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# Manhunt for foreign terrorists

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A joint team of security forces continued to hunt down the group of foreign terrorists for the second day in succession in the Ahlan Gagar-Mandu forest area of Anantnag district to avenge the supreme sacrifice of their fellow soldiers. Two soldiers sacrificed their lives in the firefight on Saturday while one critically injured civilian succumbed to his injuries during treatment on Sunday. Despite carrying out massive searches, at an altitude of over 10,000 feet, the security forces could not track down the footprints of a group of battle-hardened Pakistani terrorists. It is also suspected the foreign terrorists may have once again breached the tight cordon taking advantage of the thick foliage and inclement weather conditions prevailing in the area.

The soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice have been identified as Hav Dipak Kumar Yadav and L/Nk Praveen Sharma. In a post on X, the Indian Army spokesman said, the Indian Army offers deepest condolences and stands firm with the bereaved families in this hour of grief. "General Upendra Dwivedi COAS and All Ranks of the Indian Army salute the supreme sacrifice of bravehearts Hav Dipak Kumar



Security personnel during an encounter with terrorists at Ahlan Gagar-Mandu forest area, in Anantnag district of South Kashmir, on Sunday

PTI

Yadav & L/Nk Praveen Sharma, who laid down their lives in the line of duty, in Anantnag, J&K". Meanwhile, Inspector General (IG) of Kashmir VK Birdi who visited the encounter site told reporters on Sunday that the operation that began a day ago is underway in the upper reaches of Gagar-Mandu area of Kokernag in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district.

"Security forces had information regarding the movement of terrorists in the upper reaches. A search operation was being conducted in the Gagar-Mandu area. Security forces spotted the movement of terrorists and there was an exchange of fire between the security forces and terrorists... Operation is underway..." IG Birdi told

reporters. He said the civilian killed in the encounter has been identified as Abdul Rashid Dar. Giving details of the current operation, a Srinagar-based defence spokesperson said that on August 5, it was confirmed through human and electronic means that terrorists responsible for atrocities in the Doda region in July have

sneaked across the Kishtwar range into the Kapran-Garol area in south Kashmir. "The Rashtriya Rifles and the Jammu and Kashmir Police have relentlessly tracked these terrorists and precise operations were launched on the night of August 9 and 10 in the mountains in the east of Kapran where these terrorists were reportedly holed up.

# Kolkata doctor rape-murder: Shocking details surface

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The murdered lady doctor from a North Kolkata medical college was subjected to horrific brutalities, according to preliminary postmortem and inquest reports. Referred to as "Abhaya" by her colleagues, the victim suffered ten grievous injuries, evoking memories of the decade-old Nirbhaya case in Delhi, say fellow doctors at RG Kar Medical College, where she was pursuing her postgraduate studies in chest medicine.

"The autopsy report is chilling," said a fellow doctor, who is participating in the State-wide indefinite cease-work by medical staff. "She had a finger, collarbone, and pelvic bone broken. She was bleeding from her eyes, lips, abdomen, and private parts. Tufts of her hair had been torn out, and a clip was attached to her private parts," said the doctor.

Police sources revealed that the brutal attack took place within 30 to 35 minutes. The panel of doctors who conducted the postmortem suggested that she might have been raped after being killed, as it would have been nearly impossible for one person to inflict such extensive injuries in such a short time, said the police. Family sources shared that the victim was scheduled to get married next year. A colleague from the same college,



Junior doctors and medical students stage a protest against the sexual assault and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor in RG Kar Medical College &amp; Hospital, in Kolkata, on Sunday

PTI

## Another lady doc threatened

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Police on Sunday arrested another civic volunteer for threatening a woman doctor at Bharat State General Hospital in East Burdwan district with "RG Kar-like consequences". According to the lady doctor, the man, identified as Susanta Roy, threatened her after a heated altercation, warning, "You'll face an RG Kar-like consequence for your conduct... Do you even know what happened to the doctor there?"

requesting anonymity, said the young doctor likely endured extreme pain before her death, as a healthy person of her age would not have succumbed quickly.

"The post-mortem reports are not fully out so that we can understand whether it was a gangrape or an act of an individual beast," she said. Sanjay Das - a civic volunteer from the unarmed wing of Bengal Police, which operates on a daily wage basis - was arrested on Saturday in connection with the heinous crime. Reports indicated that Das confessed to the act, even pleading with his interrogators to hang him swiftly, a desperate request that has sparked suspicion among civil society members. Many are now questioning whether Das is being used as a scapegoat to shield others involved in the crime.

# Delhi rain fury claims lives of two teens

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The rain in the national Capital on Sunday, while offering relief from the oppressive heat, also brought chaos, with traffic snarls, water-logging and tragedy. Amid the downpour, two children lost their lives - a seven-year-old drowned and a 13-year-old electrocuted - raising the toll of rain-related deaths to four in the last two days.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued an orange alert for the city.

In Delhi's Rohini Sector 20, a seven-year-old boy named Tarun drowned in a waterlogged park on Saturday evening around 6:30 pm while playing there. In another incident in the Ranhola area of outer Delhi, a 13-year-old boy lost his life after being electrocuted when he came into contact with an iron pole supplying electricity to a gaushala (cowshed) while playing cricket in Kotla Vihar Phase-2.

Meanwhile, the teen's mother Anita Devi has demanded strict action against the 'gaushala' (cowshed) and the Power Department. Disruptions to flight



Photo: Ranjan Dimri

operations were also witnessed at Delhi airport on Sunday due to the bad weather. Delhiites who stepped out to enjoy their weekend were met with massive disappointment as their journey to hangout destinations turned into nightmares, with roads inundated and many people struggling to push their vehicles through knee-deep water. Many candidates who went out to write their NEET-PG 2024 examinations also faced difficulties reaching their centres due to waterlogged roads.

# Bangladesh interim Govt warns media over fake news

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bangladesh's interim Government on Sunday issued a stern warning to media organisations, stating that they will be shut down if they publish or broadcast false or misleading news, in a move aimed at curbing the spread of misinformation. "A nation falters when the media does not uphold the truth," the interim government's Home Affairs Adviser, Brigadier General (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain, said during his visit to injured policemen at Rajarbagh

Central Police Hospital. He warned that the media outlets would face closure if they provided misleading news, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported. Meanwhile Syed Refaat Ahmed was sworn in as Bangladesh's new chief justice on Sunday, a day after Obaidul Hassan stepped down as the top judge following an ultimatum by the protesters demanding a revamp of the judiciary. Hassan and five other judges of the apex Appellate Division on Saturday tendered their resignation,



Bangladeshi Army and navy officials stand guard in front of the Supreme Court area in Dhaka, Bangladesh

PTI

five days after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime amid massive street protests

Criticising the media for not presenting the truth, Hossain said, "A country deteriorates when the media fails to report honestly," and argued that had the media accurately reported events, the current situation involving the police might have been avoided. "The media often ignores the truth... There is a lack of substantive discussion on talk shows, and the media fails to provide accurate information," he said.

# Mullaperiyar Dam: A deluge waiting to engulf Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Close on the heels of the landslides and deluge in Wayanad that claimed more than 400 lives and devoured 300 houses, a disaster of higher magnitude is all set to befall on the State of Kerala. The Mullaperiyar dam built across River Periyar and dating back to 130 years is on the verge of collapse and this will wipe out the entire population in five districts of the State. Though the dam is situated in Kerala, the entire water in the catchment area is drawn from Tamil Nadu which shows from all rooftops that Mullaperiyar dam is safe. But experts in dam construction and safety disagree. Though Tungabhadra dam is in Karnataka, the news that one of its gates getting washed

away because of the snapping of the chain link by the floodwaters has jolted people in five districts of Kerala. Tungabhadra dam built in 1953 and Mullaperiyar in Kerala, built 130 years ago have a lot of similarities. Both are built with a combination of surki, mortar, mud and limestone making them the last surviving non-cement dams in India.

The Mullaperiyar dam, constructed across River Periyar in Kerala with the sole purpose of providing drinking and irrigation water to the four districts in Tamil Nadu has become a modern day water bomb. People living in the districts of Idukki, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam and Ernakulam would be drowned in the deluge that would occur



Search and rescue operation underway at a landslide-hit area in Wayanad district, Sunday

PTI

once the dam collapses. It can happen any time now because the dam has outlived its utility," said P C George, a seven-time MLA of the State who is waging a battle with the authorities to construct a new

dam. George, in his 35-year-long service as a law maker and chairman of the petition committee of the legislative Assembly had submitted three comprehensive reports to the authorities. "But the

governments of the day did not take any action on these reports," George told The Pioneer in the aftermath of Wayanad tragedy. He said the impact of the collapse of Mullaperiyar Dam would be similar to the repercussions of 1,000 Wayanad landslides. "The old and children do not sleep well even for a single day as they fear that the dam would down any time. It is atop the Western Ghats and you cannot imagine the intensity of the water bursting out of the dam. There will not be any time for evacuation and rescue missions," he said. Mullaperiyar Dam is 53.67 metre tall and 365.85 metre long.

