



OPINION 6
HOW MEDIA SHAPES
PUBLIC PERCEPTION

WORLD 8
EU URGED TO RETHINK TIES
WITH ISRAEL OVER GAZA

MONEY 10
INDIA PLANS REPAIRABILITY INDEX FOR
MOBILE, ELECTRONICS TO TACKLE E-WASTE

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MESSI JOINS
GROUP TRAINING
WITH INTER MIAMI
12 SPORTS

Jammu or Kashmir, India will not spare Pakistani terrorists



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

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

As electioneering gains momentum across different parts of Jammu and Kashmir in the run-up to the first round of polling on September 18, the terrorist handlers sitting across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan are hell-bent on disturbing the peaceful conduct of Assembly polls, being held after a gap of 10 long years. On Thursday, the troops of the Indian army eliminated at least three terrorists while they were attempting to infiltrate inside the Indian territory along the LoC in

the frontier district of Kupwara. These terrorists were gunned down by the alert troops in two separate anti-infiltration operations along the line of control in the Machhal and Tangdhar sectors of Kupwara. This is the second major incident involving terrorists after the announcement of the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir on August 16. On August 19, a heavily armed group of Pakistani terrorists targeted an area domination patrol party comprising jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Special Operations

Group of Jammu Kashmir Police (JKP) in the remote Duddu Basantgarh area of Udhampur in which one Inspector-rank CRPF officer sacrificed his life in the line of duty. Official sources said troops deployed along the LoC in the anti-infiltration grid could pick up the movement of the terrorists and neutralised them before they could breach the Anti-Infiltration Obstacle system (AIOS). Meanwhile, efforts are being made to create a conducive atmosphere for holding of election. The Centre has already rushed additional companies of para-

military forces to be deployed on ground zero to instill confidence among the voters. During the recently held Lok Sabha polls the Union Territory witnessed over 58 per cent voter turnout across five Parliamentary constituencies. The Election Commission of India is aiming to further improve the voter percentage turnout during the Assembly polls. In the Jammu region, security forces had also established initial contact with a group of foreign terrorists in the Kheri Mohra Lathi & Danthal areas under the jurisdiction of Budhal police station, Rajouri, past midnight. After a brief exchange of firing as the security forces rushed additional troops to cordon the area the terrorists, taking advantage of the inclement weather, may have fled the area. Residents in the area also claimed heavy firing in the Lathi area of Khwas around midnight. In Srinagar, Chinara Corps while confirming the killing of two terrorists in the Machhal sector of Kupwara posted on X, "Two terrorists have been eliminated in the ongoing anti-infiltration operation in general area Machhal, Kupwara. Two AK-47 Rifles, one Pistol, four Hand Grenades, and other war-like stores were recovered". The troops were still carrying out the searches in the area to rule out the presence of more infiltrators.

Continued on Page 2



Delhi drowns, yet again

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Incessant rain since Wednesday midnight in Delhi and its neighbouring areas led to a complete collapse of city's drainage infrastructure causing severe waterlogging and traffic congestions in many parts of the national Capital. There were reports of tree falling and power outages in several areas. According to reports from civic agencies, most of the low-lying areas and underpasses were inundated with rainwater. Visuals showed vehicles struggling to negotiate heavily waterlogged roads and pedestrians wading through ankle to knee-deep water on most roads, with underpasses almost completely submerged. There was also the risk of an overflow of sewers in many areas.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) received a total of 34 calls regarding waterlogging and tree falling from different parts of the city in 12 hours till 6 pm. According to the India

Meteorological Department (IMD), the Safdarjung Observatory, the city's primary weather station, recorded 77 mm of rainfall bringing the total rainfall for the monsoon season to 825.5 mm. This figure has already exceeded Delhi's annual average rainfall of 762.3 mm. According to Mahesh Palawat of Skymet Weather Services, Delhi's annual average rainfall is 762.3 mm and the city has already received 825.5 mm so far. August has seen unprecedented rainfall as the number of rainy days shot up to 25 which is the highest number of rainy days reported for the month in the last 13 years, according to IMD record from 2011 to 2024. There were 22 rainy days reported in August 2012, which is the second-highest mark in this period. Moreover, the month received 378.5 mm of rainfall, the city's highest in 12 years, according to the IMD, surpassing the previous high of 321.4 mm recorded in August 2013.

Continued on Page 2

Gujarat flooded with merciless rains

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

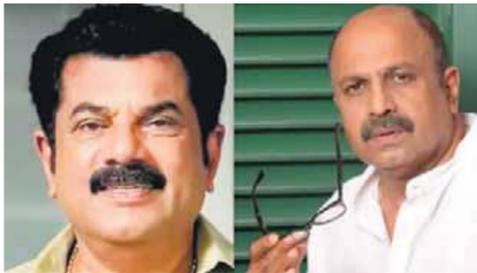
The situation in rain-battered Gujarat improved slightly on Thursday as the rainfall activity subsided, but Vadodara and some other parts of the State are still reeling under a flood-like situation due to overflowing rivers while the authorities continue the rescue and relief operations. Rain-related incidents have claimed the lives of 26 people in three days till Wednesday, the authorities said earlier. More than 18,000 people have been relocated and around 1,200 people rescued from flood-affected areas in the state. In some cases, choppers were used by the security forces to take people to safer locations, State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) said in its latest update. Vadodara, the worst-hit city due to recent downpour, heaved a sigh of relief as the water level of Vishwamitri river has come down from 37 feet to 32 feet in the morning. However, several low-lying areas are still inundated. The river had crossed the danger mark of 25 feet on Tuesday morning following heavy rains and the release of water from Ajwa dam. In a post on X, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said, "Gujarat has been receiving incessant rains for the last three days. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called me up today on the second straight day and inquired about the situation." Modi spoke to Patel for the second consecutive day and took stock of the situation. He also asked the CM to ensure that proper steps are taken to prevent the spread of diseases post floods.

Continued on Page 2

Me Too travels from Kerala to Tamil Nadu

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The MeToo controversy rocking the Malayalam film industry is set to spread over to Tamil Nadu. Vishal Reddy, popularly known as Vishal to fans, said on Thursday that the disclosures would start surfacing in the coming days. "This is not a phenomenon confined to Malayalam films alone. We have many skeletons in the cupboard which will tumble out soon," said Vishal in a brief interaction with media persons at Chennai. Vishal is the president of Tamil Film Producers Council. Meanwhile, Siddique, veteran Malayalam actor who had to quit as general secretary of Association of Malayalam Movie Artists following allegations by some actresses that they were harassed by him, was in for a shock on Thursday as a young actress filed a complaint against him with Thiruvananthapuram Police for rape and physical assault. "The incident took place in 2016 after the preview show of a Malayalam film. After the show was over Siddique asked me to accompany him to Mascot Hotel owned by Kerala State Tourism Development Corporation where he sexually abused and



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

for the police and court to prove the authenticity of the allegation. There were many serious allegations of rape and assault against Congress party leaders in the past and none of them had resigned. Why you are singling out Mukesh?" asked E P Jayarajan, convener, Left Democratic Front and one of the CPI(M)'s top leaders in Kerala. CPI(M) ideologue MA Baby with interests in Malayalam film industry supported Mukesh on Thursday and other artists involved in the cases. Marxist leadership pointed out that Congress MLA Eldhose Kunnapillil had raped a schoolteacher in the capital city and had gone underground for weeks to evade arrest.

Continued on Page 2

Kolkata horror gets murkier

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The parents of the victim lady doctor of RG Kar Medical College Hospital rejected the claims of the Kolkata Police that the portions of the seminar hall where the body of the said doctor was allegedly found in a semi-nude condition had been cordoned off and that the outsiders were not allowed to go near the place of occurrence. The lady doctor was allegedly raped and murdered in the early hours of August 9. "First of all we deny and reject the claim made by the Kolkata

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



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

waiting for three hours but they allowed outsiders to vitiate the area leading to destruction of evidence... now

we wonder what is left for the CBI to find on the spot that could shed light on the crime." The parents also referred to the

bed sheet that was used to cover victim's body complaining how "the sheet was changed three." The mother of the victim doctor said, "My daughter had a red chadhaar with her... which was changed to blue and then green... these three kinds of sheets were on her on three occasions... is this not an example of destruction of evidence... if it is now then what is." Meanwhile the audio tape of the telephone call that went to the victim's family for the first time from the hospital on August nine went viral.

Continued on Page 2

Adani outpaces Ambani in race to riches

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani with a net worth of ₹11.6 lakh crore is the richest Indian. He has elbowed out Mukesh Ambani to clinch the top spot in 2024, according to the Hurun India Rich list released on Thursday. Moreover, a new billionaire is being added every five days this year as compared to last year. Interestingly, 2024 had the best for those people whose zodiac sign is cancer, followed by Gemini and Leo. The number of billionaire in India has reached 334 this



year, rising by 29 per cent as compared to 2023. Cancer witnessed an astonishing 84 per cent increase in cumulative wealth. Gemini follows closely, with a notable 77 per cent increase

in wealth. In third place is Leo, with a 68 per cent rise in cumulative wealth. Similarly, Sagittarius, with a 64 per cent wealth increase, and Libra with 61 per cent are also among the top five. Capricorn saw a 58 per cent increase in cumulative wealth followed by Pisces with a 46 per cent increase. Aquarius and Virgo share the eighth spot, each with a 39 per cent increase in wealth. Aries, Scorpio, and Taurus occupy the final spots, with wealth increases of 34 per cent, 33 per cent, and 32 per cent, respectively.

Continued on Page 2

Supreme Court reprimands Telangana CM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

BR Gavai, PK Mishra, and KV Viswanathan was hearing a plea seeking transfer of the 2015 cash-for-votes case against the Chief Minister to Madhya Pradesh. The petitioners argued he could influence witnesses and tamper with evidence. "Have you read in the newspaper what he said? Just read what he has stated. What sort of statement is this by a responsible chief minister. That might rightly create apprehension in the minds of people. Is this a kind of statement which should be made by a chief minister."

