August 2006. "Fitch Ratings has affirmed India's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at BBB-' with a Stable Outlook," the global rating agency said in a statement.

India's ratings are underpinned by its strong medium-term growth outlook, which will continue to drive improvement in structural aspects of its credit profile, including India's share of GDP in the global economy, as well as its solid external finance position, it said in a statement.

Strengthening fiscal credibility from recent achievement of deficit targets, enhanced transparency and buoyant revenues, have increased the likelihood that government debt can follow a modest downward trend in the

medium term, it said. Nevertheless, it said, fiscal metrics remain a credit weakness, with deficits, debt and debt service burden all high compared to 'BBB' range peers. Lagging structural metrics, including governance indicators and GDP per capita, including

also weigh on the rating, it added. Observing that India is set to

remain among the fastest-growing sovereigns globally, it said, "we forecast GDP growth of 7.2 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2025 (FY25) and 6.5 per cent in FY26, down slightly from 8.2 per cent in FY24."

Tyre exports from India rise 17 per cent in Q1: ATMA

Tyre exports from India grew 17 per cent year-on-year to reach Rs 6,219 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal with the US emerging as the biggest market, industry body Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association

Manufacturers Association (ATMA) said on Thursday.

Tyre exports from India recouped in the first quarter of FY25, increasing by 17 per cent yoy. Tyre exports had declined by 14 per cent in the by 14 per cent in the corresponding quarter in the previous year, ATMA said citing data just released by the Ministry of Commerce. Sustained focus on R&D and



technology products aided by competitive pricing and branding efforts helped Indian tyre manufacturers drive growth in exports despite a challenging environment, ATMA Chairman Arnab Banerjee said in a statement. "Improving demand prospects in key export destinations and expected monetary easing also helped growth," Banerjee added. The rise in exports is a testament to the Indian tyre industry's enhanced integration with global supply chains, he added. globally

regulatory environment in the country for manufacturing of tyres also augurs well for increasing the addressable market manufactured tyres," Banerjee During Q1FY25, the US was

the largest export destination for Indian manufactured tyres accounting for 17 per cent share. Other large export destinations included Brazil, Germany, France and Italy, the

LIC hands over ₹3,662 cr dividend cheque to Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) on Thursday handed over a dividend cheque of Rs 3,662.17 crore to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The cheque was presented by Siddhartha Mohanty, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director of LIC to the finance minister in the presence of M P Tangirala, Additional Secretary, Secretary, Ministry of Finance. LIC also paid an interim dividend of Rs 2,441.45 crore on March 1, 2024, thus

रितीय जीवन बीमा निग् E INSURANCE CORPORATION OF IND

totaling Rs 6,103.62 crore dividend paid to the Centre for the year 2023-24. LIC, which completed 68 years since its incorporation, has an asset base of over Rs 52.85 lakh crore.