"The active capacity of the dam is \$10.56 thousand million cubic feet (TMC ft). Geologists have cautioned us that the dam is

vulnerable to high intensity earthquakes as the fault line passes through the reservoir," said PNS Nambodiri, former revenue official in Kottayam district. While the Tamil Nadu government scoffed at reports about a possible collapse of the dam, it went many steps ahead in opposing the Indian Nutrinu Observatory at Madurai under the pretext that the fault line passes through the area earmarked for the proposed project. But the fault line is dangerously close to the Mullaperiyar dam. Seismic experts and geologists have warned that the dam made of surki and mortar has outlived its utility and should be decommissioned at the earliest. Dr A K Gosain of IIT Delhi who had led a team of experts to study the safety aspects of

the dam has called for the construction of a new dam in 2011 itself. "I don't say that Mullaperiyar will collapse tomorrow. But the dam is not safe from the point of view of a hydrologist," he had told this newspaper. More than 40 lakh people in the five districts mentioned above would perish once Mullaperiyar collapses. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin's act of donating Rs five crore towards the Chief Minister's disaster relief fund is being seen in Kerala as a ploy to buy silence from the State Government. "The 8100 acre land on which the dam has been built belongs to Kerala and the dam was constructed with money given by the State of Travancore. Tamil Nadu is like having the cake and eating it too," said George.

# Former External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh passes away

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh passed away on Saturday night after a prolonged illness, family sources said. He was 93. He breathed his last at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram near Delhi, where he had been admitted for the past couple of weeks, they said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday conduced the passing away of Natwar Singh, and said he made rich contributions to the world of diplomacy and foreign policy. In a social media post, Modi said, "Pained by the passing away of Shri Natwar Singh Ji. He made rich contributions to the world of diplomacy and foreign policy."

"He was also known for his intellect as well as prolific writing. My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this hour of grief. Om Shanti," the prime minister said. Singh was born in 1931 in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan. He was a career diplomat, who brought a wealth of experience in diplomacy to his political career and a prolific author on subjects ranging from the life of a maharaja to nuances of foreign affairs. During his distinguished career, he wore many hats, and for his service to the nation, the former external affairs minister was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1984.

# Har Ghar Tiranga



People wave the Indian national flags at Mubarak Mandi palace ahead of the Independence Day, in Jammu, on Sunday

PTI





Govt. of Haryana



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UP bypolls: BSP to fight all 10 Assembly seats, announces Mayawati

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Chief Mayawati on Sunday announced that her party will field candidates in all the 10 assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh where bypolls are going to be held.

The Election Commission is yet to declare the schedule for the by-elections to Karhal, Milkipur, Katheri, Kundarki, Ghaziabad, Khair, Meerapur, Phulpur, Majhawan and Sisamaun assembly seats.

cial announcement of the date has been made so far but activities pertaining to this are increasing continuously, especially the ruling party, BJP, and its government have made it an issue of prestige, due to which the interest of the people in the bypolls has also increased," it said.



ence in the operation of the mosques-madrasas and Waqf are being done," the BSP chief said.

continue its efforts to win the their trust through its policy and principle of "bahujan hitaaye, bahujan sukhaaye".

to make sub-classifications within scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and batted for the creamy layer to be excluded from reservation.

these seats in the name of saving the Constitution and reservation," she said.

Kerala Minister breaks down while consoling kin of landslide victims

PTI WAYANAD (KERALA)



Kerala Forest Minister A K Saseendran broke down while consoling people looking for their missing family members days after the devastating landslides in Wayanad district.

He urged everyone to work in unison to rebuild the lives of the victims. The minister also assured survivors that the entire state and the government stood by them in their most difficult time in life.

on July 30. On Saturday, Modi visited the landslides-hit Wayanad district and assured that the central government would "spare no effort" in helping Kerala in relief and rehabilitation while describing the tragedy as "nature displaying its furious form."

Bihar: Tributes paid to Khudiram Bose at Muzaffarpur Central Jail

PTI MUZAFFARPUR/PATNA



Agathered outside the Muzaffarpur Central Jail on Sunday to pay tributes to freedom fighter Khudiram Bose, who was hanged in the prison on this day in 1908.

Singh, Inspector General of Police Shivdeep Wamanrao Lande, District Magistrate of Muzaffarpur, Subrata Sen, and several people from Bose's ancestral village in Habibpur in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal and hundreds of others took part in paying tributes to the freedom fighter.

Pendharkar takes charge of Spear Corps, Manipur conflict top priority

PTI DIMAPUR

Lieutenant General Abhijit S Pendharkar assumed command of the Indian Army's elite Spear Corps on Saturday, inheriting a significant challenge in the form of the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur which has claimed more than 200 lives in the past year.

commanding formations along the Line of Control. Prior to taking over as the head of the Spear Corps, Pendharkar served as the Director General of the Territorial Army. He is a recipient of the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Yudh Seva Medal, and multiple commendation awards.

Panic over fire rumour, 6 hospitalised after jumping from train in UP

PTI SHAHJAHANPUR/NEW DELHI



Six passengers were hospitalised after they jumped out of a moving train in panic near Uttar Pradesh's Bilpur on Sunday following rumours of a fire, Government Railway Police (GRP) officials said.

the train has caught fire. Someone pulled the emergency chain to stop the train and some passengers started

jumping from the moving train, he said. Six passengers, including two women, were injured, and they

were admitted to the Shahjahanpur Medical College, the GRP official said.

Northeast wing of federation of former servicemen in banking sector formed

PTI GUWAHATI



To press for their legal rights and provide support to colleagues across various sectors, the Northeast wing of a pan-India body of ex-servicemen working in the banking sector has been formed, a statement said on Sunday.

ensured to the ex-servicemen and we will work to ensure that our members get these."

ber of jobs assured for them. "We will take up such instances and ensure our members are not deprived," he said.

Kushal Kumar Das was named the president and Dipankar Bharali the treasurer of the Northeast committee, formed during a meeting of All India Ex-Servicemen Bank Employees Federation here on Saturday which was attended by the president and secretary of the central committee Praveen Kumar Sharma and Suresh Kumar respectively.

Tripura's connectivity project with Bangladesh may be delayed: Minister

PTI RANCHI

a total cost of Rs 972.52 crore is the first railway connectivity between India's North-East and Bangladesh to encourage trade between the two countries.

TN Congress to hold tricolour marches, flays BJP for 'attempt to appropriate' national flag

PTI CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee President K Selvaaperunthagai on Sunday tasked his party office-bearers with holding tricolour marches on two-wheelers and through padayatras and hit out at the BJP for what he described as an attempt to 'appropriate' the national flag by conducting Tiranga yatras.

the connect and bond the Congress party has with the national flag should be explained to the people by tracing the freedom movement, the role played by Gandhiji and the party's pivotal role.

Villages in Vadodara alerted as Sardar Sarovar dam level rises

PTI AHMEDABAD



The Vadodara administration on Sunday alerted 25 villages in the district after release of water from the Omkareshwar dam in Madhya Pradesh and heavy rains led to a rise in the Sardar Sarovar dam level in Gujarat's Narmada district.

electricity, and the opening of nine radial gates of the Sardar Sarovar dam," an official statement said.

villages not to venture near the river bed, the collector said. The district administration is taking all measures to avoid any accident or casualty in low-lying areas of the Sardar Sarovar dam, she added.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Catastrophe revisited

### Prime Minister Modi visits Wayanad, pledges full Central Government support for recovery efforts

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Wayanad, Kerala, which was devastated by landslides that left more than 200 dead. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a review meeting after conducting an aerial and ground survey of the landslide-hit areas in Wayanad. Recalling the devastating 1979 Morbi dam disaster in Gujarat, Modi empathised with the affected residents, assuring them of full support from the central government. During his day-long visit to Wayanad, Modi surveyed the destruction caused by the July 30 landslides. Modi's visit included a trek through the severely impacted Chooralmala region, where he assessed the damage and interacted with rescue personnel, officials, and residents. He also visited a relief camp in Meppadi, offering comfort to survivors, including children who had lost family members. PM Modi emphasised the need for better preparedness and resilient infrastructure to mitigate the impact of such natural disasters in the future.



Wayanad is perhaps the worst hit as the incessant rains triggered landslides, damaging homes and infrastructure and causing extensive agricultural losses. The region's economy, heavily dependent on agriculture and tourism, has been severely impacted, with farmers facing significant losses and tourists staying away due to the adverse weather conditions. However, Wayanad is not the only place that has endured losses. This year's monsoon has brought unprecedented destruction across the country. From north to south, no region has been spared from the monsoon fury. The Himalayan states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have also endured losses. Torrential rains, landslides, and flash floods have resulted in significant loss of life and property. In Himachal Pradesh, an entire village was tragically wiped off due to a deluge after a cloudburst. The heavy rainfall has also caused rivers to overflow, leading to widespread flooding and disruption of daily life in the plains. Roads have been washed away, leaving many remote areas inaccessible, and thousands of people have been displaced from their homes. The increasing frequency and intensity of monsoon-related disasters in India can be attributed to a combination of factors, including climate change, deforestation, and unplanned urbanisation. India must continue to invest in and implement strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy sources. International cooperation is also crucial in addressing the climate change. Besides, ensuring that development projects, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas like the Himalayas must be properly evaluated before being commissioned. This includes stricter regulations on construction and deforestation. In the given scenario what is of utmost importance is preparedness—strengthening disaster management capabilities at the local, state, and national levels. This includes improving early warning systems, enhancing infrastructure resilience, and conducting regular disaster preparedness drills.