Continued on Page 2

Nitish Kumar's dream for Jarasandh moves closer to reality

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Bihar Government's ambitious plan to construct a grand memorial for Jarasandh, a key figure from the Mahabharata and the ancient king of Magadha with his capital at Girivraja (modern-day Rajgir) at lush green Rajgir wildlife sanctuary, has taken a significant step forward. Recently, the Central Wildlife panel, headed by Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, approved the project, bringing it closer to realisation. Situated in the protected area in Nalanda district, this project includes the installation of an 18-foot tall statue of Jarasandha, various murals depicting his life and achievements, as well as tributes to great freedom fighter and socialist Lok Nayak Jayprakash Narayan also known

as JP. Additionally, the project envisions the construction of an art gallery using prefabricated materials and the renovation of existing park facilities. The project is part of the Jay Prakash Udyan Park situated within the sanctuary and officials pin hopes that it is expected to boost tourism given that it is around 100 km from the State capital Patna, and cultural interest by highlighting Bihar's rich historical and mythological heritage. Because of the want of approval, many installed structures are in dilapidated condition. Given that the project falls within the Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary, it required extensive consideration for wildlife clearance. The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife, which is the highest decision-



making body of the Central Government for projects in protected sanctuaries and reserves, has now endorsed the proposal. This approval signifies that the project has met the

necessary environmental and regulatory criteria, as confirmed by an official from the Union Environment Ministry. "The State Government had requested the diversion of

approximately 1.8436 hectares of forest land within the Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary for the installation of the statue and historic murals, alongside the construction of essential facilities such as toilets, a cafeteria, and an art gallery made of prefabricated structures," said the officials. The proposal has already received recommendations from the State Chief Wildlife Warden, the State Board for Wildlife, and the State Government. According to the minutes of the meeting of the NBWL, the Chief Wildlife Warden noted that the sanctuary was officially notified in 1978, with park development commencing prior to that and opening to the public in 1979. "The ongoing renovation and provision of basic amenities are crucial to maintaining and enhancing the park for public

use," said the minutes quoting the Bihar Government officials about the project being overseen by the Divisional Forest Officer of the Nalanda Forest Division. Following deliberations, the Standing Committee recommended the proposal with the stipulation that the region's flora and fauna remain undisturbed. The Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary is home to various species, including wild boar, cheetal, jungle fowl, porcupine, hare, langur, monkey, and jackal. The central wildlife panel emphasised that the legal status of the land will remain as part of the sanctuary and will be dedicated solely to eco-tourism purposes. The project proponent has assured that no trees will be cut down as the area falls within an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) for

which the final notification was issued in 2017. The park, established in 1979, has been in use since its opening. However, many of its structures are now in disrepair. The planned upgrades include the installation of essential amenities such as toilets, seating benches, platforms, drinking water facilities, landscaping, and water drainage systems. These improvements are vital to prevent further deterioration of the park. "Upgrading the park is aimed at integrating the ecological, cultural, and historical aspects of Rajgir," said officials. "This initiative will bring the glory of ancient India to the forefront, providing educational opportunities for park visitors and enhancing their understanding of the region's rich heritage," he said.

Technical panel appointed to probe Shivaji statue collapse

T N RAGHUNATHA ■
MUMBAI

Amid continued protests by the Opposition Maha Vikass Aghadi (MVA) over the sudden collapse of a 35-foot tall statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Malvan Sindhudrug district, the Indian Navy and Maharashtra Government on Thursday announced the formation of a joint technical committee comprising Naval officials, civil engineers and experts, to investigate the cause of the statue collapse and fix responsibility for the mishap.

To be headed by the Indian Navy, the technical committee will comprise representatives from the Maharashtra government, civil engineers and experts, including the ones from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, JJ School of Art and renowned sculptors from across the state.

Apart from into the cause and circumstances leading to the collapse of the imposing Shivaji Statue inside Rajkot at Malvan in Maharashtra's Sindhudrug district, the technical committee will also fix responsibility for the collapse. The decision to constitute a technical committee to investigate the Shivaji statue collapse follows a joint meeting that chief minister Eknath Shinde held with the senior Naval officials, his senior ministers, bureaucrats at his official residence "Varsha" in South Mumbai on Wednesday night.

In a statement issued by the state government, Shinde said that he had asked the State Public Works Department (PWD) to set up a committee comprising the nation's best sculptors; civil engineers, expert officers and Navy officers for constructing a grand and magnificent statue of

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj that portrays his achievements in a best way. "The collapse of the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is unfortunate and the feelings and emotions of the Maratha warrior and Shiv Bhakts are intense. Due care should be taken by all of us so as to ensure against recurrence of such type of incidents in the future," Shinde said.

In a separate statement issued earlier in the day, the Indian Navy was committed to assisting in all measures to repair, restore, and reinstate the statue at the earliest. "The Statue was unveiled on December 4, 2023 as part of the Navy Day celebrations conducted, for the first time, in Sindhudrug, aimed at honouring the legacy of the Maratha Navy and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj towards maritime defence and security, and its historical link-



age with the modern Indian Navy," the Navy said in its statement. "The project was conceptualised and steered by the Indian Navy, in coordination with state govt which also provided funding for it. The Indian Navy remains committed to assisting in all measures to repair, restore, and reinstate the statue at the earliest," the statement added.

It may be recalled that the 35-foot tall statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj with a sword in his hand at 12.30 pm on August 26, within nine months after it was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 4, 2023 as part of the Navy Day celebrations. The collapse of Shivaji statue

has triggered a major political uproar across the state, with the Opposition MVA staging protests across Maharashtra demanding the resignations of chief minister Eknath Shinde and deputy chief ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar. Ajit Pawar on Wednesday publicly apologised to the "13 crore people of Maharashtra" for the Shivaji statue collapse.

Meanwhile, the Shiv Sena (UBT), a constituent of the Opposition Shiv Sena, staged protests for the fourth consecutive day. Shiv Sena (UBT)'s deputy leader and party spokesperson Sushma Andhare led the protest march in Pune on Thursday. Talking to media persons, Andhare hit out at senior BJP leader and MP Narayan Rane for resorting to "intimidation tactics" and handing threats to the media, police and the opposition leaders "when the

MVA workers staged a protest in Malvan on Malvan. "The language used by Rane displayed his character... He was intimidating the media persons, the police and the Opposition leaders carrying out a peaceful protest at the Rajkot Fort. His sole intention is to spoil the communal atmosphere in the state and create disturbances," Andhare said.

She questioned Deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis of the ruling BJP if it was he who had asked Rane and his cheap hoodlums to indulge in a ruckus at Rajkot fort and quell any form of public protests in Sindhudrug to create caste-communal divides in the state. "If anything untoward happens, then it is only Fadnis who will be responsible as the state home minister. We demand that Rane should be booked and arrested for disturbing peace and fomenting

violence there," Andhare said. Rane's supporters virtually clashed with the MVA workers at Malvan's Malvan fort. So heated was the atmosphere at the Rajkot fort at Malvan that the workers of the BJP and the rival MVA elbowed one another and shouted fierce slogans against each other. At one stage, Rane snatched the mic of a television journalist capturing the developments at Rajkot.

Andhare said that despite tough efforts by the Sindhudrug Police, Rane and his supporters proved to be uncontrollable as they staged a siege and prevented the MVA leaders like leaders of Opposition in the State Assembly Vijay Wadetiwar, his counterpart from the State Council Ambadas Danve, NCP (SP) state President Jayant Patil, SS (UBT)'s Aditya Thackeray and others from entering the Rajkot Fort.

BJP advocates putting up party face against Kejriwal ahead of Assembly polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the February Assembly election, a section of the Delhi BJP has been advocating for putting up a party face to challenge the Aam Aadmi Party convenor and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

In the 2020 Assembly elections, the BJP contested against AAP without a leader as the CM face of the party. In the election, the BJP was routed by the AAP, which emerged victorious on 62 of the 70 seats in the Assembly. "The debate over the issue has already begun with several senior leaders thinking that the BJP will benefit if it goes to poll with a face to challenge Kejriwal and AAP. They have already conveyed their sentiments to the national leaders in this regard," said a top leader of Delhi BJP.

Other leaders proposed several names who could be flagbear-

ers of the party's agenda. "It could be anyone of the prominent leaders of the party like the MPs Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Bansuri Swaraj or Manoj Tiwari, or state president Virendra Sachdeva, former MP Parvesh Verma or Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Vijender Gupta," said another senior Delhi BJP leader. The entire party rallying behind one leader will give a message of "unity" and also streamline campaigning for the polls, he claimed.

The BJP fought the 2015 Delhi Assembly polls with Kiran Bedi as its Chief Ministerial candidate but failed miserably, a Delhi BJP leader opposed to the idea pointed out. Not only Bedi lost from Krishna Nagar seat, but the party also was "crushed" by the AAP, which won 67 of 70 seats. According to the section, the debate is still open and the national leadership will take a decision on later on.

Mamata Govt to bring law for death penalty to rape convicts

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Government has convened a special two-day Assembly Session on September 2 where it will get a stringent anti-rape law passed senior Bengal Minister Sovandeb Chattopadhyay on Thursday said. "A Bill will be passed mandating capital punishment for a convicted rapist," Chattopadhyay said. Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee too said that the Bill would be brought for discussion Monday and would be passed on Tuesday.

The State Cabinet had already cleared the tabling of the Bill inside sources said. Earlier Chief Minister who was under tremendous pressure from the civil society and the citizenry for her Government's alleged shoddy handling of the RG Kar medical College lady doctor rape and murder case told a Trinamool Congress students' rally that her Government would convene a special session and bring a stringent anti-rape

law with death sentence for the rape convicts. "I wrote Prime Minister Narendra Modi for bringing similar laws but the Centre brought some Sanhitas or things like that ... what use in bringing weak laws ... Now we will bring stringent laws giving death sentence to the rapists who are convicted ... we will also ensure fast track trial," she said leading to a widespread criticism among the civil society members and the lawyers who said that there were already stringent laws in place. "The only issue is implementation of such laws and the Government's intention to act tough," senior lawyers of Calcutta High Court said. Meanwhile, reports came in from South Dinajpur of a minor girl being raped. "The girl was first raped and then murder was attempted, police sources said adding the accused had been arrested. The girl is a Class V student at a school in Bangshihari village of South Dinajpur district in North Bengal. She was allegedly raped by a miscreant on



Wednesday midnight, police said adding, "her parents were alerted by her screams ... when her mother went to her room someone pushed her aside and fled ... she is presently admitted in Gangarampur Super Specialty Hospital." Her mother said the miscreant tried to kill her. Meanwhile, the junior doctors protesting of Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College Hospital put up a brave front during Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday to take whatever action she wanted to

take against them insisting they would in no condition withdraw their strike until justice was delivered to the victim lady doctor who was allegedly raped and murdered in the intervening night of August 8 and 9. "The Chief Minister has indirectly threatened us with action ... or FIR or similar things ... but we are not scared because we are fighting with our back against the wall ... it is now or never ... we are fighting for justice for our dead colleague and we are deter-

mined to take that ... we are doing nothing illegal ... so no amount of pressure or threat from anyone including the Chief Minister will be shake us," a striking doctor on Thursday said. This even as the Chief Minister at her words writing on the X handle that her words were being misinterpreted as she had never threatened the doctors but requested them to join work. "Let me most emphatically clarify that I have not uttered a single word against the [medical etc.] students or their movements. I totally support their movement. Their movement is genuine. I never threatened them, as some people are accusing me of doing. This allegation is completely false," Banerjee wrote. Asking the doctors to withdraw cease work Banerjee had on Wednesday said that "the Supreme Court has given powers to the State Governments to take action ... but I am not registering any FIR as this might spoil the

young doctors' careers ... they may not get visa for studying abroad ... but I request them to join back duty as the continuous cease work is affecting the poor people the most." She also wrote that she had not incited the Trinamool Congress to attack the opposition workers saying she was only targeting the BJP and none else. "I have spoken against BJP. I have spoken against them because, with the support of the Government of India, they are threatening the democracy in our State and trying to create anarchy. With support from the Centre, they are trying to create lawlessness and I have raised my voice against them." Referring to the bandh called by the BJP and the Tuesday's march by some rightwing students' groups to the State secretariat Nabanna demanding her resignation Banerjee had on Wednesday asked her party men to sometimes bark at the opposition if not bite them adding, "I don't have to say what you need to do now."