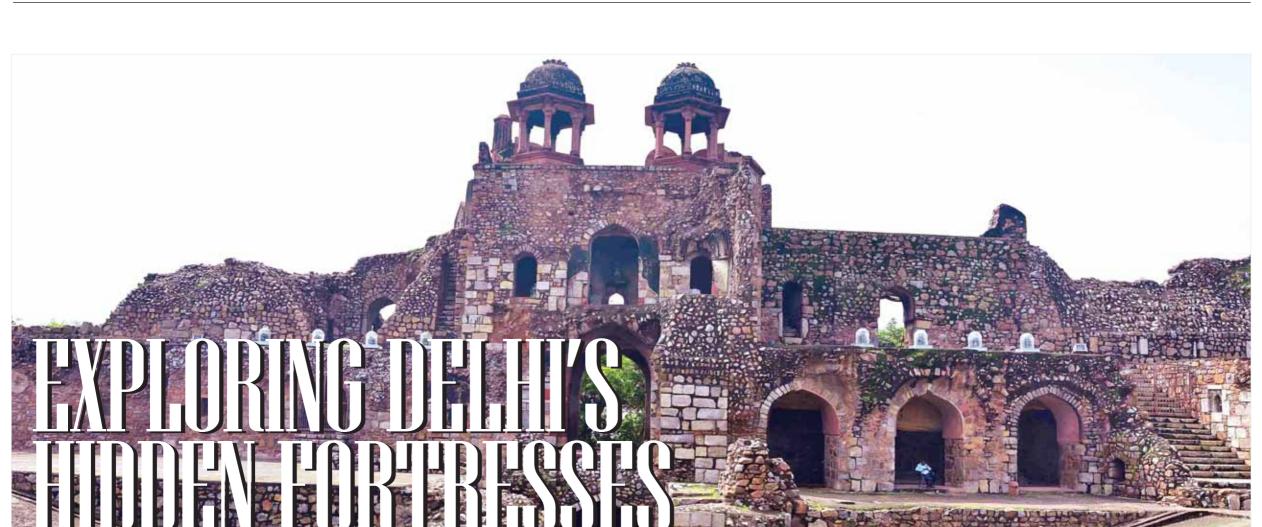


Photo: Pankai Kumar

Discover the rich history and architecture of Delhi's forts in Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai, offering an engaging and insightful exploration of the city's past, says SAKSHI PRIYA

part of the Delhi Heritage series, this book dives deep into the architectural and historical readers a comprehensive view of Delhi's rich past. Rooprai, a dedicated heritage activist and educator has put together a guide that blends historical facts with accessible to both history enthusiasts and casual readers.

One of the highlights of the book is description of Shahjahan's grand how it sheds light on not just the famous forts like the Red Fort and Purana Qila, but also on the lessertone for the book's rich narrative known ones, such as Qila-i-Rai Pithora and Nai ka Kot. Rooprai takes readers on a journey through

elhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts the history of these forts, detailing by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai their construction, purpose and the is an engaging journey of events they have witnessed over ten prominent forts in Delhi. As centuries. The book stands out because it goes beyond the typical tourist information, offering a more detailed look at how these forts fit significance of these forts, offering into the broader historical and cultural context of Delhi.

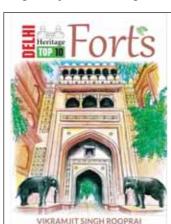
BHUBANESWAR | FRIDAY | AUGUST 30, 2024

he pioneer

The book opens with a vivid portrayal of the Red Fort, a symbol of Mughal grandeur. Rooprai captures the momentous day of 18 intriguing stories, making it May 1648, when Emperor Shahjahan inaugurated this architectural marvel. The entry, with Prince Dara Shikoh showering him with coins, sets the style. The Red Fort's formidable outer walls, crowned with ornate chhatris and punctuated by five

principal gates, are brought to life through Rooprai's evocative prose. Following the Red Fort, Rooprai delves into the history of Purana Qila, a site steeped in both myth and historical significance. The fort is traditionally believed to be built on the grounds of Indraprastha, the legendary capital of the Pandavas. Rooprai skilfully interweaves folklore with historical facts, recounting legends such as Lord Krishna's demand for Khandavprastha. The Darwaza (large gate) of Purana Qila stands as an attestation to its historical importance and Rooprai's detailed descriptions make it clear why it has been a must-visit site since the British era.

Tughlaqabad Fort, the largest surviving fort in Delhi, takes centre stage next. Commissioned by Sultan



Ghiasuddin Tughlaq between 1321-1323 CE, the fort's imposing ruins and its strategic significance during the Tughlaq dynasty are examined. Rooprai brings to light the fort's intriguing lore, including the another

reputed curse by Sufi mystic Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya condemned it to remain abandoned. The fort's role in defending Delhi from Mongol invasions underscores its military importance, a facet Rooprai explores with both depth and

The book also highlights the contributions of Feroz Shah Tughlaq, whose focus on public works and irrigation earned him the title 'Father of the Indian Irrigation System'. Rooprai describes Feroz Shah's efforts to improve the lives of his subjects and his legacy of equality and prosperity. This section provides insight into the ruler's priorities and the architectural innovations that characterised his reign. Salimgarh,

introduced as a strategic outpost built by Islam Shah Suri, son of Sher Shah Suri. Rooprai's account of Salimgarh's strategic location on a riverine island near the Yamuna and its role in defending Delhi adds a layer of understanding to the city's fortification network.