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An elderly woman spins tricolour yarns ahead of the Independence Day in Nadia district. PTI

## A Heartfelt reflection on the changing face of Nainital

### Over the decades, relentless deforestation and unchecked construction have turned Nainital's once verdant landscapes into tinderboxes

Summers were harsh this year. Fire rained from the skies. Cities were burning. So were the mountains. My first holiday to the mountains was in the summer of 1970. We boarded the train in the evening, excited about the trip. The first glimpse of the distant mountains the next morning kept us awake for the remaining journey, as the faint outlines turned prominent. The bus ride from the railway station was equally exciting. Sometimes we travelled hugging the mountains, and at other times we looked down with fear, as the bus moved literally at the edge of the road.



After what felt like an impatiently long time, as we turned a bend, I gasped looking with awe at the majestic lake spread out before me. We had arrived at Nainital. I had fallen in love with the hills. I would return several times in the following years, till I realised that there were many other equally beautiful hills to explore. Things started changing fast. My first visit in the summer of 1970 faded into a fond memory, which I would often draw upon to mourn a lost time. I still remember very vividly the green shades covering the hills, even in the summers, much before the onset of monsoons. There was not even a speck of brown visible beneath the thick curtain of foliage. I also do not remember the presence of fans, coolers, refrigerators, much less air conditioners. The only cooling devices were the soft ice-cream machines along the Mall road. The subsequent visits were a stark contrast. We could see the rapid pace of deforestation and the mushrooming of construction activities along the roads. There was a hazy curtain of dust as dumpers carried their load from the innumerable quarries in the hills. Fans started making their entry in homes and hotels, initially only for a few days in peak summers, and then for a better part of the year. I was unaware of the ecological disaster that was in the making at that stage in life. However, I could intuitively sense that it was not something desirable. A few wild fires in the mountains are not new; but not to the extent that they now ravage. A trickle in the previous century is now a raging river. Fires in the Nainital region alone engulfed vast tracts of land even entering residential areas. Other mountains in the north also faced the same fate. Even the plains are not immune to the rapid march

# When heroes defy their legacies



SANTHOSH MATHEW

### History is a tapestry of contradictions and ironies, offering few clear heroes or villains. Instead, it presents figures whose actions and legacies are deeply intriguing

History, much like a tapestry, is interwoven with threads of contradiction, paradox, and irony. It refuses to offer a simplistic narrative of heroes and villains, instead presenting us with figures whose actions and legacies are often at odds. Even as we try to categorize these individuals within neat labels, the complexities of their lives and the contexts in which they lived often defy such easy classifications. In delving into these paradoxes, we uncover the profound dichotomies that have shaped our world. Here, we explore some of the most striking examples of such contradictions.



The Pulitzer Prize is one of the most prestigious awards in journalism, representing the pinnacle of recognition for investigative reporting, public service, and literary achievement. It stands as a symbol of journalistic integrity and excellence. Yet, the man behind this esteemed award, Joseph Pulitzer, was a pioneer of "yellow journalism"—a style characterized by sensationalism, exaggeration, and a sometimes tenuous relationship with the truth. Pulitzer's newspapers, including the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and the New York World, became synonymous with this sensationalist style, prioritising scandal, shock, and spectacle over factual reporting. Pulitzer was, in many ways, a shrewd businessman who used his media empire to captivate, excite, and often inflame public opinion. Yet, despite his role in fostering yellow journalism, Pulitzer's legacy is paradoxically one of promoting journalistic excellence. The award that bears his name has honoured countless journalists who have exposed corruption, championed the underdog, and stood as defenders of truth against tyranny. The irony is profound: a man who built his career on sensationalism is now celebrated as a patron of journalistic integrity. This duality highlights the complexities of human nature and the ever-evolving landscape of media. The Nobel Prizes, particularly the Nobel

Peace Prize, embody the highest aspirations of humanity. They honour individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the betterment of the world through science, literature, and the pursuit of peace. However, the man behind these prestigious awards, Alfred Nobel, accumulated his wealth from an invention that has caused immense destruction: dynamite. Nobel's invention revolutionized construction and engineering, but it also became a powerful tool in warfare. The devastating impact of dynamite weighed heavily on Nobel's conscience. It is said that his decision to establish the Nobel Prize was influenced by a premature obituary that labelled him "the merchant of death" after his invention became synonymous with violence and destruction. By creating the Nobel Prizes, particularly the Peace Prize, Nobel sought to reshape his legacy from one of destruction to one of hope and progress. Yet, the contrast between his contribution to the proliferation of powerful weapons and his desire to reward peace-makers serves as a poignant reminder of the paradoxes that can define a person's life. A recent example of this paradox can be found in the story of



JINNAH'S PERSONAL LIFE WAS FAR REMOVED FROM THE STRICT RELIGIOUS VALUES THAT WOULD LATER COME TO DEFINE THE COUNTRY HE FOUNDED. JINNAH WAS A HIGHLY WESTERNISED INDIVIDUAL WHO ENJOYED THE FINER THINGS IN LIFE

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. Abiy was recognized for his efforts in resolving the long-standing conflict with neighbouring Eritrea, earning international acclaim as a peacemaker. However, within two years of receiving the prize, Abiy found himself leading his nation into a brutal civil war. The conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region has been marked by atrocities, displacement, and a humanitarian crisis of staggering proportions. The United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights are celebrated as monumental achievements in the history of human rights, enshrining the principles of freedom, equality, and justice. Thomas Jefferson, one of the Founding Fathers and the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, played a crucial role in shaping these foundational documents. Yet, Jefferson was also a slave owner who, during his lifetime, owned over 600 enslaved people. This glaring contradiction between his public advocacy for liberty and his private practice of slavery has sparked intense debate among historians and scholars. Jefferson's writings espoused ideals of

freedom and human dignity, yet he continued to benefit from an institution that deprived others of these very rights. Similarly, Muhammad Ali Jinnah is revered as the founding father of Pakistan, the world's first Islamic republic. He is celebrated for his role in establishing a nation for Muslims in the Indian sub-continent, based on the idea of Muslim nationalism. However, Jinnah's personal life was far removed from the strict religious values that would later come to define the country he founded. Jinnah was a highly Westernised individual who enjoyed the finer things in life. He was known to smoke cigars, drink alcohol, and reportedly favoured pork—a practice contrary to Islamic teachings. His second wife, Maryam, was a Parsi, and his only daughter, Dina, married a Parsi as well, sparking considerable controversy given his public role as a Muslim leader. These episodes remind us that even the greatest leaders are not without their contradictions. In the end, history reminds us that even the greatest of icons are not immune to contradiction—it is in their complexity that their true humanity shines through. (The writer is an associate professor, views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BAIL NOT JAIL SHOULD BE THE NORM

Madam — Recently, while an assistant director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was swiftly remanded to CBI custody over a bribery charge involving Rs 20 lakhs from a Mumbai-based jeweler, the ongoing case of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia raises serious concerns. Despite being accused of money laundering in the Delhi excise policy scam, Sisodia has languished in jail for 17 months without any progress toward a trial, as observed by the Supreme Court. The Court emphasised that personal liberty is paramount, and delaying bail without commencing the trial is unacceptable, leading to Sisodia's release on bail. This case highlights a troubling disparity in the justice system: while some accused individuals evade legal consequences due to the laxity of investigative agencies and courts, others, potentially innocent, remain imprisoned for years, leaving their families to suffer. As we have seen in numerous cases, delayed justice is effectively denied justice. A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

### HATS OFF TO INDIAN OLYMPIC SQUAD

Madam— Hats off to the Indian Hockey team for regaining its past international glory via winning a medal in the Paris - Olympics - 2024. Their defeating the great - proven - teams such as Australia and England elucidates their resolve, dedication, determination. It could not enter the final and had to settle for bronze (due to sheer bad luck of the day). This is the 13th Olympic medal for India in hockey (8 gold, 1 silver, 4 bronze). Arman Sherawat's bronze in wrestling, cooled the hearts of Indians, which otherwise wallowed in pain over the disqualification of Vinesh Phogat, (the gold medal sure shot). Hats off to the Indian magnificent 6, who won 5 bronze medals and 1 silver in the Paris Olympics - 2024. Also kudos to all the national and international participants of the prestigious grand gala Olympics (sports festival). Kudos to Indian winners: 3 shooters:

### A world in turmoil



The world seems to be in flames. In the UK, violent clashes between communities are intensifying, with immigrants gaining

ground in the conflict. Across Europe, a similar surge sees immigrants clashing with native populations. But the most alarming development this week has been the chaos and coup in our neighboring country—once a close friend and an Islamic nation that upheld peaceful coexistence among all religions, now plunged into turmoil. These are difficult times where unrests and upheavals have become order of the day. Amidst this global unrest, our own opposition leaders are calling for insurrection, openly demanding the removal of our elected Prime Minister. These are the same voices that champion democracy and preach about love. Yet, we believe that Indians will never tread that destructive path. We stood strong during the Emergency, showing our love for the nation and our willingness to fight for it if necessary. C K Subramaniam | Bengaluru

Manu, Sarabjot, Swapnil Kusale, wrestler Aman Sehrawat and the hockey team for the 5 bronze medals, star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra for the silver medal (for the athletic 89.45 m throw).