Bharat Dojo yatra coming soon, says Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday shared a video on martial arts sessions held at campsites of his east to west Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra earlier this year and said a "Bharat Dojo Yatra" is coming soon. Dojo broadly refers to a training hall or school for martial arts. "During the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, as we journeyed across thousands of kilometers, we had a daily routine of practicing jiu-jitsu every evening at our campsites. What began as a simple way to stay fit quickly evolved into a community activity, bringing together fellow yatrins and young martial arts students from the towns where we stayed," Rahul

Gandhi said in a social media post along with the video of the sessions. "Our goal was to introduce these young minds to the beauty of the 'Gentle Art' a harmonious blend of meditation, Jiu-Jitsu, Aikido, and non-violent conflict resolution techniques," the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said. "We aimed to instill in them the value of transforming violence into gentleness, giving them the tools to build a more compassionate and safer society," Rahul Gandhi said. On this National Sports Day, he said he wants to share his experience with the people, hoping to inspire some of them to take up the practice of the "gentle art". "P.S.: Bharat Dojo Yatra is coming soon," Rahul Gandhi added.

Delhi...

From Page 1
As rains lashed the city, office goers and commuters faced a hard time as they had to wade through knee deep water with heavy traffic witnessed at several areas where the vehicles were seen crawling. Many areas including Shankar Vihar, Delhi Cantonment, Sainik Farms, Mehrauli-Badarpur road, ITO, Geeta Colony and area around MCD Civic Centre between GB Pant Hospital and Delhi Gate were severely submerged in water. Other areas such as Kalindi Kunj, Delhi-Gurugram border, Sarai Kale Khan, Dhaura Kuan and GT Karnal Road, among others, witnessed traffic jams for more than an hour. Besides, traffic congestion was also reported from North Campus of Delhi University and some areas of east Delhi. Delhiites expressed their frustration as reaching their workplace became a hassle amid trying to wade through the waterlogged streets. A 22 year old Suraj Bahuguna said, "I commute daily from Badarpur to Noida for work, and the monsoon months of July and August have been especially challenging due to severe waterlogging in my area. The traffic congestion caused by this is another major headache."

Kolkata horror...

From Page 1
A popular Bengali channel showed how a woman calling up the parents of the doctor asking them to rush to the hospital "as she is seriously ill." When the father of the victim doctor called back asking as to what had happened to her daughter they asked him to rush to the hospital quickly as she was seriously ill and had been carried to the Emergency. Subsequently a third phone call came from the same number from the same woman who got herself identified as the Assistant Superintendent of the Hospital who said, "now I have to tell you that I am the Assistant Super speaking ... it seems that your daughter has committed suicide so you have to come quickly to the hospital."

Me Too travels from Kerala...

From Page 1
"But the Congress leadership instead of taking action against him, in 29 were seen saving him from arrest and legal proceedings," said a CPI(M) leader. The complaint filed by Sreelekha Mitra against director Ranjith which opened a can of worms reached new heights as the Special Investigation Team probing the case called on Joshy Jose, another movie director to whom the former had confided about the incident. The sexual abuse about which Tamil actor Vishal mentioned on Thursday brought back the memories of popular play back singer Chinmayi Sripaada against lyricist and Padma Bhushan awardee Vairamuthu in 2018. Though there were many more allegations of sexual abuse against Vairamuthu, no action has been taken against him. The controversies against film personalities has caused a vertical split in the LDF as the CPI leaders were unanimous in their demand that Mukesh should quit as MLA and face probe. But the CPI(M) leadership os of the view that one need not give any importance to the CPI. "They keep on barking but they will not bite," said a senior CPI(M) leader.

Gujarat flooded with...

From Page 1
"He expressed concern over the floods in Vishwamitri river and wanted to know about what relief and rescue measures are being taken for people of Vadodara," the CM said. The PM took stock of the relief measures in all the districts of the state and assured all help to the state. He also instructed that proper measures for cleaning be taken to ensure that diseases do not spread after floods, Patel added. In the 24 hours ending 6 am, Bhanvad in Devbhumi Dwarka district recorded 295 mm rainfall, while Abdasa in Kutch received 276 mm, while Kalyanpur in Devbhumi Dwarka witnessed 263 mm rainfall.

Supreme Court reprimands Telengana...

From Page 1
A constitutional functionary is speaking in this manner? "Why should they drag court in political rivalry? Do we pass orders on consultations with political parties. We are not bothered by politicians or if anybody criticises our orders. We do our duty as per conscience and oath," a three-judge bench headed by Justice B R Gavi told senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Reddy. In an interaction with mediapersons, Reddy on Tuesday had said there are doubts over MLC Kavitha getting bail in five months when Manish Sisodia got it after 15 months and Kejriwal is yet to get it. "It is

Adani outpaces Ambani in race to...

From Page 1
Overall, Cancer leads in terms of wealth growth, Gemini tops the list in total contribution, representing 9.9 per cent of the richest individuals on the list. The youngest on the 2024 Hurun India rich list is Kaivalya Vohra (21) of Zepto and his co-founder Aadit Palicha, 22, is the second youngest in the list. For the first time, actor Shah Rukh Khan made his debut on the list owing to the rising value of his holdings in the IPL team Kolkata Knight Riders, with a fortune estimated at Rs 7,300 crore, which was much higher than business partner Juhi Chawla with Rs 4,600 crore net worth secured second place among the entertainers. In 2023's report, Adani's wealth declined by 57 per cent to Rs 4.74 lakh crore, and Ambani was way ahead with a fortune of Rs 8.08 lakh crore. It can be noted that Adani's net worth declined sharply following various allegations levelled by US-based short seller Hindenburg Research. The conglomerate has denied all the allegations. In the 2014 edition, Hurun had pegged Adani's fortunes at Rs 44,000 crore, which made him the 10th richest Indian then. Shiv Nadar and family of HCL gained one spot to be the third richest with a net worth of Rs 3.14 lakh crore, while Serum Institute of India's Cyrus Poonawalla slipped by one notch to the fourth position with a net worth of Rs 2.89 lakh crore in 2024. Sun Pharmaceuticals' Dilip Shangvi continued his ascent on the list, securing the fifth richest tag against sixth last year with a net worth of Rs 2.50 lakh crore. Radha Vembu of Zoho was the wealthiest among self-made women with a fortune of Rs 47,500 crore, while Zepto's co-founders Kaivalya Vohra and Aadit Palicha, who are in their early 20s, were the youngest on the list with a net worth of Rs 3,600 crore and Rs 4,300 crore, respectively. The list, which captures Indians having a net worth of over Rs 1,000 crore, grew by 220 individuals to 1,539 people in 2024. The cumulative wealth has seen a 46 per cent jump in the year.

Jammu or Kashmir...

From Page 1
According to a Chinar Corps spokesman, another terrorist was eliminated in the Tangdhar area of Kupwara. The operation was still in progress till the time of filing the report. In Jammu, Senior Superintendent of Police Joginder Singh visited the border belt of RS Pura-Arnia including Border Police Posts (BPPs) & reviewed the operational preparedness along the border grid. Police have recently deployed more newly trained jawans in various border villages across the Jammu region to bolster the anti-infiltration and anti-terrorism grid. Besides, Village Defence Group committees have been strengthened to further augment the border grid. The Jammu and Kashmir police have established 19 special counterterror units, each headed by a Dy SP, in 8

terror-hit districts of Jammu. These teams will remain stationed and will conduct counterterror operations alongside looking after routine crime in the areas. The units have been set up in the areas that witnessed terror attacks in recent months across the Jammu province. According to official sources, these units will remain stationed at Latti and Panchari of Udhampur district. Malhar, Bani of Kathua district. Pouni/Ransoo, Mahore, Chassana, Gulabgarh, and Passana of Reasi district. Dessa/Kastigarh, Assar of Doda district. Dachhan, Drabshalla of Kishtwar district. Ransoo, Chanderkote/Batote Sangaldan/Dharamkund of Ramban district. Kalakote of Rajouri district. Baffliaz/Behramgalla, Mandi/Loran, Gursai of Poonch district.

Supreme Court reprimands Telengana...

From Page 1
A fact that BRS worked for the victory of the BJP in the 2024 LS polls. There is also talk that Kavitha got bail because of the deal between BRS and BJP," he had alleged. The apex court said it a fundamental duty to have mutual respect for institutions and maintain arm's distance. The top court said it a fundamental duty to have mutual respect for institutions and maintain arm's distance. The bench said, "We always say we will not interfere in the legislature, then that is expected from them also. Do we pass orders on political considerations?" Senior Advocate C Aryama Sundaram, appearing for

Supreme Court reprimands Telengana...

BRS MLA Guntakandla Jagadish Reddy and three others, sought transfer of trial saying the Telangana chief minister has been publicly making statements on the case. "Only on apprehension, how can we entertain... If we entertain such petitions, we will be disbelieving our judicial officers," the bench observed. Sundaram submitted that Telangana chief minister is himself the home minister. "There is a rule of natural justice that no person should be a judge in his own cause," he argued. The bench then said it will pass orders to appoint an independent public prosecutor to inspire confidence.

Supreme Court reprimands Telengana...

crore, according to the list. Gera Developments' Kumar Pritamdas Gera's wealth grew the fastest at 566 per cent in the 2024 list, while Ambani and Adani had the biggest growth by quantum, the list said. Meanwhile, the Congress attacked the Centre, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "billionaire raj" is more unequal than even the British Raj and it is also the cornerstone of the government's economic policy-making, he alleged. This is why, at a time when countries across the world are coalescing around the idea of a global billionaire tax, the Indian government has been conspicuously silent and continues to remain blind to rapidly increasing economic inequalities, Ramesh said.