Rooprai's narrative is enriched by

his ability to convey the fort's historical and cultural significance. His engaging writing style and meticulous research offer readers a window into the past, highlighting how these structures reflect the evolving history of Delhi. The book is peppered with narrative and detailed descriptions that humanise the history of these fortresses, making their stories accessible and compelling.

Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by

than just a guide, it's a celebration of Delhi's rich historical and architectural heritage.. Rooprai's engaging narrative brings these majestic structures to life, making it an invaluable resource for both history enthusiasts and those curious about Delhi's cultural legacy. Through its insightful and meticulously researched content, the book highlights the importance of preserving our historical landmarks and provides a compelling journey into the depths of Delhi's heritage.

BOOK DETAILS:

Book Name & Author: Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai Price: INR 499

Pages: 214 Vikramjit Singh Rooprai is more Publisher: Niyogi Books

NEW ARRIVAL

The Battle of Haji Pir: The Indian Army's **Cross-Border Surgical Strike**



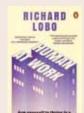
The Battle of Haji Pir" by Kulpreet Yaday offers a profound exploration of the 1965 Indo-Pak war. focusing on the pivotal vet often overlooked Haii Pir hattle which was surrendered under the Tashkent Agreement. Yaday's hook brings to life the valor and sacrifices of Indian soldiers, making

the complexities of military history accessible to all readers. Yadav's detailed account highlights the strategic maneuvers of the Indian Army during Operation Gibraltar and their critical role in defending Kashmir The book also delves into the behindthe-scenes diplomacy and concessions made for peace, providing an insider's perspective on

the conflict. With over 15 books to his name, Kulpreet Yaday combines thorough research with engaging storytelling, making "The Battle of Haii Pir" a compelling read for military enthusiasts and history buffs. Available this September in

Human at Work by Richard Lobo

major bookstores and online platforms.



Richard Lobo, Chief People Officer at Tech Mahindra, delves into the evolving workplace, emphasising the importance of keeping humans at the center of technological shifts. The book explores themes like agile leadership, ethical decision-making, and

In "Human at Work."

human-centric technology, offering practical insights and real-world examples. Lobo underscores that every company today, regardless of industry, is fundamentally a tech company, driven by human expertise and

"Human at Work" highlights the power of microtransformations to spark significant change, making it a valuable read for HR professionals. managers and anyone navigating today's complex work landscape. Lobo's approach is particularly relevant to the Indian market, with timely discussions on hybrid work models and managing technological disruptions. Available this September in major bookstores and online this book serves as a roadmap for leading with a human-first mindset in an increasingly digital

Genetic Study Refutes Eelam Tamil Origins

A new genetic study reveals that Sri Lanka's Tamil and Sinhala populations are genetically similar, challenging claims of distinct Eelam Tamil origins and questioning the basis for separatist movements

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

n international team of scientists, Adrawn mainly from Sri Lanka and India, have demolished the concept of Eelam Tamils in the island nation through a comprehensive genetic study. A three-year long molecular biology research spanning across Sri Lanka and India have established that the population in the island nation is homogeneous in nature and there is no scientific basis for the claims by the Tamils that they had their origin in that country. The findings prove that the demand for a separate Eelam(country) for Tamils is bunkum and thousands of Tamils and Sinhalese massacred in the war for Eelam died for a non-existent cause. "The Sri Lankan population, mainly the Sinhala and Tamils, have massive genetic mixing. If the Tamils had their origin in Sri Lanka, their DNA should be visible and discernible. But it is missing," said Prof Gyaneshwer Chaubey, Department of Zoology, Banaras Hindu University who led the team of scientists in this path breaking research.

The peer-reviewed research paper "Reconstructing the Population History of the Sinhalese, the major ethnic group of Sri Lanka," has been published in iScience, a widely respected scientific portal. While Dr Chaubey led the team of Indian scientists, R Ranasinghe (Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University Colombo) led the researchers from the island nation. It may be remembered that Dr Chaubey and a team of researchers from Estonia, Harvard and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (Hyderabad) had demolished the Aryan and Dravidian linguistic theory and proved that both of these groups share the same forefathers. "The analysis based on



Dr Gyaneshwar Chaubey in discussion with a Sri Lankan student of his research team

the frequency of various genetic mutations showed a tight cluster of Sinhalese and Tamil populations, suggesting strong gene flow beyond the boundary of ethnicity and language. A further connection of Sinhalese with the West of India has been established based on the traces of DNA segments. Overall in the South Asian context, Sri Lankan ethnic groups are genetically more homogenous than others", said the team leaders.