### NEERAJ WINS SILVER

Madam — India's star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra clinched a silver medal at the Paris Olympics, performing in front of an enthusiastic crowd at Stade de France. Neeraj's throw of 89.45m earned him second place on the podium. Although it was his best performance of the season, it wasn't enough to secure gold, which went to Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem with a throw of 92.97m, (will be hard to beat in the near future) setting a new Olympic record. It's a pity for 145 crore Indian that we have not won a single gold but we plan to hold the Olympics in India! It is quite evident that Neeraj Chopra has given his best (though too much pressure of expectations was put on the guy). But the most important thing to note is that India is very poor in succession planning and finding alternatives,



SANJAY CHANDRA

of unplanned urbanisation and the greed of the unscrupulous. I remember going to view Ram Lila wearing half-sleeved sweaters. We would wait with baited breaths for Diwali. However warm it was the previous day, we would invariably take out heavier woollens from Diwali. With time, winters started setting in later than we were used to. Our beautiful planet is nudging us with innumerable omens to wake up and look after her. Hills are sinking under the heavy burden of unplanned construction of houses, hotels, and resorts. Sea levels are going up. Many coastal cities may submerge over the next few decades. Water tables are fast going down resulting in conflicts for drinking water. We need to act to live a better future for the coming generations. Let us remember British historian, explorer and activist Robert Swan, "The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it." (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## HAVE A INTREPID AND ROBUST MINDSET

Through spiritual practices, one can find strength to continue the journey of life



RAVI VALLURI

Always be associated with people who are good at heart. This is what Swami Vivekananda said. My mother shares her birthday with Swami Vivekananda who was born on 12th January 1863. Association, Sangha, and Satsang were her strong points. She nurtured strong bonds with all religious faiths and spiritually inclined people. She wanted to pursue medicine but life did not take that trajectory instead she became a qualified medical social worker. She used to tell patients and their children, 'Fear is only as deep as the mind allows.' Thus, patients afflicted with TB, but not bedridden, participated in the projects. This was what she called 'Diversionary Therapy'.

The TB Hospital became a unique template for the methods adopted by doctors, para-med staff, social workers, government bodies and NGOs, all to contribute to the rehabilitation of the patients. Climate changes, civilizations collapse, governments change political affiliations alter and even the best possible model collapses. This is inevitable. As Buddha says, 'The only permanent thing in life is impermanence.' The lofty objectives were not approved by a new set of hospital administrators and the beacon of hope collapsed but she tried hard with a robust mindset. This was extremely traumatic for my mother and she became a patient of Paroxysmal Atrial Tachycardia (PAT). This is a type of arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat).

Paroxysmal means that the episode of arrhythmia originates and terminates abruptly. Atrial implies the arrhythmia starts with the atria or in the upper chambers of the heart. The tachycardia results in a signifi-



cant increase in the heartbeat per minute. It abnormally increases the pace, like in an athlete on a treadmill. PAT significantly increases the heartbeat of an adult from the normal 60 to 100 to 130 to 230 and among infants and children, it shoots up from 100 to 130 to 220 beats per minute. It is accompanied by sweating, dizziness, palpitations, angina and acute breathlessness.

Normally, a patient suffers from such a condition owing to emotional upheavals, physical exhaustion, deep anxiety, and consumption of caffeine or alcohol. I saw my mother suffering from this condition on several occasions and being admitted to the ICU. It was a distressing and disturbing sight. While it is not a life-threatening affliction, it certainly disorients the psychology and attitude of the patient. During her suffering, we saw her clutching onto her rosary as a lifesaver, while we prayed fervently for her recovery. She was administered medication but it worked only to an extent. The real help came in the form of a pentagon-shaped talisman. That is through Siddha Healing, Pranik Healing, the ten-day Vipassana Course and the Part 1 and Part 2 Art of Living courses. This is the unique, amazing and scientific power of the breath.

Breathing techniques, meditation, medication, and proper diet changed the trajectory of the life of the patient and brought back the mojo in her life. 'When you take a breath in, let it become your meditation that all the suffering of all the beings in the world is riding on that incoming breath and reaching your heart, and see a miracle happen,' says Osho. Till her final days, she continued with these practices. Senior citizens, those in pain and agony and even the able-bodied should undertake the courses mentioned. Swami Vivekananda took Yoga to America and spread the Ramakrishna Mission. He was the Arjuna of Shri Rama Krishna Paramhansa. My mother imbibed the trait of service to mankind by reading extensively about Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda and the Almighty God blessed her with an intrepid mind.

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

## Populism will not let food subsidy reforms take off



UTTAM GUPTA

Leakages can be curbed if the subsidy is given directly to the beneficiaries using 'direct benefit transfer' mode. The potential for reducing food subsidies is immense



In the full Budget presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23, 2024, the government has pegged the budget estimate (BE) food subsidy for FY 2024-25 at Rs 205,250 crore which is no different from the estimate given in the interim Budget. Though slightly lower than the revised estimate (RE) of Rs 211,394 crores for FY 2023-24, this is no consolation as invariably, the RE for any financial year turns out to be higher than the BE. For instance, while presenting the budget for FY 2023-24, Sitharaman kept the BE for food subsidy at Rs 197,000 crore. Against this, RE has turned out to be Rs 14,394 crore more. The moot point is that the expenditure incurred by the Central government during the last five years under this head has been consistently over Rs 200,000 crore mark every year 2020-21: Rs 529,000 crore; 2021-22: Rs 372,000 crore; 2022-23: Rs 287,000 crore; 2023-24: Rs 211,394 crores and 2024-25: Rs 205,250 crore (BE).

During 2024-25, food subsidy will account for 4.2 per cent of its budget (Rs 4820,000 crore), 5.5 per cent of its revenue expenditure (Rs 3709,000 crore) and consume nearly 8 per cent of its estimated net tax receipts (Rs 2583,000 crore). Reining in food subsidy is no less important than the goal it seeks to achieve namely providing 'food security'. The uncontrolled rise in the former leads to an unsustainable increase in fiscal deficit (excess of total receipts over total expenditure) which can injure the economy in multiple ways through high inflation, high interest rates, a slowdown in growth, fewer jobs, low incomes and so on. This, in turn, can lead to a demand for higher financial assistance including food subsidies from the government thereby exacerbating the vicious cycle.

There exists a huge scope for reducing food subsidies. To assess this, at the outset, let us see how it is administered. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Centre asks the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other state agencies to procure food from the farmers at MSP (minimum support price) and organize its distribution to around 820 million people for free.



REINING IN FOOD SUBSIDY IS NO LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE GOAL IT SEEKS TO ACHIEVE NAMEDLY PROVIDING 'FOOD SECURITY'. THE UNCONTROLLED RISE IN THE FORMER LEADS TO AN UNSUSTAINABLE INCREASE IN FISCAL DEFICIT (EXCESS OF TOTAL RECEIPTS OVER TOTAL EXPENDITURE) WHICH CAN INJURE THE ECONOMY IN MULTIPLE WAYS

The entire cost i.e. MSP paid to farmers plus handling and distribution cost (HDC) is reimbursed to the FCI/other state agencies as a subsidy. The money comes from the Union Budget's allocation for 'food subsidy'. While, the PMGKAY has been in force since January 1, 2023, before that, the Centre was giving food to 820 million persons (7 kg of cereals per person per month to 120 million poorest of the poor persons covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana or AAY families and five kg of cereals per person per month to the remaining 700 million) at a heavily subsidized price of Rs 2/3/1 per kg for wheat/rice/coarse cereals under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). In addition, since April 2020, it has given 5 kg of food per person per month for "free" to all 820 million beneficiaries under PMGKAY to mitigate the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic. From January 1, 2023, it merged the free part of PMGKAY with the regular food security schemes under NFSA.

Now, food is available to all 820 million beneficiaries for free under the new incarnation of NFSA namely the PMGKAY. This arrangement will continue for five years till the end of CY 2028 as per the announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2023. Avenues for saving in subsidy First, fundamentally, subsidized food is meant for the poor. The number of poor isn't more than 15-20 per cent of India's population. Yet, the number of beneficiaries under the PMGKAY at 820 million works out to nearly 59 per cent of the population. Even as per the Shanta Kumar Committee (2015), the number of people eligible for subsidized food under NFSA shouldn't be more than 40 per cent. The excess of 19 per cent comes to around 270 million.

Further, during the last nine-and-a-half years of the incumbent government, 250 million persons have come out of poverty (as per a recent report by Niti Aayog). These persons can be excluded from the list of beneficiaries.

Doing a back-of-the-envelope calculation, giving free food to a million persons entails a subsidy of Rs 200 crore per annum. Excluding 250 million will help save Rs 50,000 crore. The existing beneficiaries list of 820 million is based on 2011 Census estimates while the Supreme Court (SC) has directed that the Centre should take into account the population during 2021. On this basis, it needs to give free food to an additional 100 million.