Vehicles stuck in traffic jam after rain in New Delhi on Thursday



Waterlogged road in New Delhi on Thursday



Traffic jam in New Delhi on Thursday

PTI

Record 100 mm rainfall sinks Gurugram

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

With the Gurugram recording 100 mm of rainfall on Thursday morning, the residents were seen helpless and multiple stretches across city turned into a river. However, officials claimed that efforts are on to clear waterlogging. Power outages were also reported from different areas of the city. A few hours of rain caused heavy water logging on multiple stretches across the district. Both vehicular traffic and pedestrian movement have been disrupted due to waterlogging on several roads. Commuters faced huge prob-

lems due to rainwater. Morning rush hour traffic was affected and the police struggled to keep the vehicles moving. Also, 3-4 feet of water accumulated on several city roads while the rainwater was also seen in the city's industrial area in Sector-37, Sector-34, Khandsa and Wazirabad. The rain started at around 4 am on Thursday and it turned into a heavy downpour till 9.30 am. Traffic movement on the Delhi-Jaipur-Mumbai highway was severely hit due to waterlogging. Nearly 70 percent of the city was submerged in an average of 3 feet of water with the worst-hit areas being Signature Tower Chowk, Hanuman Chowk



(Udyog Vihar), Narsinghpur (NH-48), Haldiram towards Manesar, Basai Road, Nathupur, Z Chowk near Huda City Centre Metro Station, Bilaspur Chowk, Dronacharya Metro Station, Iffco Metro Station, Galleria Market Road, Mayfield Garden Chowk, Sector-12 Chowk, Mini Secretariat, Sector-21/22 T-point, Medicity T-point, Bus Stand Road, Sanjay Gram Road, Basai Road and Sheela Mata Road. With heavy rain lashing the city since the early hours on Thursday, several parts of the district were inundated, and water also entered several houses in Sector 7, Sector 4, Malibu Town, Anjana Colony, Saraswati Enclave,

Sheetla Colony, Rajiv Colony, Ashok Vihar, Palam Vihar and Sushant Lok. The Gurugram resident took to social media to describe their anguish and held responsible the local authority due for this huge mess. People were seen taking selfies in the water logging area. Several residents took to Twitter to share their experiences and posted photos of waterlogging and traffic jams. Office-goers in the city, too, faced a lot of inconvenience due to traffic disruptions. "We have improved upon our city infrastructure in last three years, which kept the city running even during the heavy downpour. We will learn from

our experiences and ensure that areas and junctions which experienced waterlogging, can be improved upon for the future," a civic body official added. "I would like to say the district administration, Gurugram, stop fooling the residents of Gurugram and must start work on the ground. A few kilometres of travelling turned into hours which is ridiculous," Ajay Chauhan, a resident of Sector-31, said. "1,000 plus traffic personnel have been deployed at major junctions for traffic operations. We also coordinated with the civic authorities to drain out the water for smooth traffic movement," said Virender Vij, DCP (traffic).

Traffic cops to re-launch upgraded version of Traffic Sentinel app

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena has directed Delhi Traffic Police to re-launch the modified and upgraded version of the Traffic Sentinel Mobile App "as Traffic Prahari" starting September 1, which serves as a platform for the common citizens to report traffic/parking violations and thus helps in regulating city traffic. It aims at enhancing people's participation in the management of traffic as direct stakeholders. Citizens will now be able to complain of traffic violations, help the police track them and contribute to managing traffic in the city, Raj Niwas officials said. Traffic Sentinel scheme (TSS) is a unique scheme where common citizens act as the eyes and ears of Delhi Traffic Police and help reduce the number of traffic violations on roads by reporting the same to the police. To further encourage citizens' participation, the LG asked the Delhi Traffic Police to introduce monthly rewards



system for the "Traffic Prahari". As part of this, a first reward of Rs 50,000, 2nd reward of Rs 25,000, 3rd reward of Rs 15,000 and 4th reward of Rs 10,000 will be given every month to the top 04 performers, based on the points earned through their activities and reporting of traffic violations. The first monthly rewards would be distributed in the first week of October, after analyzing the activities of the "Traffic Praharis" through the month of September. The LG said Traffic Praharis Scheme would provide the aware citizens with an opportunity to participate with Delhi Traffic Police in maintaining the city traffic and preventing

traffic violations. He said this would additionally provide avenues of income to the people as well as contribute constructively and significantly in governance and earn. He said the effectiveness of the scheme would be reviewed after six months and based on the results, the monthly rewards would also be accordingly enhanced so as to encourage more participation of the people. Saxena exuded confidence that this model of citizens' participation would prove effective in creating awareness about citizen's rights and responsibilities while being the partners of the government

Shahbad Dairy BJP Councillor joins AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after five AAP councillors switched their loyalties and joined BJP on Sunday, Shahbad Dairy Councillor Ramchandra on Thursday re-joined the AAP and said that it was his biggest mistake to join the BJP. This comes a day after the Municipal Secretary announced that elections for the MCD's 12 ward committees will be held on September 4. AAP in a statement said, "The BJP, which tricked an AAP councillor into joining its party, got a big blow on Thursday as Councillor Ramchandra from Ward No. 28, who left the AAP after being misled by the BJP, returned to his party." On his rejoining, Ramchandra said that he realized his wrong decision and met senior leaders of the AAP including former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and Dr. Sandeep Pathak and expressed his desire to return to his family. "Joining the BJP was my big mistake, but now I want to return to my family and correct this mistake," he said. Welcoming the Councillor



back into the party fold, Manish Sisodia tweeted, "I met old AAP colleague and former Bawana Vidhan Sabha MLA Ramchandra. Today he has returned to his Aam Aadmi family." The AAP councillor said that he has returned after getting a dream of AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal. "I am Ramchandra, a small soldier of the AAP. I made the wrong decision, but I have returned to my family again. Last night, our Chief Minister came in my dream and reprimanded me saying that Ramchandra get up and go and meet Manish (Sisodia), Gopal Rai, Sandeep (Pathak) and all the leaders; go and meet your workers in the area and work." He added that he will never

leave AAP and said that he has taken an oath to never be misled by anyone in the future. Chander's return could have implications in the upcoming ward committee elections, particularly in the Narela Zone. Chander was one of two AAP councillors from the Narela Zone who had defected to the BJP, giving the BJP a majority in the ward. With Chander back in AAP, the Narela ward is likely to see a tie in the upcoming ward committee elections, as both parties may now have an equal number of votes. The ward committee elections are important because 12 of the 18 members of the Standing Committee, which serves as the MCD's financial backbone, are elected during these elections.

Lawyer files complaint with Delhi Police against Mamata for inciting remarks

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A lawyer has filed a complaint with the Delhi Police on Thursday against West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her remarks at a Trinamool Chhatra Parishad event, alleging they were provocative and inciting statements. The complaint, filed by Vineet Jindal, a practising lawyer at the Supreme Court, to the Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora is against Banerjee's statement on Wednesday where she reportedly said, "Remember, if Bengal burns, then Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Delhi will also burn." It is clear that this statement is instigating, provocative, and antinational in nature. Her words are intended to create hatred and enmity between different groups on the basis of region, which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony. As the Chief Minister of a state in the Union of India, she holds significant influence over the public," he said.



He added that the seriousness of her statement is amplified by her position as Chief Minister, where she controls the administrative and law enforcement authorities in West Bengal. "Her words clearly indicate a willingness to misuse her power to create unstoppable unrest in the state and other parts of the country," Jindal alleged. "Given the instigating and provocative nature of her statement, which intends to create disharmony and foster hatred and enmity among the masses of India, as she mentioned the name of Delhi in her statement as one of the states, I being a resident of Delhi respectfully request that an FIR be lodged under Sections 152, 192, 196, and 353 of the BNS against Mamata Banerjee.

Innovative ideas shared at workshop on pre-incubation entrepreneurship

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amity Foundation for Science Technology & Innovation Alliances (AFSTIA), Amity University Noida organised a Workshop on "Pre-Incubation Entrepreneurship (PIE) Development Programme" in collaboration with Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, Department of Space (IN-SPACe). The IN-SPACe PIE programme is designed for aspiring space entrepreneurs and individuals with innovative ideas in the space sector who are seeking early-stage support and mentorship to develop their concepts into viable businesses. More than 1000 participants from Delhi/NCR Universities and institutions joined the workshop, including IIT Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi Technological University and National Institute of Technology, to name a few. Delivering the Keynote Address, Dr Vinod Kumar, Director, Promotion Directorate, IN-SPACe, averred "On November 20, 1967, India's first Indigenous Sounding Rocket, Rohini-75 was launched which marked a new beginning for the Indian



Space Industry. Under the visionary leadership of our Prime Minister, the Government initiated Space Sector reforms and formed and autonomous body, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, IN-SPACe on June 24, 2020, which enables private entities to carry out end-to-end space activities. Welcoming the guests, Prof (Dr) Balvinder Shukla, Vice Chancellor, Amity University, Uttar Pradesh, said, "The workshop serves as a one-stop solution for participants to explore the entire journey from ideation to commercialization in starting a start-up or pursuing entrepreneurship. Space Technology is an important sector for Viksit Bharat@2047 and Chandrayaan's landing on the South Pole of the moon has proved India's potential in the Space Sector."

Cluster bus with 50 passengers catches fire, no casualties reported

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A low-floor cluster blue bus with around 50 passengers onboard was completely gutted after it caught fire in east Delhi's Jagatpuri area near A block bus stand on Thursday. According to the police, no passengers were injured. DCP Shahdara Surendra Choudhary said, "On Thursday at 9.48 am, we received a PCR call at Jagatpuri police station about a cluster bus burning at A block bus stand in Jagatpuri. After reaching the spot, it is found that fire broke out in a blue colour cluster bus." He added that as the vehicle is a CNG air-conditioned bus, there was a danger of fire spreading. "So the area was cordoned off and about 40 passengers were rescued. Three fire tenders reached at the spot immediately and extinguished the fire," DCP stated, adding that no one was injured and no causality was reported. The bus was plying on route 340, from Central Secretariat to Seemapuri. The probable cause of the fire was short-circuit in the AC system, he added. The Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System Limited (DIMTS) monitors and manages cluster buses. An inquiry has been ordered, transport



department officials said and added that the bus will be examined by the manufacturer to determine what caused the fire. Reacting to the news, Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot said, "This bus was not very old and only four years old. We will conduct an investigation to know the reason for the fire. We will hundred percent get to the root cause of the incident. We stand committed to the safety of passengers. We will surely come down very heavily on those responsible at any level." Another officer added, "It is a matter of concern that a relatively new bus caught fire. The fire started from the back portion and despite efforts by the driver and the conductor to extinguish it, it spread." Station officer of Delhi Fire

Services (DFS) Anoop Singh said a call was received around 9.40 am about the incident and three fire tenders were sent to the spot. It is suspected that an electrical short-circuit in the vehicle's air conditioning system may have caused the fire, Singh said. Eyewitness Surender Bhola said a biker noticed smoke coming out of the bus engine and alerted the driver, who immediately stopped the vehicle and instructed the passengers to get off. The incident caused a massive traffic jam at the Jagatpuri crossing, affecting other commuters. "Traffic is affected on New Rohtak Road in the carriageway from Kamal T-Point towards Punjabi Bagh due to a fire in a Cluster Bus on Zakhira Flyover. Commuters are advised to avoid the stretch," it said in a post on X.