The study also found that the Sinhala language spoken in the country is a combination of Konkani, Marathi, Sanskrit and Gujarati and reached the island nation through Arabian Sea. According to K M Raghavan, a Sri Lankan historian, the Tamils could have reached Sri Lanka as part of the Kaurava army units hired by the princes of the island nation to fight for them as private army warriors.The Kauravas, who were defeated by the Pandavas in the Mahabharata War took refuge in the East Coast of India and reached Sri Lanka at the invitation of various Kings in the island nation. Following the Portuguese occupation of Sri Lanka, the Kauravas converted to Christianity and their name was

changed to Karavas. Raghavan in his book.

Wijayabalan,

Ramaswami

plantation owner and Tamil scholar based in Colombo, told The Pioneer that the Tamils in north and north east of Sri Lanka are descendants of migrant workers from Malabar province in present day Kerala. "The Tamil they speak, their food habits and social life have their origin in Malabar. The priests in temples in North and East are addressed as Gurukkal as they had come here for teaching martial arts and offering poojas," said Wijayabalan. He asked how puttu, appam etc became the staple food of the Jaffna and Batticaloa Tamils. Interestingly, Ceylon and Colombo find mention in novels and short stories in Malayalam whereas the same is not that common in yesteryear literary works in Tamil, said Josephine Jayashanthi, leading novelist in Tamil Nadu. Dr S Kalyanaraman, Indologist of repute, concurred with the findings of Dr Chaubey and his team. "You may be able to distort history but you cannot distort science. The study by Dr Chaubey is based on pure science and no force can repudiate the same," said Kalyanaraman who deciphered the Indus script.

Revolutionising India's Dairy Industry: The Inspiring Legacy of Verghese Kurien

MS Meenakshi's "Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes" chronicles the transformative journey of the 'Milkman of India, whose visionary leadership and innovative approach revolutionised India's dairy industry and empowered rural communities, writes TEAM VIVA

Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes by MS Meenakshi is a compelling tribute to the 'Milkman of India,' whose visionary leadership and relentless dedication transformed India's dairy industry and rural economy. This book, part of the Pioneers of India meticulously series, chronicles Kurien's journey from unconventional engineer in Anand, Gujarat to becoming the architect of the White Revolution and a pivotal figure in post-Independence

MS Meenakshi vividly captures the essence of Kurien's pragmatic leadership his many accomplishments in the development of cooperative societies, which became a bedrock of India's dairy sector. The book emphasises Kurien's commitment to sustainable development and entrepreneurship, highlighting how he championed the interests of rural stakeholders. Through initiatives like the creation of AMUL and the Institute of Rural Management in Anand, Kurien only revolutionised dairy management but also spurred significant changes in rural socio-economic structures, industries, developmental policies. One of the book's strengths

lies in its detailed portrayal of Anand to a formidable social Kurien's partnerships with



prominent Indian leaders such as Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Lal Bahadur Shastri and Iawaharlal Nehru. These collaborations played readers, making Kurien's a crucial role in the growth of achievements all the more India's economy inspiring.

Independence. The author also delves into the challenges Kurien faced, from bureaucratic hurdles and corruption to dealing with inefficient officials and self-serving lobbies. Despite these obstacles, Kurien's unwavering dedication to rural development and his iron will to stand by his principles shine through. His first loyalty was always to the farmers and stakeholders, a stance that led him to establish a network of small-scale cooperatives that empowered millions of farmers and made India a self-sufficient producer of

milk by the 1970s. The narrative is enriched with insights into Kurien's personal growth, from a misfit engineer who initially struggled to find his place in

and intimate, offering a balanced view of a leader who was as astute as he was MS Meenakshi's writing is both informative and engaging. Her expertise is evident in the way she presents complex economic and social concepts in a manner that is accessible to

Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes is more than just a biography, it's an inspiring roadmap for future thinkers and leaders in sustainable development. It reminds us of the power of visionary leadership and the impact that one dedicated individual can have on a nation. For anyone interested in the history of India's economic development, social entrepreneurship or the story of a man whose legacy continues to feed millions, this book is a must-read.