That will cost Rs 20,000 crore. Even after providing for this, it will save Rs 30,000 crore annually. Second, why every beneficiary should get free food? The Shanta Kumar Committee had recommended that non-AAY persons should pay 50 per cent of the MSP. Other than AAY are 700 million persons. Minus 250 million (who shouldn't get a subsidy at all) and adding 100 million (as per SC order), we get 550 million. Making them pay 50 per cent of MSP or Rs 11.4 per kg (wheat), will save Rs 37,600 crore annually. Third, the NFSA legislation enacted in 2013 required beneficiaries to pay Rs 2/3/1 per kg for wheat/rice/coarse cereals.

Since 2016, there has been no legal bar on increasing the price. Yet, far from increasing, the Modi - government has reduced the price to zero. Are they all (read: 820 million persons) so poor that they can't pay even a fraction of the cost (in the case of wheat at Rs 2 per kg, it is 1/15th)? Even if you make them pay a notional Rs 1 per kg, this will yield savings of Rs 5000 crore per annum. Fourth, the initial idea under the

Scheme was that FCI et al would buy only the quantity needed for meeting beneficiaries' requirements under NFSA plus maintain some 'strategic' buffer to meet emergencies.

It was never meant to be an 'open-ended' procurement which it has become today. This has also contributed to the avoidable increase in subsidy besides stocking problems. Shunning 'open-ended' purchases can yield significant savings. Fifth, currently, FCI/state agencies are paid HDC on an 'actual' basis. This leads to payment for inefficiencies in the system and even cost padding.

The stories of loaders being paid hefty salaries by the FCI are still fresh in memory. A shift from 'actual' to reimbursement of cost to agencies on a 'normative' basis can save a lot of subsidy. Finally, the availability of a mammoth of around 60 million tons (the quantity distributed under the PMGKAY) in the supply chain with zero price tag is an open invitation to dubious operators to siphon off and sell in the open market raking in a moolah.

The PDS scam in West Bengal involving the diversion of subsidized food grains worth tens of thousands of crore currently under investigation by the central agencies provides a classic example. This can be curbed if the subsidy is given directly to the beneficiaries using DBT (direct benefit transfer) mode. The potential for reducing food subsidies is immense. The government can go for any of the above measures or all of them depending on how much savings it targets. But, ALAS under the current political scenario, Modi won't dare to take even a baby step like charging a notional price of Rs 1 per kg.

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

## Implications of upheaval in Bangladesh on its trade relations with India

The sudden turn of events have raised concerns about the potential impact on trade, economic stability, and the broader geopolitical dynamics of the region

Since Sheikh Hasina assumed office as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in 2009, the country has been a key ally of India. Her leadership has seen significant progress in bilateral relations, with a focus on infrastructure, connectivity, and trade. However, the recent political crisis in Bangladesh has raised concerns about the future of this partnership.

On January 8, 2024, Sheikh Hasina declared that boosting the country's economy would be her top priority for the next five years. Yet, by August 2024, the nation was engulfed in violent demonstrations over a quota system for government positions, leading to a deepening domestic political crisis. As tensions escalated, Sheikh Hasina resigned and sought



ADITYA PRATAP SINGH

refuge in India, raising concerns about the stability of Bangladesh and its impact on Indo-Bangladesh relations. The Evolution of Indo-Bangladesh Relations Over the past decade, India and Bangladesh have fostered strong economic ties, with infrastructure and connectivity projects playing a crucial role in strengthening their relationship. Since 2016, India has extended \$8 billion in

credit to Bangladesh for the development of road, rail, shipping, and port infrastructure. The two nations have also engaged in various areas of commerce, including medical tourism, business expansion, and the international garment trade. Bangladesh, a major player in the global garment industry, relies heavily on cotton imports from India.

The textile and garment sectors account for 56% of Bangladesh's total exports to India, making it a vital trading partner in South Asia. In the financial year 2023-24, bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$13 billion, according to the Union Ministry of Commerce.

The Impact on Trade Sheikh Hasina's leadership saw a flourishing of com-

merce between India and Bangladesh, leading to a significant trade surplus for India. However, the ongoing political turmoil in Bangladesh threatens to disrupt this economic partnership. The civil unrest and worsening economic situation have created security concerns that could impact Indian exports, commerce, and infrastructure projects in the neighboring nation.

One of the major challenges will be on the bilateral trade front. After reaching \$12.21 billion in 2022-23, India's exports to Bangladesh dropped to \$11 billion in 2023-24. Similarly, Bangladesh's imports decreased from \$2 billion in the previous year to \$1.84 billion in the most recent fiscal year. Indian exporters have



voiced concerns about the situation in Bangladesh, fearing that the instability in the country will negatively affect commerce between the two nations. A significant scarcity of dollars in Bangladesh, as noted by the think tank GTRI, has already curtailed the country's ability to import goods, particularly from India.

Uncertainty Surrounding the Free Trade Agreement

In October 2023, India and Bangladesh discussed the possibility of a free trade agreement (FTA) during a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Trade meeting in Dhaka. An FTA could streamline regulations, encourage investment and commerce, and potentially remove customs tariffs, boosting trade between the two countries. According to a 2012 World Bank working paper, a full-product FTA could enhance Bangladesh's exports to India by 182%, while a partial FTA might grow them by 134%. This would contribute to strengthening Bangladesh's trade transport infrastructure and commerce links, leading to a significant rise in exports. However, the current political crisis has cast doubt on the

future of the FTA proposals. Sheikh Hasina's exit might slow or pause this development, affecting the expansion of commerce and trade in new areas between the two nations.

Challenges for the Textile and Garment Industry The ongoing crisis in Bangladesh could also have a negative impact on other sectors, particularly the textile and garment industry. In the fiscal year 2021-2022, Bangladesh exported garments worth \$42.613 billion, solidifying its position as the second-largest apparel exporter globally. However, the recent incidents of factories being set on fire have raised concerns about the future of this industry. Many of these textile units are owned by traders associated with the

Awami League Party, making them particularly vulnerable in the current political climate. While India has the potential to step in and provide garments to developed economies, there are certain drawbacks to this shift. Bangladesh, as a Least Developed Country, benefits from zero-duty advantages, while Indian goods face tariff barriers. If borders remain closed and duty-free export-import activities are suspended, there is a possibility of increased demand for Indian garments. However, it is still too early to make definitive predictions about the opportunities and gains that might arise from this situation.

(The author is a PhD scholar at HBTU, Kanpur; views are personal)

# 'Bringing eco on track priority'

PTI ■ DHAKA

The top priority of Bangladesh's interim government is to bring the economy back on track and restore the people's trust in the banks, finance and planning adviser Salehuddin Ahmed has said. Former Bangladesh Bank governor Ahmed was entrusted with the charge of the finance and planning ministries by interim leader Muhammad Yunus, who announced the portfolios of his 16-member council of advisors on Friday. The interim government led by the 84-year-old Nobel laureate was formed after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on August 5 following widespread protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs.

Talking to reporters on Saturday for the first time after assuming office, Ahmed said the government's priority is to restore the trust of common people in the banks while resuming the operations of the central bank. "Then we'll work on bringing reforms," state-run news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) quoted him as saying. "For various reasons, the country's economy has slowed down. Our goal will be to revive the economy as quickly as possible. Once the economy comes to a standstill, it becomes quite difficult to restart it. We do not want it to come to a halt," he said. "There are various problems in the economy. There are issues with the banking sector, inflation, and many other complexities. We will need to work on all fronts," the Dhaka Tribune newspaper quoted him as saying. Asserting that they have been given the responsibility during a "critical time" for the country, he said, "At this time, it's not just about law and order or security measures; opening banks, keeping ports operational—everything needs to be given equal importance." He added that it would not take much time to resume the basic operations of the banking sector. "Already the operations are there, but there were some deviations at the middle of the operations...the operations



A student paints a new graffiti on a street wall at Dhaka University campus in Dhaka, Bangladesh

# Refaat Ahmed sworn in as B'desh new chief justice

PTI ■ DHAKA

Syed Refaat Ahmed was sworn in as Bangladesh's new chief justice on Sunday, a day after Obaidul Hassan stepped down as the top judge following an ultimatum by the protesters demanding a revamp of the judiciary. Hassan and five other judges of the apex Appellate Division on Saturday tendered their resignation, five days after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's regime amid massive street protests. His resignation came as protesters of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement gathered at the apex court premises. The students had issued an ultimatum to him and the judges of the Appellate Division to resign by 1 pm. Ahmed took oath as the new chief justice during a ceremony at the Darbar Hall of the president's official residence at around 12.45 pm local time, The Daily Star newspaper



reported. President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath to the chief justice. The oath-taking ceremony was conducted by Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain, the report said. Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, who was sworn in on Thursday as the head of an interim government following the ouster of Hasina, also attended the event.

President Shahabuddin on Saturday appointed Justice Ahmed as the 25th chief justice of Bangladesh. Several top officials in Bangladesh, including Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Maksud Kamal and Bangla Academy Director General Professor Dr Md Harun-Ur-Rashid Askari, resigned from their posts in the wake of new protests by students and other demonstrators. Meanwhile, Dr Bidhan Ranjan Roy Poddar and Suprodip Chakma were sworn in on Sunday as the members of the council of advisers of Bangladesh's interim government led by Nobel laureate Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus. President Mohammed Shahabuddin administered the oath of office to Poddar and Chakma while Chief Adviser Dr Yunus witnessed the ceremony at Darbar Hall of the presidential palace 'Banghaban' here, state-run BSS news agency reported.