DU welcomes new batch of UG students for academic session 2024-25

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Vibrant posters, anti-ragging campaigns and signature drives welcomed the new batch of undergraduate students as classes for the 2024-25 academic session commenced at Delhi University on Thursday. The roads around the North Campus were bustling with heavy traffic as excited students, along with their parents, flocked to the colleges. Outside the colleges, several police personnel were deployed to prevent any untoward incident, while, inside, volunteers and senior students warmly greeted the freshers with chocolates and flowers. I am very happy to have finally made it to the college of my choice, Anjali, a student who has secured admission in the BA (Hons) English programme at Hansraj College, said. "I was quite tense when the CUET results were delayed. I was eager to start college life. My first impression of the college is good and I hope it continues to be so," she added. Radha Saini, mother of another student Udhai Saini who will be pursuing BA (Hons) Economics at Hansraj College, said, "We are happy that our



child has been admitted here. It's a nice college and I hope he studies well". Over 65,000 students have secured admissions in various undergraduate programmes across Delhi University's 69 colleges this year. More than 1,500 undergraduate programmes, with a total of 71,600 sanctioned seats, are available at the university. Admissions are still ongoing, with a third round scheduled to admit students through performance-based programmes and supernumerary quotas, including those for children and widows of armed-forces personnel (CW), extra-curricular activities (ECA) and sports. Students have time until August 30 to accept their allocated college and course combination by paying the required fees on the Delhi University's CSAS portal for admissions.

NDMC to provide free tea and snacks to its field staff

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a first, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has decided to provide free tea and snacks to its field staff across various departments. This initiative is aimed at supporting over 5,000 employees, including sweepers, gardeners, 'beldars' (groundsmen) and linemen from the electricity department among others, according to an official. The official added the decision is on the same lines as practiced in the police and paramilitary forces where the personnel working during the odd hours receive free refreshments. "Our field workers, like sweepers, start their duties as early as 4 am to ensure that streets are clean before the traffic begins. At that time, finding food or tea is challenging, so this is a commendable step," the official said. According to the official, this initiative makes the NDMC the first municipal body in India to implement such a program and the provision of free tea and snacks is a gesture of appreciation and support for the dedication of these workers, who often work in difficult conditions. Asked about the implementation details, the official did not divulge details.

PM Modi to lay stone for Vadhwan Port in Maharashtra today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday will lay the foundation stone of Vadhwan Port worth over Rs 76,000 crore during his visit to Maharashtra. It aims to establish a world-class maritime gateway that will boost the country's trade and economic growth by catering to large container vessels, offering deeper drafts, and accommodating ultra-large cargo ships. Giving details of his visit, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said here on Thursday, Prime Minister Modi will visit Mumbai and Palghar in Maharashtra. He will address Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2024 at the Jio World Convention Centre in Mumbai. Thereafter, Prime



Minister will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of various development projects at CIDCO ground, Palghar. He will lay the foundation stone of Vadhwan Port. Located near Dahanu town in Palghar district, the port will be one of India's largest deep-water ports and will provide direct connectivity to international shipping routes, reducing transit times and costs. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology and infrastructure, the port will feature deep berths, efficient cargo handling facilities, and modern port management systems. The port is expected to generate significant employment opportunities, stimulate local businesses, and contribute to the overall economic development of the region.

The Vadhwan Port project incorporates sustainable development practices, with a focus on minimizing environmental impact and adhering to stringent ecological standards. Once operational, the port will enhance India's maritime connectivity and further strengthen its position as a global trade hub. Prime Minister Modi will also inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of 218 fisheries projects worth around Rs 1,560 crores, aimed at bolstering the sector's infrastructure and productivity across the nation. These initiatives are expected to generate more than five lakh employment opportunities in the fisheries sector.

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's second indigenously designed and built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine INS Arighat was commissioned on Thursday thereby adding to country's nuclear deterrence capabilities and boosting operational readiness. The first nuclear powered submarine INS Arihant was commissioned in 2016. The second Arihant-Class submarine 'INS Arighat' was commissioned into the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Defence Ministry said here. In his address, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh exuded confidence that 'Arighat' will further strengthen India's nuclear triad, enhance nuclear deterrence, help in establishing strategic balance and peace in the region, and play a decisive role in the security of the country. He described it as an achievement for the nation and a testament to Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government's unwavering resolve to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence. The defence minister commended the Indian Navy, Defence Research and Development Organisation



(DRDO) and the Industry for their hard work and synergy in achieving this capability. He termed this self-reliance as the foundation of self power. He appreciated the fact that the country's industrial sector, especially MSMEs, have received a huge boost through this project, and more employment opportunities have been created. Recalling former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's political will which put India on a par with a nuclear weapon state, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said, "Today, India is surging ahead to become a developed country. It is essential for us to develop rapidly in every field, including defence, especially in today's geopolitical scenario. Along with economic prosperity, we need a strong military. Our Government is working on mission mode to ensure that our soldiers possess top-quality weapons and platforms made on Indian

(SBC), Visakhapatnam. In fact, the SBC is building five nuclear powered submarines. While Arihant is already operational and Arighat commissioned on Thursday, work is now on the remaining two submarines. They are in advanced stage of construction, it was learnt. INS Arighat is 111.6 meters long and weighs 6,000 tonnes. It plays a crucial role in India's nuclear triad, enabling the nation to launch nuclear missiles from land, air, and sea. Powered by an 82.5 MW pressurized light water reactor developed with Russian assistance, INS Arighat can achieve a top speed of 24 knots submerged and 10 knots on the surface. Its primary armament consists of 12 K-15 Sagatika submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), each with a range exceeding 700 kilometers. These missiles are housed in four large vertical launch system (VLS) tubes and are a testament to India's indigenous missile development capabilities. The submarine is divided into seven compartments, housing propulsion and combat management systems, a platform management center, and a torpedo room. Additional safety measures include two standby auxiliary engines and a retractable thruster for emergency power and mobility.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that Mrs. Kavita W/o. M. Deepak Kumar who is purchasing the Built-up Second Floor, area measuring 60 Sq. Yards, Built-up Property Bearing No. 416-A (Old No. 416), out of Kharsa No. 74/046, Situated in the above of La Dora, Village Chitrawan, Tehsil Palwal, District Haryana, New Delhi-110017 from Mr. Sushil Prakash Gupta S/o. Mr. Dewak Ram who was the owner of property area measuring 115 Sq. Yards by virtue of Sale Deed dated 22.03.2024 (Doc. No. 229) executed by Mr. Suresh Kumar Sandhya, Intend to mortgage the same against the financial assistance from Shunham Housing Development Finance Company Limited, Surviving Member Certificate (SMC) of Life M. Mem. Certificate is available with Selet. To comply the requirements of BANK/NFC, we give this public notice that if any persons having any objection regarding ownership and/or existing mortgage of the said property, please hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 07 days at below address.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to public at large that my client Mr. Yogesh who is the owner of Third Floor With Roof Rights Out, Of Property Bearing No. 21, admeasuring 70 Sq.Yds., Out of Kharsa No. 11/25/2 Part Of Kharsa No.11/25, Situated in Village Pochanpur, Delhi State Delhi, Pochanpur Extn. A, Block, New Delhi vide Sale Deed dated 14.06.2024 registered as doc no. 2024/161/8101, registered in the SRO South West Kapashera and intend to get the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Finance Ltd. If any person's/institution has/have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the said property may please contact us within 07 days from the date of this notice on the address mentioned herein below, failing which my client(s) shall not be held responsible in any manner whatsoever. Khaitan & Khaitan A-38 Kailash Colony, New Delhi-110048, Ph. No: 011-49774545

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby informed that my client Sh. Ranu Vedi S/o Late H.K. Vedi, R/o 5 Sankar Street, Rowat, A.C.T. 251, Australia. Has already revoked the General Power Of Attorney registered before the Sub-Registrar III, Delhi, bearing Registration No. 5, in Book No. 4, Vol no. 4, 325 on pages 156 to 161 dated 08/01/2016 as well as the NOC executed in favour of his brother Sh. Rohit Vedi S/o Late H.K. Vedi R/o 1468/24, Nawala Karol Bagh, Delhi. Vide his legal notice dated 23/08/2024 qua the property No. 1468/24, Nawala, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005, and Property Bearing Plot No. 1358-1403, admeasuring 111 sq. Yds., Gali No. 22, Block E, Nawala Karol Bagh, Delhi. If any one deals with them, will do so, at his/her own risk, cost & consequences. My client shall not be held responsible & liable for the same in any manner whatsoever. Lali Kumar (Advocate), Ck. No. 1526, Lawyers Chamber Block Rohini Courts, Delhi-110065.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publically notified that the Plot No. 62, Block-A, Sector-23, Noida, has been allotted in the name of Mrs. Bharti S. Kohli W/o Sh. Sulhas S. Kohli R/o G-78, Sector-27, Noida, had sold the said plot, on the basis of GPA to the following persons:- A GPA was executed in favour of Sangita Sharma W/o Sh. Lekraj Sharma R/o 210, Mathmalayan Pikhua Dehat Ghazabad U.P. GPA which is duly registered in the office of SR Noida vide Book No IV Volume No 5694 on pages 199-200 at Document No 1403 dated 18.09.1989 and Agreement to sell is not registered. The said property is going to be transferred in favour of Prashant Raj Sharma S/o Sh. Lekraj Sharma R/o A-62, Near Noida Public School, Sector-23, Noida, G.B. Nagar U.P. If any one has/have any objection he/she may submit his/her, objection in the Residential Plot Department of Noida Authority along with sufficient proofs within 30 days of the publication of this notice. Sangita Sharma

CORRIGENDUM

CORRIGENDUM TO PUBLICATION OF APPENDIX IV-A DATED 29.08.2024 ISSUED UNDER RULE 8(6) OF SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 ('The Act'). This Corrigendum is issued in relation to the publication of Appendix IV-A dated 22.08.2024, in THE PIONEER - DELHI - ENGLISH and RASHTRIYA SAHARA - DELHI - HINDI, both dated 29th August, 2024, issued by the Authorised Officer of Sammaan Capital Limited (formerly known as Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd.) under Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 for the following correction(s):