BOOK DETAILS: Price: INR 299 Format: Paperback **Pages:** 176 Publisher: Paper Missile Imprint, part of the Pioneers of India series by Niyogi

INDIA'S CHANCES OF WINNING IN AUSTRALIA WILL DEPEND ON BATTERS: JOHN BUCHANAN

ormer Australia coach John Buchanan believes India's chances of completing a hat-trick of Test series wins Down Under will hinge on how the visiting batters, including "ageing' stars Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, tackle the hosts' battery of pace bowlers.

For the first time since 1991-92, India will tour Australia for a five-match Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, with the opening game scheduled to be played at Perth from November 22.

Buchanan, who presided over Australia's golden run in all forms in the first decade of this millennium as head coach, said both India and Australia have plenty of ageing players at disposal but that will not be a deterrent to the competition between the sides.

"Australia (has), since losing to India in the last series, the pace bowling attack with (offspinner Nathan) Lyon, backed up now by Cameron Green or Mitch Marsh, is just a really, powerful bowling lineup," Buchanan told PTI on Thursday after the launch of 'Ready Steady Go Kids' multisport program for the CP

Goenka International School. "India's top order, (Yashasvi) Jaiswal, (Rohit) Sharma himself, (Virat) Kohli, possibly Iyer... they've got to bat really well to establish totals and then the likes of (Jasprit) Bumrah, (Mohammed) Shami, (Mohammed) Siraj will come into their own," he said. Buchanan said there won't be much of a psychological impact of India's wins in Australia on the previous two

are not likely to be a part of the touring squad for the upcoming series. The previous series that India won - important from both, Indian perspective and an Australian perspective - a little bit of the mind games will go into the pre-series," he said.
"But for all that, those games have passed, those players are gone and the current players we have both in the Australian side and the Indian side, they're at a stage of their careers where they all want to

tours given that two of the

mainstays then - Cheteshwar

Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane -

perform."
"I looked at the ages and India



has got some aging players in that side notably Rohit who's 37 and Kohli is 35, (Ravichandran) Ashwin, if he tours, he's 37 and you look at the Australian side, there's only one or two players who are under 30

"It'll be very much a battle again between the very good pace bowling attacks of both sides and how well the top order players of both sides can deal with the ball that will bounce, seam and probably swing a little bit more in the day-night game in Adelaide," he said

BATTING FOR LONGER PERIODS: Buchanan said it will be key for India to bat for longer periods in Australia and tire out their bowling attack, something that Pujara executed to perfection in 2018-Pujara 19 facing 1,258 balls. Two years

later, Pujara faced 928 balls as India once again won the series

"Why Australia plays well at home is they do bat well, they understand their conditions." but that lineup of (Pat) Cummins, (Mitchell) Starc, (Josh) Hazlewood, backed up by Lyon, is just one of the alltime best all-round attacks that world cricket has seen," he said. "Albeit that, Starc is (nearly) 35, Hazlewood is 33, Cummins is 31 - it's a five-Test series - so if India can not only bat well, but bat for long periods of time, then it will test the physical capacities of that Australian bowling attack and therein potentially lies a little bit of a key to how India can look at winning the series," he

Buchanan said the lack of preparation among travelling

teams will be a hinderance that India will face as well.

India will play a two-day pink-ball match against the Prime Minister's XI on November 30 and December 1 ahead of the day-night Test.

"Australia is favourite going into the series right at this stage. When you look around world cricket these days - and it has been (the case) for some time it has been (the case) for some time - it's very difficult to tour other countries," he told

reporters later.
"(The) travelling teams no longer have that preparation in a country. They don't play two or three games prior to playing the first Test match to adjust to a country, because nobody wants to tour for that long.
"That makes it very difficult

when you go to Perth, when it's fast and bouncy, for a side that's coming from, they will have played Bangladesh (and New Zealand) obviously, b Bangladesh at home isn't it?