# B'desh interim govt warns media shutdown for misleading news

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh's interim government on Sunday issued a stern warning to media organisations, stating that they will be shut down if they publish or broadcast false or misleading news, in a move aimed at curbing the spread of misinformation. "A nation falters when the media does not uphold the truth," the interim government's Home Affairs Adviser, Brigadier General (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain, said during his visit to injured policemen at Rajarbagh Central Police Hospital. He warned that the media outlets would face closure if they provided misleading news, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported. Criticising the media for not presenting the truth, Hossain said, "A country deteriorates when the media fails to report honestly," and argued that had the media accurately reported events, the current situation involving the police might have been avoided. "The media often ignores the truth...There is a lack of substantive discussion on talk shows, and the media fails to provide accurate information," he said. Meanwhile, Nahid Islam, adviser for Posts, Telecomunications, and Information Technology, said action will be taken against officials involved in the internet shutdown during the recent student protests. Talking to journalists on the first day of joining his office at the Secretariat on Sunday, Nahid emphasised that those responsible for the internet shutdown during the protests will face consequences, the Daily Star newspaper reported. He said access to the internet is a right and disrupting or shutting it down is a violation of human rights. Nahid asserted that the indiscriminate internet shutdowns will no longer be tolerated.

the country following the recent fall of the Hasina-led government. Bangladesh's Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan also tendered his resignation, five days after the fall of Hasina's regime amid massive street protests and students marching towards the apex court demanding a revamp of the judiciary. Over 230 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government on Monday, taking the death toll to 560 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-July. The crisis in Bangladesh, which is a crucial market for Indian textiles, poses "significant concerns" for India's textile and apparel sector, according to the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry. The textile industry body believes that any supply disruption in Bangladesh will have an immediate impact on the supply chain, potentially affecting production schedules and delivery timelines of Indian firms. Rouf Talukder tendered his resignation, citing personal reasons. His resignation is part of a broader wave of departures from various institutions of

# Schoolchildren in UK to be trained in spotting fake news

PTI ■ LONDON

Schoolchildren will be taught to spot extremist content and fake news online under proposed changes to the curriculum in the wake of far-right riots across UK cities fuelled by misinformation on social media. UK Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson told "The Daily Telegraph" on Sunday that she is launching a review of the curriculum in both primary and secondary schools to embed critical thinking across multiple subjects and arm children against "putrid conspiracy theories". It means schoolchildren may analyse articles in English lessons to help learn how to weed out fabricated clickbait from accurate reporting. "It's more important than ever that we give young people the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge what they see online," Phillipson told the newspaper. "That's why our curriculum

review will develop plans to embed critical skills in lessons to arm our children against the disinformation, fake news and putrid conspiracy theories wash on social media," she said. "Our renewed curriculum will always put high and rising standards in core subjects first—that's non-negotiable. But alongside this we will create a broad, knowledge-rich curriculum that widens access to cultural subjects and gives pupils the knowledge and skills they need to thrive at work and throughout life," she added. The move came as the chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Chief Constable Gavin Stephens, cautioned in an article in the newspaper over disinformation being widely shared on social media sites during the recent violent clashes. "What has struck me during the disorder is how vulnerable we all are to disinformation and vile hatred online. We have spoken in recent

years about how to keep our children safe online, and what we have learned this week is that left unchecked misinformation and harmful posts can undermine all our safety," he writes. "How we behave online is not abstract. It has real world consequences. Perhaps we should be deleting a lot more than we share," he added. The riots began in Southport, the scene of the fatal stabbings in north-west England of three young girls at a holiday dance workshop on July 29, after false claims over the UK-born teenage male suspect being a Muslim refugee who arrived illegally into the country on a small boat recently spread like wildfire online. The violent clashes, blamed by Prime Minister Keir Starmer on "far-right thuggery", soon spread across different cities with tough policing action and fast-track court hearings being brought in to clamp down on the unrest.

# Trump's campaign says its emails were hacked

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Former President Donald Trump's presidential campaign said on Saturday that it has been hacked and suggested Iranian actors were involved in stealing and distributing sensitive internal documents. The campaign provided no specific evidence of Iran's involvement, but the claim comes a day after Microsoft issued a report detailing foreign agents' attempts to interfere in the US campaign in 2024. It cited an instance of an Iranian military intelligence unit in June sending "a spear-phishing email to a high-ranking official of a presidential campaign from a compromised email account of a former senior advisor." Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung blamed the hack on "foreign sources hostile to the United States." A spokesperson for the National Security Council said in a statement that it takes any report of improper foreign

interference "extremely seriously" and condemns any government or entity that attempts to undermine confidence in US democratic institutions, but said it deferred to the Justice Department on this matter. Iran's mission to the United Nations, when asked about the claim of the Trump campaign, denied being involved. "We do not accord any credence to such reports," the mission told The Associated Press. "The Iranian government neither possesses nor harbors any intent or motive to interfere in the United States presidential election." However, Iran long has been suspected of running hacking campaigns targeting its enemies in the Middle East and beyond. Tehran also long has threatened to retaliate against Trump over the 2020 drone strike he ordered that killed prominent Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani. The US Justice Department this past week unsealed crim-

inal charges against a Pakistani national with ties to Iran alleged to have plotted assassination attempts against political figures in the United States, including potentially Trump, and to have sought to hire purported hitmen who were actually undercover law enforcement officials. Court documents in that case pointedly noted a desire by Iran to conduct operations against perceived enemies of the regime and to avenge the killing of Soleimani. Politico first reported Saturday on the hack. The outlet reported that it began receiving emails on July 22 from an anonymous account. The source — an AOL email account identified only as "Robert" — passed along what appeared to be a research dossier the campaign had apparently done on the Republican vice presidential nominee, Ohio Sen. JD Vance. The document was dated Feb. 23, almost five months before Trump selected Vance as his running mate.

# Harris pledges to work to end taxes on tips

AP ■ LAS VEGAS

Vice President Kamala Harris promised on Saturday to work to eliminate taxes on tips paid to restaurant workers and other service employees, echoing a pledge that her opponent in November, Donald Trump, has made, and creating a rare instance of political overlap from both sides. Harris made the announcement at a rally on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where the economy relies heavily on the hotel, restaurant and entertainment industries. Trump vowed essentially the same thing at his own rally in the city in June — though neither he nor Harris are likely to be able to fully do that without actions from Congress. "It is my promise to everyone here that, when I am president, we will continue our fight for working families of America," Harris said. "Including to raise the minimum wage and eliminate taxes on tips for service and hospitality workers." Trump responded on his social media site a short time later, posting that Harris "just copied

my NO TAXES ON TIPS Policy." "The difference is, she won't do it, she just wants it for Political Purposes!" the former president wrote. "This was a TRUMP idea - She has no ideas, she can only steal from me." Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, came to Nevada as the final stop of a battleground blitz in which their party has shown new energy after President Joe Biden exited the race and endorsed Harris. On Sunday, the vice president is holding a San Francisco fundraiser that has already raised more than USD 12 million, her campaign said, with House Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi among those set to speak. There were 12,000-plus people inside the campus basketball arena on Saturday and, before the event started, local law enforcement opted to close the doors to the event due to people becoming ill while waiting outside to go through security in the 109-degree heat. Approximately 4,000 people were in line when the entrances were shut down. Walz referenced that during his speech, but turned it into an



Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris speaks at a campaign rally at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas on Saturday

Latino, 55 per cent women and 60 per cent immigrants. "The path to victory runs through Nevada," the union said in a statement, "and the Culinary Union will deliver Nevada for President Kamala Harris and Vice President Tim Walz." Harris made her promise on eliminating tip taxation as part of a broader appeal to strengthen the nation's middle class, seizing on a theme that was a centerpiece of Biden's now-defunct reelection bid. "We believe in a future where we lower the cost of living for America's families so they have a chance, not just to get by, but to get ahead," she said. AP VoteCast found in 2020 that 14 per cent of Nevada voters were Hispanic, with Biden winning 54 per cent of their votes. His margin with Hispanic voters was slightly better nationwide, a sign that Democrats cannot take this bloc of voters for granted. "There's an incredible energy here among the college students and community members who are coming together to support and listen to our next president, Kamala Harris," said Imer Cespedes-Alvarado, 21.