IN THE APPENDIX IV-A DATED 22.08.2024: The name of the Borrowers have been inadvertently mentioned as MOHD. NOUMAN and AZRA BATUL GAUR, and the correct names be read as HAKIMUL KHAN and AARTI. Kindly note that the rest of the contents of Appendix IV-A dated 22.08.2024 published in the afore-dated Newspapers shall remain the same, and the above corrections shall be read as part and parcel of the publication of Appendix IV-A dated 22.08.2024. Sd/- Authorised Officer Sammaan Capital Limited (Formerly known as Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited) Place: NEW DELHI

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005

The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA). A Notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, at their last known addresses. However, it has not been served and are therefore being notified by way of this Public Notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Description of Secured Asset to be enforced	Date of Notice sent/Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Devesh Shanker, Shamloia Mathur, 89, Nanak Vihar Anand Vihar, Delhi-110092, Ac.- LBDEL00002060673	SCB 083, Floor 08 Block No. B Along With 2 Parking Space No. PO8004 & PB1008 The Sky Court, DLF, Garden City, Sector-86 Gurgaon- 122101	05/08/2024 Rs. 1,22,22,797/-	30/05/2024
2.	Vipin Kumar Choudhury, Shweta Kumari, Flat No. 1106, 11th Floor, Block-IV, Express Garden, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh Ghaziabad- 201014 Ac.-LBGH200006255830	Flat No. 1106, 11th Floor, With Out Roof Rights, Block-IV, Express Garden, Plot No. 6, Situated at Vaidhyan Khand Indrapuram, Tehsil & District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, 201001	08/08/2024 Rs. 47,82,925/-	11/05/2024
3.	Nitish Rajeev, Dhanish Rajeev, RZ F2 153A, Gali No. 5, Mahavir Enclave Near Delhi Mart Palam Village, Delhi - 110045, Ac.-LBDEL00005915779	Office No. 108, 109 and 110, Rajnil Plot No. 15, Preadia Urbano (Quatro Lote), Dondo, Margao, Lote No. 4, Chaltra No. 143, 406 to 409 PTS 238, South Goa, Goa, Aquem- 403601	08/08/2024 Rs. 69,01,468/-	03/01/2024

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower/s and/or guarantor/s (as applicable) is/are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. Date: August 30, 2024 Place: Delhi/ NCR Sincerely, Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Reg.-Second Floor without roof rights (hereinafter referred to as the "Said Floor") built on Property bearing No. A-1/86 Old No. A-203, area measuring 114 Sq. Yds., carved out of Kharsa No. 125, situated at the Above of Main Textile Road, Kabi Nagar, Village Sikdarpur and Illaga Shahdara Delhi. (Hereinafter referred to as the "Said Property"). Be it known to all that our clients, Mohd. Atif and Mrs. Falma Begum (hereinafter called the "Purchaser") intend to purchase the said floor from Mr. Arif Ali (hereinafter called the "Attorney-holder"). In this connection, the Attorney-holder has informed the purchaser that he is the sole and absolute Attorney-holder in respect of the said property vide POA documents vide. GPA. ATS and Will dated 02/09/2023 executed by Mr. Bhorey Khan in his favour. Mr. Bhorey Khan purchased the said property from Mr. Govind Sharma and Mr. Mukesh Sharma vide POA documents vide. GPA. ATS and Will dated 04/11/2022 The Attorney holder has further informed the purchaser that the said floor is not mortgaged anywhere and there is no charge or dispute or any litigation pending regarding the said floor. Any person including Bank's, Financial Institution's, relatives having any claim, right, title or any interest of any nature whatsoever into or upon the said floor is hereby called upon to make the same known, in writing, with documentary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below within 07 days of publication of this notice and in the event of no response having been received to the notice, the title of the attorney-holder in respect of the said floor shall be deemed to be clear of any charge or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever and any subsequent claim shall not bind our clients/Purchaser, in any manner whatsoever. Shivkath Arora, Advocate M/s Intelective Law Offices A-74, LG, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024

MISC. ENGG. WORKS AT KATHIHAR DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. KIR/Engg/25 of 2024 Dated: 23-08-2024. E-Tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No. 1. Brief Description of work:** Galgalia - Provision of MEA and Construction of high level platform of Precast RCC Face wall with VDF at Galgalia. **Tender Value:** ₹36,30,942.05/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,18,200/- **Tender No. 2. Brief Description of work:** At Siliguri Jn. - Extension of BG platform No.5 towards New Jalpaiguri end (Balance work) & provision of 10 bay PP shed at PF 4 & 5. **Tender Value:** ₹3,76,07,800.16/- **Earnest Money:** ₹3,38,000/- **Tender No. 3. Brief Description of work:** Supply of drinking/potable water by Motor truck at Tindharia Works Shop, ADME's office, Railway Hospital, Mahanadi Station, Ronglong Station and Railway colony of Tindharia including maintenance of main pipe line from source (Pagaljhora) to Tindharia etc for 18 months. **Tender Value:** ₹ 59,02,218.54/- **Earnest Money:** ₹ 2,18,100/- **4. Brief Description of work:** Carrying out slope stability analysis and providing detailed scheme for protection works, Slope stabilisation, remedial measure etc & site supervision of works during execution phase including Soil Exploration and Testing etc in connection with Sukna - Darjeeling: Construction of Retaining wall/Breast wall & slope protection works of DHR (NG) section. **Tender Value:** ₹ 77,59,370.08/- **Earnest Money:** ₹ 1,55,200/- **5. Brief Description of work:** Kathiar - Renovation of ORH Suite No. A, B, E & F and Room No. 1 & 2 including out side painting etc. **Tender Value:** ₹ 48,81,109.89/- **Earnest Money:** ₹ 97,600/- **6. Brief Description of work:** Provision of additional waterways at Km 9/7-8 (1 Nos.) by constructing RCC box in Kathiar-Jogbani section under DEN/II/Kathiar. **Tender Value:** ₹ 3,40,66,297.67/- **Earnest Money:** ₹ 3,20,300/- **Date & Time of closing of tender:** 15.00 hrs. of 23-09-2024 & opened at 15.30 hrs. of 23-09-2024. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs. of 23-09-2024 in website www.ireps.gov.in **DRM (W), Kathihar**

STATE BANK OF INDIA, Home Loan Centre-2, Rama Complex, Sohna Road, Badshahpur, Gurgaon-122016.

(RULE - 8(1) POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property))

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the State Bank of India, Home Loan Centre-2, Badshahpur Gurgaon Branch, under the securitisation and reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 08.01.2024 calling upon the Borrowers:- MR. SURESH CHAND SIROHNYA S/O MR. NANA KHAND, both residents of Khawat No.16/17 Kharsa No.39/4, Sale Deed Vashika No.6935 Dated 07.09.1994 House at V.P.O. - Palra, Tehsil and District Gurugram, Haryana, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.7,01,069/- (Rupees Seven Lakh One Thousand Sixty Nine Only) as on 08/01/2024, with further interest, incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower, above said, having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on this 29/08/2024. The Borrower above said in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of State Bank of India, Home Loan Centre-2, Badshahpur Gurgaon Branch, for an amount of Rs.7,01,069/- (Rupees Seven Lakh One Thousand Sixty Nine Only) as on 08/01/2024, together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate of interest till the date of payment & expenses thereon. **The Borrower attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Property Owned By: Mr. Suresh Chand Sirohny S/o. Mr. Nana Khand Khawat No.16/17, Kharsa No.39/4, Sale Deed Vashika No.6935 Dated 07.09.1994 House at V.P.O. - Palra, Tehsil and District - Gurugram, Haryana. **Date: 29.08.2024 Place: Gurugram Authorised Officer, State Bank of India**

LOST DOCUMENTS

My client has lost the Death Certificate of Late Satya Parkash Sharma who passed away on 27.05.2009 and SMC of Property Address : E-345 Nirman Vihar , Delhi-110092. Current property owner M/s Shriji Metalloys Pvt Ltd through its Director Mr. Rahul Mongia Contact no : 98 11 888 912 issued by concerned SDM in favour of legal heirs of Late Mr. Satya Parkash Sharma viz. Mrs. Santosh Sharma (wife), Mrs. Nidhi Sharma (Daughter) and Mr. Samidh Sharma (son). If anyone finds these documents, contact Advocate **PUKHRAJ NEERJ Phone : 0120-2986739 Mob: 999-979-2385**

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs)	Name of Branch
1.	Manish Kumar/ Nimish Khosla/ Ritu Khosla/ LBDEL00004581497/ LBDEL00005362400	Dda Built Janta Flat Bearing No. 12/293 (Single Storey), "The Legates", Block-12, Situated at Village- Madangiri, New Delhi- 110062.	April 05, 2024 Rs. 23,06,095/-	Delhi/Ncr

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantor(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Date: August 30, 2024 Place: Delhi/Ncr Sincerely Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited shal Tower Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road Karol Bagh New Delhi-110005