"The wickets are going to be completely different, albeit it's fantastic lead-in that they're playing some Test cricket, but it's going to be quite difficult to go to Perth to start with," he said. Buchanan added that he was also not in favour of Steve Smith continuing as Australia's

"Not personally. He's made his mark at No 4. But I'm not a selector, and I'm not the captain, and I'm not Steve Smith and so those three people will end up making the decision that they think best fits the make-up of that side,"

Wimbledon champion Krejcikova out of



Paralympic Games opening ceremony starts the final chapter on a long summer of sport in Paris

Just weeks after hosting the Olympics, Paris inaugurated the 2024 Paralympics on Wednesday with a nearly fourhour-long opening ceremony in the heart of the city.

Against the backdrop of a setting sun, thousands of athletes paraded down the famed Champs-Elysées avenue to Place de la Concorde in central Paris where French President Emmanuel Macron officially declared Paralympic Games open.

About 50,000 people watched the ceremony in stands built around the iconic square, which is the biggest in Paris and is visible from afar because of its ancient Egyptian Obelisk. Accessibility for athletes in wheelchairs was facilitated with strips of asphalt laid along the avenue and placed over the square. More than 4,000 athletes with physical, visual and intellectual impairments will compete in 22 sports from Thursday until Sept. 8. Organizers say more than 2 million of the 2.8 million tickets have been sold for the various Paralympic events. The opening ceremony was

held outside the confines of a stadium, just like when the Olympics opened in the city on July 26. Fighter planes flew overhead, leaving red-whiteand blue vapors in the colors of the French national flag, before the delegations entered the square in alphabetical order.

Some delegations were huge -more than 250 athletes from Brazil - and some were tiny less than a handful from Barbados and just three from Myanmar. Ukraine's delegation got a loud

cheer and some of the crowd stood to applaud them.

Flag bearers Steve Serio and Nicky Nieves led the U.S. Team's delegation. The French arrived last and to roars from the crowd, which then sang along to popular French songs, including "Que Je Taime" by late rocker Johnny Hallyday. Throughout the show, directed by Thomas Jolly who also led Olympic opening ceremony, singers, dancers and musicians with and without

disabilities performed on stage together seamlessly, projecting a theme of inclusion and overcoming physical differences. Lucky Love, a French singer who lost his left arm at birth, was joined by performers in wheelchairs. Other acts featured dancers with crutches.

Paralympic International Committee President Andrew Parsons said he hoped the Paris Paralympics would start "inclusion revolution" beyond the field of sport.
"The Paris 2024 Paralympic

Games will show what persons with disabilities can achieve at the highest level when the barriers to succeed are removed," he said in a speech. The fact these opportunities largely exist only in sport in the year 2024 is shocking. It is proof we can and must do more to advance disability inclusion - whether on the field of play, in the classroom, concert hall or in the

boardroom."

As the ceremony concluded, the Paralympic torch was carried into the area by former Olympic wheelchair tennis gold medalist Michaël who Jérémiasz, surrounded on stage by dozens of torchbearers. Five French Paralympians lit the Olympic cauldron, which is designed to look like a hot air balloon and glowed gold-like in the night.



Nitish-Thulasimathi duo makes winning start in Paralympics

India's Nitesh Kumar and **▲**Thulasimathi Murugesan had little difficulty overcoming country-mates Suhas Yathiraj and Palak Kohli in the opening group stage match of badminton mixed doubles (SL3-SU5) at the Paralympic Games here on Thursday.

However, mixed doubles duo of Sivarajan Solaimalai and Nithya Sre, seeded second, lost their SH6 group play stage match in straight games to the American pair of Miles Krajewski and Jayci Simon.

The Nitesh-Thulasimathi duo won the Group A contest 21-14, 21-17 in 31 minutes.