# Kin of Brazilian plane crash victims gather in Sao Paulo, identification process on

AP ■ SAO PAULO

Families of victims of an airliner crash in Brazil are gathering Sunday at a morgue and hotels in Sao Paulo as forensics experts work to identify the remains of the 62 people killed in the accident. Local authorities said the bodies of the pilot, Danilo Santos Romano, and his co-pilot, Humberto de Campos Alencar e Silva, were the first to be identified by forensics experts. Sao Paulo state government said in a statement Saturday evening that the remains of all the victims had been recovered. There were 34 male and 28 female bodies in the wreckage, it said. The ATR 72 twin-engine turboprop operated by Brazilian airline Voepass was headed for Guarulhos international

airport in Sao Paulo with 58 passengers and four crew members when it went down Friday in Vinhedo, 78 kilometers north of the metropolis. Voepass said three passengers who held Brazilian identification also carried Venezuelan documents and one had Portuguese. At least eight physicians were aboard, Parana state Gov. Ratinho Junior said. Four professors at Unioeste university in western Parana were also confirmed dead. Three-year-old Liz Ibba dos Santos, who was travelling with her father, was the only child known to be on passenger list. The remains of Luna, a dog that was travelling with a Venezuelan family, was found in the wreckage. Sao Paulo's morgue began receiving the bodies Friday

evening, and it asked victims' relatives to bring in medical, X-ray and dental records to help identify the bodies. Blood tests were also done to help identification efforts. The few family members speaking about the tragedy did so on social media. Tania Azevedo, who lost her son Tiago in the crash, was put up in one of the hotels in Sao Paulo, but said in a posting that she was waiting to go to the morgue. "I believe Tiago is somewhere trying to help the other people wounded who also need light and love," she said. "I couldn't go there (to the morgue). I am here waiting. It is dark here, I need some light and love myself." Images recorded by witnesses showed the aircraft in a flat spin and plunging vertically before

smashing to the ground inside a gated community, and leaving an obliterated fuselage consumed by fire. Residents said there were no injuries on the ground. It was the world's deadliest airline crash since January 2023, when 72 people died on a Yeti Airlines plane in Nepal that stalled and crashed while making its landing approach. That plane also was an ATR 72, and the final report blamed pilot error. Metsul, one of Brazil's most respected meteorological companies, said Friday there were reports of severe icing in Sao Paulo state around the time of the crash. Local media cited experts pointing to icing as a potential cause for the accident. A video shared on social media channels Saturday shows a Voepass pilot telling passengers

of a flight from Guarulhos to the city of Cascavel, the same origin of the crashed plane, that the ATR 72 has flown safely around the world for decades. He also asked passengers to be respectful to the memory of his colleagues and the company and asked for prayers. "This tragedy doesn't hit only those who perished in this accident. It hits all of us," the unidentified pilot said. "We are giving all our hearts, all our best to be here and fulfil our mission to take you safely and comfortably to your destination." Police restricted access to the main entrance of the Sao Paulo morgue where bodies from the crash were being identified. Some family members of the victims arrived on foot, others came in minivans. None spoke to journalists, and authorities

requested that they not be filmed as they came. A flight carrying more family members from Parana state landed Saturday afternoon at Guarulhos airport, and they also chose not to speak to journalists. A minivan sponsored by the airline was provided to transport them to the morgue. Many family members were gathered at a hotel in downtown Sao Paulo, and declining to speak to media there, too. An American Eagle ATR 72-200 crashed on October 31, 1994, and the US National Transportation Safety Board determined the probable cause was ice buildup while the plane was circling in a holding pattern. The plane rolled at about 8,000 feet and dove into the ground, killing all 68 people on board. The US Federal Aviation

Administration issued operating procedures for ATRs and similar planes telling pilots not to use the autopilot in icing conditions. Brazilian aviation expert Lito Sousa cautioned that meteorological conditions alone might not be enough to explain why the Voepass plane fell in the manner it did Friday. "Analysing an air crash just with images can lead to wrong conclusions about the causes," Sousa told The Associated Press by phone. "But we can see a plane with loss of support, no horizontal speed. In this flat spin condition, there's no way to reclaim control of the plane." Brazil's air force said Saturday that both of the plane's flight recorders had been sent to its analysis laboratory in the capital, Brasilia. The results of its

investigations are expected to be published within 30 days, it said. Marcelo Moura, director of operations for Voepass, told reporters Friday night that while there were forecasts for ice, they were within acceptable levels for the aircraft. In an earlier statement, the Brazilian air force's centre for the investigation and prevention of air accidents said the plane's pilots did not call for help or say they were operating under adverse weather conditions. The ATR 72, which is built by a joint venture of Airbus in France and Italy's Leonardo SpA, is generally used on shorter flights. Crashes involving various models of the ATR 72 have resulted in 470 deaths going back to the 1990s, according to a database of the Aviation Safety Network.







# A REFRESHING TWIST ON PROBIOTIC HEALTH

Yakult Light Mango Flavour combines the benefits of probiotics with the delicious taste of mango. This new variant supports gut health and boosts immunity with every sip.

Enjoy a tasty and healthy addition to your daily routine, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



mango flavour adds a refreshing twist, making it an enjoyable choice for those who love the fruit and want to incorporate probiotics into their daily routine.

Dr. Neerja Hajela, Head of Science and Regulatory Affairs at Yakult Danone India Pvt Ltd, emphasises the importance of probiotics in daily life: "Lactobacillus casei Shirota is backed by more than 100 human studies conducted across the globe, including India. Probiotics increase the good bacteria in the gut, reducing the harmful ones. This balance ensures better digestion, proper absorption of nutrients, and stronger immunity, reducing the risk of infections." In today's environment, where factors like pollution, stress and poor diet can easily disrupt gut health, incorporating probiotics into your diet is a proactive step toward better health. A decrease in probiotic bacteria, coupled with unhealthy lifestyle choices, can lead to poor gut health and weak immunity, manifesting as fatigue, poor growth, malnutrition, and repeated infections.

Therefore, introducing scientifically validated probiotic products like Yakult into your daily routine is essential for maintaining a healthy gut and a strong immune system. Yakult Light Mango Flavour is more than just a tasty drink; it's a step toward better health. By incorporating this probiotic-rich beverage into your daily routine, you can support your gut health and boost your immunity. As Yakult Danone India continues to innovate and expand its offerings, the new mango flavour is an attestation to its commitment to improving the health and well-being of its consumers. Whether you're a longtime fan of Yakult or new to probiotics, Yakult Light Mango Flavour is a refreshing way to support your health goals.

In today's fast-paced world, maintaining good health is a top priority, especially with increasing lifestyle disorders linked to poor nutrition, stress and inadequate sleep. A robust immune system is essential for combating these challenges and ensuring overall well-being. One effective way to support immunity is through probiotics, which are known for their ability to enhance gut health. Recognising this, Yakult Danone India Pvt Ltd, a leader in the probiotic industry, has launched an exciting new product Yakult Light Mango Flavour. Probiotics are live bacteria that are beneficial for gut health. They work by increasing the population of good bacteria in the gut, which helps reduce harmful, disease-causing

bacteria. This balance is crucial for proper digestion, nutrient absorption and overall immune function. A healthy gut is often linked to a strong immune system, which is essential for fighting off infections and maintaining overall well-being. Yakult has long been a trusted name in probiotics and its latest offering, Yakult Light Mango Flavour, continues this legacy. The new product contains the same unique probiotic strain, Lactobacillus casei Shirota (SHIROTA strain), as the original Yakult. This strain is scientifically proven to survive the journey through the digestive tract and reach the intestines alive, where it can impart its health benefits. The story of Yakult begins with Dr. Minoru Shirota, a Japanese medical doctor who was

deeply moved by the poor health conditions in Japan during the early 1900s. Witnessing the deaths of children due to infections caused by inadequate hygiene and poverty, Dr. Shirota dedicated his life to preventive health. He believed in using probiotics to prevent diseases rather than curing them after they occur. This philosophy led to the development of the SHIROTA strain, which has now been helping people maintain gut health for over 90 years. Yakult Light Mango Flavour combines the health benefits of probiotics with the delightful taste of mango, a favourite fruit among Indians. This new variant is a sister product to the original Yakult, offering the same 6.5 billion beneficial bacteria in every bottle. The

# Revolutionising Fitness and Wellness

Renowned fitness expert **SUMAYA DALMIA** highlights the importance of balanced lifestyle habits, emphasising nutrition, exercise and daily activity for sustainable health

At the recent FDCI Manifest Wedding Weekend, renowned fitness and wellness expert Sumaya Dalmia delivered a masterclass focused on practical health and fitness advice. The session, designed for brides, grooms and wellness enthusiasts, aimed to promote sustainable fitness habits rather than quick fixes or superficial transformations. Sumaya's approach emphasised the importance of a balanced lifestyle, combining nutrition, exercise and daily physical activity for long-term health benefits.

Sumaya began the masterclass by addressing common fitness myths that often mislead people. She debunked the idea that weightlifting leads to unwanted bulk, especially for women. Instead, she encouraged attendees to embrace strength training, highlighting its role in building muscle, improving metabolism and boosting confidence. Sumaya stressed that fitness is not an instant achievement but a lifelong journey requiring consistency and dedication. She pointed out that while exercise is crucial, nutrition is equally vital in achieving fitness goals, stating, "99.9% of anything to do with gut health, losing weight or aesthetics is about nutrition." The masterclass delved into the importance of understanding individual dietary needs, focusing on protein intake. Sumaya explained how to calculate daily protein requirements and stressed the significance of distributing protein consumption throughout the day for optimal absorption. Rather than categorising foods as "good" or "bad," Sumaya advocated for balanced eating, integrating proteins, healthy fats and carbohydrates based on personal needs. This approach, which promotes moderation and mindful eating, resonated well with the audience.