The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA). A Notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, at their last known addresses. However, it has not been served and are therefore being notified by way of this Public Notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Description of Secured Asset to be enforced	Date of Notice sent/Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Abhishek / Usha Subashi/ Sonia Abhishek/ Abhinav A/C No. LBFD00002081187 C Anand Niketan New Delhi- 110021	C-34, Entire 1st Floor As Well As 60% of The Terrace Above 2nd Floor, Road No. 13, Anand Niketan Co-Operative Housing Society Ltd., Anand Niketan, New Delhi- 110021	08/08/2024 Rs. 2,05,12,571.93/-	08-10-2023
2.	Binod Kumar Singh/ Bina Singh A/C No. LBGUR0002134622 Vihar House No. A-90 Palam Vihar Gurgaon Haryana- 122017	Shop No. GF 05 Tulsiani Grace, Part of Barok No. 25, Plot No. 33/25/1 Civil Station, Civil Lines, Situated Allahabad Uttar Pradesh- 211001	29/06/2024 Rs. 1,60,15,729.81/-	10-05-2024
3.	Vijay Kumar/ Ruchi Singh A/C No. LBPWL00005748977 86 Chandhul, Chandhul 172 Haryana Palwal- 121102	Shop No. 5 and 7, Rajnil Lourenco Plaza, Preadia Urbano Salcete Chalta No. 143, 406 To 409 of Pts No. 238 Aquem Margo Goa Within Limits of Margo Goa- 403601	09/07/2024 Rs. 89,56,595/-	06-04-2024
4.	Sanjay Kumar/ Kumari Ritu Bala A/C No. TBFDB00005382066 H. No. 56 G Sector-30 Gautam Budhha Nagar Uttar Pradesh Noida- 201301	Plot No. 1860 Sector 1 - Part, Urban Estate Patudi, Residential 14 Marla, Tehsil Patudi And District Gurugram, Nearby Park Gurgaon Haryana- 122503	03/07/2024 Rs. 78,32,556/-	07-04-2024
5.	Kuldeep Kumar/ Resna A/C No. LBFD00005214694, B-207 Ina Colony New Delhi 110023	Plot No. 1686, (Old Plot No. Na 38), Ground Floor Sector A, Greenfield Colony Faridabad- 121002	01/07/2024 Rs. 36,76,766.98/-	04-04-2024
6.	Kuldeep Kumar / Resna A/C No. LBFD00005107397, B-207 Ina Colony New Delhi- 110023	Plot No. 1686, (Old Plot No. Na 38), Ground Floor Sector A, Greenfield Colony Faridabad- 121002	01/07/2024 Rs. 15,97,665.98/-	04-04-2024
7.	Arpit Sharma/ Geeta Sharma A/C No. LBGUR00005136531, H. No.- 396B Green Field Colony Faridabad Haryana- 121003	Plot No. 396, Sector B, Part of Kharsa No. 77/13 2nd Floor With Roof Rights, Situated Within The Revenue Estate of Village Saral Khawaja, Greenfield Colony, Tehsil and District Faridabad Haryana- 121001	02/08/2024 Rs. 44,69,872.14/-	14-12-2023
8.	Kshhitz Jasor/ Aakanksha Nahar A/C No. LBFDB00005612953 House No. 404, Redwood Residency, Sector-78, Old Faridabad Haryana Faridabad- 121002	Plot No. D21-28, 2nd Floor, Without Roof Rights, Block-D, Situated at Parklands, Sector-85, Faridabad, Haryana- 121002	08/08/2024 Rs. 39,67,079.00/-	29-05-2024
9.	Sandeep / Neelam A/C No. LBRHO00005720235 House No. 1934/10, Gali No.12, Ram Gopal Colony, Rohtak Haryana- 124001	House No. 2355 Mf, Bearing Id No. 151C1123U656, Sector-3, Housing Board Colony, Rohtak, Haryana- 124001	08/08/2024 Rs. 34,59,364.86/-	06-05-2024
10.	Balram/Rajbala A/C No. LBGUR00005210868 Village Bibipur jattan (65), Indri, Haryana Karnal- 132041	Flat No. A-43/1, Situated at Amaya Greens, Sector-3, Village- Farrukhnagar, District Gurgaon, Haryana- 122001	06/07/2024 Rs. 21,77,064/-	04/04/2024
11.	Dixit Verma/ Pooja Yadav A/C No. LBGUR00005241478 R/o 304/14, Jacupurna M Corp-09, Haryana Gurgaon- 122001	Flat No.501, (2 Bhk Type B) 5th Floor, Tower- 11, Aashiyara, Situated in Revenue Estate of Village, Gadauli Khurd at Sector-07, Sub Tehsil Kadipur and District Gurgaon Haryana- 122001	03/07/2024 Rs. 18,65,585/-	29-04-2024
12.	Dharampal Sri Balram/ Nirmala Devi A/C No. LBFDB00005766040 Pe45 Elite Floor, Bptp, Faridabad Haryana- 121004	Plot No. 704, Tower No. T-9, 7th Floor, Type-C1, Aggam, Situated at Sector 70, Opp. Imt, Tehsil Ballabhgarh District Faridabad, Haryana- 121003	03/07/2024 Rs. 16,75,862/-	18/02/2024
13.	Mamta Devi/ Joagender Pal A/C No. LBFDB00005703595 House No. 216, Gali No. 1, Tirka Colony, Tehsil Ballabhgarh District Faridabad Haryana- 121004	House No. 2387, Ground Floor, Lig, Situated At Mouza Sector- 03, Housing Board Colony, Tehsil Ballabhgarh, District Faridabad, Haryana- 121004	01/07/2024 Rs. 14,13,431/-	06-04-2024
14.	Gaurav Mishra/ Sushmita Mishra A/C No. LBFDB00005991237 R/o 32 1st Floor, Y6 Block, Bptp Park Land, Housing Board Colony, Sector 76, Haryana Faridabad- 121004	Plot No. 1206, 12th Floor, Tower T-9, Type-C, Aggam, Housing Policy-2013, Tower 7 R/o 32 1st Floor, Y6 Block, Bptp Park Land, Housing Board Colony, Sector 76, Haryana Faridabad, Haryana- 121003	03/07/2024 Rs. 13,19,268/-	29/04/2024
15.	Subhojit Chakraborty/ Juthika Chakraborty A/C No. BGRUR00004595026 House No. F-259, Ground Floor, Sushant Lok2, Sector-57, Haryana Gurgaon	Flat No. 2, Located at Western Side on The First Floor (G+3 Storie), Aastha Apartment, Being The Scheme Plot No.592, Lying and Situate at Mouza-Behala, J.L. No. 27, Comprised in C.S. Plot Nos. 629 & 630, Khotin No.66, Premises No.110, Parnasree Pally Road, Ward No.131, Within The Limits of The Kolkata Municipal Corporation, P.S.-Parnasree (Previously Behala) Kolkata, West Bengal- 700060	08/08/2024 Rs. 16,25,821.96/-	04-04-2024

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower/s and/or guarantor/s (as applicable) is/are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. Date: August 30, 2024 Place: Delhi/ NCR Sincerely, Authorised Signatory For ICICI Bank Ltd.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd. 4/10, Mythree Tower, Bommanhalli Hosur Main Road Bangalore- 560068

The following borrower(s) has/have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest towards the Loan facility(ies) availed from ICICI Bank. The Loan(s) has/have been classified as Non-Performing Asset(s) (NPA). A Notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Re-construction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, at their last known addresses. However, it has not been served and are therefore being notified by way of this Public Notice.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor/ (Loan Account Number) & Address	Description of Secured Asset to be enforced	Date of Notice sent/ Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	Malika Joseph & Suguna Mary/ Entire 1st Floor 4th Street Kattupakkam Village D No. 2/4 Ground and 1st Floor Plot No. 42 P 43 P 48 P 49 P Poonamallee Tk Thiruvallur Dt Jayalaxshmi Nagar Kattupakkam 214 Part 214/8 214/9 214/9A1 Chennai- 600056/ LBCHE00005440416	Schedule 'A' Property All That Piece and Parcel of Land Bearing Plot Nos. 43 Part, 42 Part, and 48 Part and 49 Measuring an Extent of 3000 Sq.ft., Undivided Share Land Out of 4500 Sq.ft., Land Together With Building Ground Floor 2850 Sq.ft., And First Floor 2850 Sq.ft., R.C.C Roof, Toilet Both Room, Electricity, Common Septic Tank, Common Stair Case, Comprised in Survey No. 214 Part, Patta No. 485 As Per Patta Survey No. 214/9A1, Situated in Kattupakkam Village, Poonamallee Taluk, Thiruvallur District Bounded by The North By: Plot Nos. 42 Part and 43 Part South By: Plot Nos. 43 Part & 48 Part Measuring on The (Plot Nos. 42 Part & 43 Part) North By: 60 Feet South By: 60 Feet East By: 25 Feet West By: 25 Feet In All Measuring Extent 1500 Sq.ft Measuring on The (Plot Nos. 48 Part & 49) North By :50 Feet South By: 50 Feet East By: 60 Feet West By: 60 Feet in All Measuring An Extent 3000 Sq.ft., Situated Within The Sub-registration District of Kundrathur And Registration District of Chennai South	29/07/2024 Rs. 72,02,939/-	10/05/2024

These steps are being taken for substituted service of Notice. The above borrower/s and/or guarantor/s (as applicable) is/are advised to make the outstanding payment within 60 days from the date of publishing this Notice. Else, further steps will be taken as per the provisions of the Securitisation and Re-construction of



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PAPER WITH PASSION

A close contest!

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

As Haryana gears up for its upcoming elections, the state's political landscape is rife with complexities that reflect broader societal divides. Central to this is the rural-urban divide and the Jat-non-Jat paradigm, both of which are poised to play a crucial role in determining the electoral outcome. The recent request by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to change the polling date has added another layer of intrigue to an already charged atmosphere. Haryana's political fabric is deeply influenced by the rural-urban divide, a reflection of the state's socio-economic disparities. The urban areas, particularly key centres like Gurugram, Faridabad, and Rohtak, have traditionally been BJP strongholds. These cities, with their high migrant populations, represent a significant voter base for the BJP. However, the upcoming election is complicated by the timing of the polling date. Scheduled for October 1, the date falls within a period that could easily be extended into a six-day holiday, thanks to overlapping weekends and public holidays. The BJP fears that urban voters, particularly those in the NCR, may choose to use this extended break to travel, thereby potentially lowering voter turnout in areas where the party has a stronghold. Historically, rural turnout in Haryana has been higher than urban turnout, which could tilt the scales against the BJP if urban voters are absent.



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

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

PICTALK



Visitors at India Gate enjoy the rains in New Delhi

RANJAN DIMRI

Emotional intelligence: The secret of outstanding leadership

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

Today's corporate climate is fast-paced and continually evolving. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the secret weapon that distinguishes great pioneers from average ones; it is accompanied by a long list of excellent technical qualifications. But what precisely is this elusive talent, and why is it becoming a defining characteristic of outstanding leaders? It is the ability to control our emotions and understand and empathise with others. It forms a link between self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. To speak more specifically to leaders, emotional intelligence is not only desirable but even more crucial for leaders than the desire to influence others and inspire their teams to greatness. This is where EI comes into play, somewhat like the oil that keeps the motor of leadership running. Emotionally intelligent leaders express ideas with clarity and empathy, make judgements based on both logic and emotion and maintain strong team morale and productivity. They prefer to ride out the



storm rather than be tossed by it, and instead look to harness it for growth and innovation. But how do aspiring leaders cultivate this crucial ability? It begins with reflection. Frequent self-analytical practices, such as journaling or meditation, may promote insight. Encouraging feedback—even the difficult kind—and viewing failures as opportunities for improvement are also important components. The most critical aspect is empathy and listening to others rather than simply hearing them. This final trait will propel a good leader to new heights. Take, for example, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella. Since the beginning of his term in 2014, he has been considered as the driving

force behind the company's cultural shift from fierce competitiveness to collaborative innovation. So, what's the magic? A leadership style relies mostly on emotional intelligence. Empathy-driven continuous learning and development mindset not only rebuilt Microsoft's reputation but also its financial performance to unprecedented heights. Another excellent example is Jacinda Ardern, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand. Ardern's leadership style, which includes speaking with compassion, making clear tough decisions, and uniting the country in the face of tragedy, highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in political leadership. Looking ahead, it is clear that one aspect of good lead-