Nitesh, 29, who hails from Karnal district in Haryana, and young Thulasimathi, a veterinary science student from Tamil Nadu who had won the mixed bronze at the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, encountered little challenge in the first game and at one stage they were leading by seven points. Unable to counter the pair's net play and deep tosses, Suhas and Palak quickly

timetable for when Messi, the

eight-time Ballon d'Or winner,

found themselves trailing, losing the game in just 14 minutes. similar lines with Palak clearly not able to match the prowess of her senior partner on court and

giving away points. SL3 players have moderate impairment on one side of the body, affecting either both legs or the absence of limbs, while SU5 players have significant impairments in their upper limbs. In Group B, Sivarajan and Nithya gave a tough challenge to the American pair before going down 21-23, 11-21 in 35 minutes in SH6 category. SH6 is for badminton players with short

Sivarajan, who trains at the Pullela Gopichand Academy in Hyderabad, and partner Nithya were equal to the task in the opening game and also took a slender one-point lead but the slender of the young American pair, who are both in their late teens, were too agile on court and fought for

every point. The second game turned out to be one-sided with the tiring

I'm very proud about it and how I was able to handle everything there," said Krejcikova, who hadn't played a $F_{
m rematch}^{
m rances}$ Tiafoe is getting the rematch he wants, a second shot at tournament on hard courts since Ben Shelton at the U.S. Open. February.

But there won't be a second straight "I think I was playing quite well, Grand Slam title for Barbora definitely better than in the first match. I think my game was Krejcikova. improving, but it just wasn't enough." The Wimbledon champion was knocked out of the U.S. Open in the second round on Wednesday, No woman has won Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in the same year since defeated by Elena-Gabriela Ruse 6-4,

Serena Williams in 2012.

Tiafoe had short work on the steamiest day of the tournament thus far, with temperatures in New York surpassing 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius). Three men's matches ended when an opponent stopped playing, the last one sending defending champion Novak Djokovic to the third round when Laslo Djere amazing. It's a great, great, great result, retired early in the third set with what



appeared to be pain near his hip after they played for more than two hours across the first two sets. "You know, in the end, not the kind of

finish that we players or crowd wants to see, but I think it's probably due to that physical battle that we had in the opening two sets," the No. 2-seeded Djokovic said. Tiafoe, the No. 20 seed, won the first

two sets before his opponent, Alexander Shevchenko, retired after the first game of the third set.

Shelton, the No. 13 seed, later beat Roberto Bautista Agut 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. He ousted Tiafoe last year in the quarterfinals, stopping Tiafoe from what would have been a second straight trip to the U.S. Open

"Obviously he's very much like me in how excited and energetic he is on the court," Tiafoe said, "and has such a big game and big shots and serves big and gets the crowd going? Well, maybe not quite as well as

Tiafoe does. 'I know that the people love him here. Probably more than me. He's electric here, and his crowds are electric here,"

the 21-year-old Shelton said. "It will be a battle. It will be a war just like the last two times we've played. Yeah, I'm more than excited to be out

there with him again." They were two of the four American men to reach the third round in the bottom half of the draw, No. 12 Taylor

Fritz got there by beating Matteo Berrettini 6-3, 7-6 (1), 6-1, while Brandon Nakashima beat Arthur Cazaux and will next play No. 18 Lozenzo Musetti, the bronze medalist at the Olympics.

Novak Djokovic reaches US Open third round

AP ■ NEW YORK

AU.S. Open match that Novak Djokovic already expected to be difficult was threatening to become a toss-up as he struggled with his serve. Missing more than he made, Djokovic couldn't get many quick points Wednesday night. He acknowledged that he should have lost the second set, and if his opponent didn't get injured and have to stop, maybe he wouldn't even have won that match.

The No. 8-seeded Krejcikova won her

second Grand Slam singles title this summer, but then she didn't play any

matches after the Paris Olympics. She

acknowledged last week not knowing

Turns out, it wasn't good enough.
"I mean, winning Wimbledon is

where her level of play was.

Once he had, the defending champion was only looking ahead.

"The matches are only going to get tougher from here. I know that, but I'm fine," Djokovic said. "I'll find my way, as I have done many times in my career." Djokovic reached the third round when Laslo Diere had to retire with the No. 2 seed leading his Serbian countryman 6-4, 6-4, 2-0.

Djere was leading 4-2 in the second set when he appeared to be troubled by pain near his hip and was visited by a Indians losing in just 14 minutes. | trainer later in the set. He finished that



set, which lasted 69 minutes after the first one went 60, but didn't last much

"In the end, not the kind of finish that we players or crowd wants to see, but I think it's probably due to that physical battle that we had in the opening two sets," Djokovic said.