Sumaya also addressed the role of daily physical activity beyond structured workouts. She acknowledged that modern lifestyles often involve less natural movement, contrasting this with the more active routines observed in other cultures. By encouraging simple activities like walking, taking the stairs and doing household work, Sumaya illustrated that even basic physical engagement significantly contributes to overall health. Her message was clear, while structured workouts remain essential, daily physical activities are equally important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The masterclass provided valuable insights into

creating a balanced fitness routine that includes strength, flexibility, mobility, cardiovascular and core exercises. Sumaya's approach to fitness reflects the lessons learned during the pandemic, emphasising that effective workouts can be achieved at home with minimal equipment. This perspective encourages individuals to find ways to stay active, regardless of their environment or access to gym facilities. Another significant aspect of Sumaya's masterclass was the discussion on diet, nutrition and lifestyle adjustments tailored for specific needs, such as PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome). She stressed the importance of mindful eating and clean eating, especially as one ages. For those following vegetarian diets, she recommended high-quality protein sources like nuts, seeds, quinoa, paneer, soya and sprouts. Proper cooking methods and using spices like hing and ginger were suggested to aid digestion. For individuals with PCOS, she recommended a diet high in protein, healthy fats and fibre-rich vegetables to help regulate hormones. Sumaya also touched on the topic of supplementation,

explaining the difference between Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) and Optimum Daily Allowance (ODA). She highlighted the importance of tailoring supplement intake to individual needs, considering factors such as menopause, perimenopause and specific conditions like PCOS. Essential supplements like Vitamin D3, magnesium glycinate and B12 were recommended, noting that even with sun exposure, many people, including Indians, often require D3 supplementation. She cited studies showing a link between low D3 levels and severe COVID-19 cases, underscoring its importance for overall health. Sumaya Dalmia's masterclass offered attendees a comprehensive guide to achieving and maintaining a balanced lifestyle. Her focus on debunking fitness myths, promoting sustainable habits and encouraging a holistic approach to health and wellness inspired participants to adopt practices that support long-term well-being. Sumaya's insights serve as a reminder that true fitness is about balance, consistency and personalisation, empowering individuals to take control of their health journey.

# No one is immune to antimicrobial resistance

## SHOBHA SHUKLA

"Even the healthiest amongst us could face a life-threatening situation through a minor injury, routine surgery, or common lung infection, if antimicrobials fail," said Dr Rajesh Sambhajirao Pandav, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Nepal. "For those with pre-existing conditions like cancers, HIV, or diabetes, an untreatable infection can become an unexpected and deadly adversary."

### Why do infections become difficult to treat or untreatable?

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites change over time and become resistant to (or no longer respond to) medicines, making infections harder (or impossible) to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death. Misuse and overuse of medicines fuels AMR. It is important to remember that it is the disease-causing microbe (and not the human being, animal or plant which is being treated) that becomes resistant to medicines. Therefore, even if a person uses antimicrobial medicines responsibly, they are still at risk of acquiring a drug-resistant infection. Resistant microbes can pass between animals, plants and food, and in the environment. A "One Health" approach which recognises that the health of animals, humans, plants and the environment are interlinked is therefore essential to respond to AMR.

### No one is immune to AMR

AMR threatens to unravel a century of medical progress, turning once treatable infections into untreatable life-threatening conditions, said Dr Pandav. "AMR is identified by the WHO as one of the top 10 global health threats facing humanity. AMR is making infections harder to treat, leading to prolonged hospital stays, higher medical costs, and increased disability, morbidity, and mortality. AMR has a real and devastating impact on individuals,

families, environmental health, agricultural and food productions, and livelihoods." Dr Pandav was speaking as a Guest of Honour at the South Asia Sub-Regional Media Workshop to prevent Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) held in Kathmandu, Nepal. The workshop was organised by Health TV Online along with co-hosts, including the Ministry of Health and Population of government of Nepal, Nepal Health Research Council of government of Nepal, Global AMR Media Alliance (GAMA), and partners.

### Almost 5 million people died of AMR in a year

"In 2019 it was estimated that almost 5 million deaths were associated with bacterial AMR including 1.27 million deaths being directly caused by it. Raising awareness is our first line of defence against AMR. It is a collective responsibility, and the media plays a crucial role to shape public opinion, influence policy, and dispel myths and misinformation. Public messaging on AMR in the media needs to be simple, consistent, and clear," said Dr Pandav. "Four quadripartite agencies that have joined hands to combat AMR globally include the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WHO, World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In a meeting in 2022, they had identified working with the media as one of the top four priorities. South Asia Media Workshop to prevent AMR was organised to raise awareness among media personnel and increase their active engagement on AMR and addressing it with One Health approach," said Kalpana Acharya, Organising Chairperson of South Asia Media Workshop to prevent AMR, Editor-in-Chief of Health TV Online, and founding Board Member of Global AMR Media Alliance (GAMA). **Nepal's response to AMR challenge** "I would like to commend Nepal government's Ministry of Health and Population for their leadership and



initiatives already taken to tackle the AMR challenge. Nepal has successfully endorsed the National Action Plan on AMR. At the 77th World Health Assembly two months back, governments, including that of Nepal, endorsed the resolution to accelerate national and global responses to AMR," informed Dr Pandav. "In Nepal in 2019, there were 6400 deaths attributable to AMR and 23200 deaths associated with AMR. Nepal has the 153rd highest death rate per 100,000 population associated with AMR across 204 countries. AMR was the third biggest cause of death in 2019 in Nepal (after cardiovascular diseases and chronic respiratory diseases). The number of AMR deaths in Nepal is higher than deaths from neoplasms, respiratory infections and TB, digestive diseases, maternal and neonatal disorders and diabetes and kidney diseases," said Dr

Madan Kumar Upadhyaya, Chief of Quality Standards and Regulation Division, Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal. He also Chairs AMR National Technical Working Committee and serves as a Member Secretary of AMR National Steering Committee of government of Nepal. Discovery of penicillin was a breakthrough moment in 1928 but resistance against penicillin was reported in the 1940s - soon after it came into the market. Methicillin resistant S.aureus (MRSA) was reported in 1961. Microbes are becoming resistant to the medicines we have - due to their misuse or overuse. And now it is 30 years since a new class of antibiotics was last introduced, shared Dr Upadhyaya. Nepal is a signatory to Jaipur Ministerial Declaration on AMR 2011 when the South-East Asia region of the WHO became the first WHO region to adopt it.

Dr Upadhyaya shared that Nepal's National Action Plan on AMR (2024-2028) is currently awaiting the endorsement from the cabinet. It has already been endorsed by the National Technical Working Group on AMR, Finance Ministry of Nepal, National Planning Commission of Nepal, and the Social Committee of Nepal's cabinet. The National Action Plan on AMR (2024-2028) of Nepal has five strategic priorities, each with its time-bound activities, managed by a government agency (focal point) with supporting partners.

- Improve awareness and understanding of AMR through effective communication, education and training
- Strengthen the knowledge and evidence through surveillance and research
- Reduce the incidence of infection through effective infection prevention and control
- Optimise the use of antimicrobial agents in human, animal and food, and
- Promote investments for AMR activities, research and innovations.

The Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal is the national focal point for AMR. Nepal's Department of Drug Administration is the national focal point for antimicrobial consumption. Nepal's Veterinary Standards and Regulatory Laboratory is the national focal point for antimicrobial use in the animal health sector. Nepal's National Public Health Laboratory is the national focal point for AMR surveillance in human health. Nepal's Central Veterinary Laboratory serves as the focal point for AMR surveillance in animal health. Nepal's Department of Food Technology and Quality Control serves as a focal point for AMR surveillance in the food sector, and the Department of Environment is the focal point for AMR in the environment, said Dr Madan Kumar Upadhyaya. "Implementation and monitoring of the National Action Plan on AMR is

challenging with limited technical capacity and budgetary resources. Limited access to diagnostic microbiology facilities (at subnational level) and access to antimicrobials is another challenge," said Dr Upadhyaya.

### Right and timely diagnosis and right treatment is key

Good plan has to be followed by a greater implementation on the ground. "We have to find an effective strategy to implement the National Action Plan on AMR. More importantly, we have to take it to the local level and ensure that the right antimicrobials are prescribed, the right amount of medicines are taken and for the right disease," said Dr Roshan Pokhrel, Health Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population of Nepal. "We need to make progress in combating AMR and measure the progress too (with right data) to ensure that we are preventing AMR." World leaders will convene on 26th September 2024 at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AMR. This is the second such meeting. The first UN High-Level Meeting on AMR was held in 2016 which resulted in significant global and national actions to address AMR with One Health approach. Participants in Nepal called upon the world leaders for stronger commitments matched with concrete actions to prevent AMR. Later this year, the World AMR Awareness Week (18-24 November 2024) will be observed worldwide on the theme: Educate, Advocate and Act Now. (Shobha Shukla is the award-winning founding Managing Editor and Executive Director of CNS (Citizen News Service) and is a feminist, health and development justice advocate. She is a former senior Physics faculty of prestigious Loreto Convent College and current Coordinator of Asia Pacific Regional Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media) and Chairperson of Global AMR Media Alliance (GAMA).