It was the 90th win at the U.S. Open for Djokovic, making him the first man to reach that total at all four Grand Slams. The 24-time major champion will play No. 28 seed Alexei Popyrin on Friday. Djere was the only player to win a set against Djokovic at last year's U.S. Open, grabbing the first two in their

third-round encounter before Djokovic

"So I knew coming into the match that if I don't serve well, which was the case, I'm going to have to really grind and work for my points a lot," Djokovic said. "That's what I guess caused the two sets to be played over two hours."

to be played over two hours."

Djokovic made only 47% of his first serves and appeared to be struggling physically himself earlier in the match, which was just his second since winch was just his second since winning the gold medal in the Olympics. Djere had two chances to break Djokovic's serve for would have given him a 5-2 lead in the second set. . Instead, he wouldn't win another game, with Djokovic breaking to win the set when Djere yanked a forehand out of bounds.

"All in all, of course, I have to be happy with the win," Djokovic said, "and happy that in important moments I managed to play one ball more than him over the net, I guess find the right shots or anticipate well as I did in the set point in the second set.



completes second Formula 1 test at Imola

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Kush Maini, India's sole rep-resentative in Formula 2 series, has completed his second Formula 1 test at Italy's Imola circuit as a member of Alpine's junior driver program.

Maini had driven Alpine's 2022 car for the first time at the Red Bull Ring in June.

The two-day test at Imola, a track renowned for its challenging layout and rich motorsport history, saw Maini behind the wheel of the Alpine A522, the 2022 season race car.

Maini was a part of a two-day testing event for the Alpine team alongside Jack Doohan, who recently secured a promotion to Formula 1.

This latest test comes at a crucial time, as the team's reserve driver spot opened up earlier last week, presenting a significant

opportunity for Maini. After 99 laps and close to 500 Km of high speed and adrena-line, the 23-year-old shared his

thoughts. 'Can't thank Alpine enough for this opportunity. Very strong day, both qualification and race

pace looked very good. Can't wait for the next one." Representing Invicta in Formula 2, Maini will return to action at Monza over the weekend. In his second season in the F1 feeder

series, Maini is ninth in the standings with 74 points. He bagged his first ever Formula 2 win by topping the sprint race at the Hungarian GP.

Messi joins group training with Inter Miami **AP** ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (FLORIDA) qualifiers in early September. "To see him on the field is great," Inter Miami goalkeeper Ligroup training with Inter ionel Messi returned to Drake Callender said after the Wednesday workout. "I know Miami on Wednesday, more he's been getting treatment than six weeks after the Argentina captain left the Copa every single day, training every single day. He's dealt with things before. He's been there, done that and he's still doing it at the highest level. To see him recoup from the kind of injury traceur to Cope America and he America final with a badly sprained right ankle. There is still no official

will play again for Inter Miami which has the best record in Major League Soccer so far this season. Inter Miami visits Chicago on Saturday, then doesn't return to MLS play until we have here." a Sept. 14 match with Philadelphia. If Messi doesn't play this weekend, that means he'd have two more weeks to continue rehabbing before returning to game action. Messi was not selected by injury. Also missed by Messi in Argentina to play in World Cup that span: all four of Inter

we saw at Copa America and be available for us this season, it goes to show the quality of care Messi has 12 goals and 13 assists in 12 MLS games with Inter Miami this season. He's missed 14 of the club's league matches, including each of the last eight either because he was playing for Argentina or recovering from the ankle



Miami's matches in Leagues Cup play, as the team tried to defend the trophy it won a year

ago. Messi last played on July 14, leaving in the second half of Argentina's win over Colombia in the Copa America final. He was dealing with leg issues throughout that tournament, plus left the field briefly in the first half of the final because of a left ankle issue - then got hurt again in the second half and had to leave for good.

If Messi doesn't play until the Sept. 14 match, he'll have had exactly two months to recover and rehab plus gear up for the MLS playoffs. Inter Miami is the only team so far to have clinched a playoff berth and is currently four points clear— with a match in hand - over the LA Galaxy for the best overall record in MLS.