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

ership will remain central: emotional intelligence. While the next wave of technology will undoubtedly replace occupations in the future, leaders in any area will need to possess increasingly humane qualities such as empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. The message is clear: to be an effective leader in the twenty-first century, we must continue to improve our emotional intelligence alongside our technical proficiency. Whether you aspire to be an established CEO or a team leader, investing in your emotional intelligence can pay you in terms of career success and personal fulfilment. Remember that developing emotional intelligence is a lifetime journey that promises to improve not only your leadership style but also your overall approach to life and relationships. As leaders, we commit to leaving a legacy based on how we make others feel and the relationships we build. The future of leadership is in emotional intelligence: isn't it time you took the initiative? (The author is a freelance writer; views are personal)

How media shapes public perception

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



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

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

This itself raises another basic question. That has to do with the role of the media in attributing to an episode both circulation and importance. The reach and mode of the media become critical in identifying an issue and formulating it. One of the farthest reach of a media is through the radio. By and large, the radio is controlled by governmental agencies. This is followed by television, which is controlled both by the government and by some powerful private media houses. Both clusters claim a popular following, and both are accused of biases. Hence, to a fairly complicated question on what constitutes much of the news, there is a plausible answer: that which the media of the day decides to project and sustain as news. Thus it is that the role of governance/ownership of the mode of the media, in the identification of news, and sustaining it becomes critical. This brings us to a basic question: what constitutes news and how is it maintained at the frontlines? What is projected in so-called news is impossible for a private citizen to verify. That raises the question of the credibility of a channel. The credibility of the channel is itself a matter of popular perception, and it is also nurtured by reputation and conviction. To understand the gravity and implications of the statements and exposures above, one has to realize that news is both essential and dependent



upon the larger intellectual culture of the community where the news circulates. If the community is mature, it has developed safe parameters of credibility and conviction, and therefore one can be reasonably sure that what is being circulated is true. By and large, globally, the media, also, has its methods of checks and balances, standards and credibility, of reach and sustenance. Hence, whereas it may be a worthwhile debate to consider what constitutes news: origin, sustenance, and dissemination of news has certain standards across the globe. These, are like many things in life, having largely acknowledged standards without much vagueness. These are considered givens of a civil society. Hence the conclusion that if the general media projects something, it must be the truth, or at least the truth in good faith. Reference has been made above to the NEET episode and the Kolkata murder and rape case. The jury is out on both cases, and a conclusions are awaited. The civil society is maintained on such pillars. However, two questions emerge: given the attention which both of these cases have received, is this the only news which affected



THE BASIC TRUTH IS ALSO THAT IT IS NOT SOME INTRANSIENT STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF THE MEDIA THAT SUSTAINS ITS LIFE BUT THE ECONOMIC FORCES WHICH NURTURE ITS EXISTENCE

the wellbeing of the people, and is there a question of the proportion and inter-se importance of news? To debate the importance of both of the two episodes mentioned above would be a pointless exercise. However, by the same token, it is true that there are other activities effecting every-day living and have been, in a manner of speaking, overlooked. Hence, after resolving the concerns related to credibility arises an issue of the relative importance of the items being reported. It would be a common place to say that sensational news spreads faster and catches more attention than routine news, no matter how important it may be. Good news travels slower and catches less attention. The healthiness of a society needs to be assessed against objective indicators of health, and clearly one of them would be how much mileage does a positive news get as compared to the mileage a negative news gets. The strength of a society comes not only from handling the unhappy episodes which lead to news but also from giving positive news the importance that it deserves. It is here again that the media need continuous help in introspection. The basic truth

is also that it is not some intransient strength and weakness of the media that sustains its life but the economic forces which nurture its existence. As indicated above, if the media disseminates sensational information, it is because that kind of information is read more widely and followed more avidly. The problem therefore originates not just with the media but with the people who use the media. Further, it becomes a question of mass contact and mobilization of mass opinion. The time has come when one needs to revisit what constitutes a civil society and how a civil society exercises its choices and preferences. The economic and financial flows merely run in the channels which have been created with such efforts. Essentially, therefore, a question is: what is the kind of society which one has given to oneself and how do its norms get modified and operated, also, through the media? As indicated above, this is merely the sub-structure to a much larger edifice that the society has built for itself. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A STATUE OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY

Madam — The recently collapsed statue of Shivaji in Maharashtra, is a grim reflection of political expediency. That a statue of one of the most revered and respected figures of Maharashtra has collapsed barely nine months after its inauguration, speaks volumes about the malpractices that must have gone into the installation of a statue that was expected to last a good part of a century. Instead of expressing remorse and regret, the political class is doing what it knows best — ducking responsibility and pointing fingers. The pedestal and all that remains of the statue ought to be cordoned off, and preserved as a reminder of the gross failure of the present day dispensation. Near it, a stone plaque should read — This site is an admission of the government's failure to do justice to the memory of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, whose statue collapsed just nine months after it was dedicated to the people of Maharashtra. We promise that this will never happen again. We hope to be forgiven by the people of the state with whose money the statue project was commissioned. To atone for our grave mistake, another statue is being constructed nearby. We assure you that it will last many many years and be a fitting tribute to a historical figure who is so dear to our hearts. I know too well that the shameful episode will soon be forgotten by our netas as well as the public. Avinash Godbole | Dewas

IMPLEMENT MISSION SHAKTI

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

The logic of Changing election date



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

1 and there are some holidays after that. INLD has also agreed to postpone the assembly elections. Opposition parties are hell-bent on condemning every aspect of the ruling party. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar has expressed concern over low voting percentage where people use long weekend holidays on the day of polling. Shifting the election dates will definitely help in increasing the voting percentage. Earlier also, the dates of elections were changed in Rajasthan, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, the change of date is not important but the change of mind of voters will be more meaningful. The election Commission is a statutory independent body and should remain firm on its stand rather than bowing to the political pressure which often times is self serving than for the public good. Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

ment and exploitation. Every day, stories emerge of women who have been failed by the very systems that were supposed to protect them. These are not just isolated incidents; they are symptoms of a much larger problem — a systemic failure to prioritise women's safety. It's time that the country wakes up to the harsh realities and takes a hard look at where we stand and acknowledge that we are failing our women. The outrage over the incident in Kolkata should serve as a wake-up call for the nation. We cannot afford to delay any longer. We need immediate action to fully implement Mission Shakti in a broader sense and the narrow minded approach of neglecting women must be a priority. In conclusion, addressing the root causes of depression and systemic failures is crucial to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of women in our country. The recent incident in Kolkata is a stark reminder that we cannot continue to ignore the harsh realities faced by women daily. It's time for collective action to fully implement initiatives like

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

REVIVAL OF VIVACITY

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

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

UKRAINE: INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC TIGHTROPE

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Prospects of privatisation of PSUs are bleak

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



UTTAM GUPTA



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

A CPSU is an undertaking in which the Central government has majority share holding of more than 50 percent. Disinvestment refers to sale of its shares to private investors. When, such sale results in reduction of the government's shareholding in the CPSU to below 50 percent and concomitant transfer of ownership and management control to private entity, this is termed as privatization. The disinvestment plans have met with disappointing results so far.

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

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

Will the Centre take up selling of PSBs and an insurance company - as promised in the 2021-22 budget? It seems unlikely. If, that were to be the case,



AS FOR PRIVATISATION, EXCEPT FOR THE SALE OF AIR INDIA TO THE TATA GROUP DURING 2021-22, THE GOVERNMENT HAS LITTLE TO SHOW. APART FROM OFFLOADING 3.5 PERCENT OF ITS SHAREHOLDING IN THE LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION (LIC), IT IS SELLING ITS STAKE IN THE IDBI BANK.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The businessmen patronized by the ruling class managed loans on considerations other than merit and got them ever-greened (taking

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

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

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

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

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

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

Global interference and India's economic sovereignty

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

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



V K BAHUGUNA

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

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

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

This insidious influence is spreading to stable democracies like India. Direct military intervention is difficult in modern times, so these forces resort to destabilizing social, political, and economic fabrics with the help of internal collaborators. They present themselves as the arbiters of morality, creating narratives to discredit certain groups, undermine social harmony, and ultimately destabilize economies. Their goal is to generate public unrest and overthrow democratically elected governments by eroding the state's capacity to man-

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

One prominent example is the Hindenburg Research firm, which targeted Adani Enterprises last year, leading to a severe crash in the Indian stock market and a major political storm just before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Israel kills prominent militant

AP ■ TULKAREM

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

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

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

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

The military said he was killed early Thursday along with

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

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

The overall toll of 16 killed in less than two days would make it the deadliest Israeli operation in the West Bank since Hamas' October 7 attack out of Gaza ignited the war there. The Palestinian Health Ministry says over 650 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the war. Most appear to have been militants killed in gunbattles during Israeli operations like the one this week, but civilian bystanders and rock-throwing protesters have also been

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EU urged to rethink ties with Israel over Gaza

AP ■ BRUSSELS

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

At a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels, Ireland's foreign minister accused Israel of deliberately targeting civilians as well as Hamas militants with the military campaign it launched almost 11 months ago. "This is a war against Palestinians not just against Hamas. The level of civilian casualties and dead is unconscionable," Micheal Martin told reporters. "It's a war on the population. No point in trying to fudge this."

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

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

Martin said a legal opinion issued by the International Court of Justice that Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank is unlawful obliges the EU to take action. The Palestinians have hailed it as "a watershed moment for Palestine, for justice and for international law". "It cannot be business as usual," Martin told reporters. "It is very clear to us that international humanitarian law has been broken." Ties between the EU and Israel — which are major trading partners — are governed by a so-called Association Agreement. Ireland and Spain have been pressing their EU partners to examine whether Israel has broken the rules. The EU is the world's top provider of aid to the Palestinians but holds little leverage over Israel, notably because the 27 member countries are deeply divided in their approach.

Austria, Germany and Hungary are staunch backers of Israel, while Ireland and Spain are more vocal in their support for the Palestinians. Nonetheless, the bloc does have credibility as a European project founded on peace.

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

HK court convicts two journalists in landmark sedition case

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

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

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

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

Iran gas leak kills 2, hurts 10

AP ■ DUBAI

A gas leak caused the death of two people and injured 10 others at an Iranian Revolutionary Guard centre, Iranian state television reported Thursday. The leak occurred on Wednesday night at a workshop belonging to the Guard in Isfahan province, and the injured people were transferred to a hospital for treatment, it said.

The Isfahan Provincial Guard identified the dead as Capt. Mojtaba Nazari and Lt. Col. Mokhtar Morshedi, the report said. The Guard's statement did not say if the two senior officers died from being asphyxiated by gas or if the gas leak caused an explosion. It did not say how the people were injured or give other details.

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

the paramilitary force's missile programme.

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

Tensions have remained high since Hamas' top political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was killed on July 31 in the Iranian capital.

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

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

In April, Iranian air defences at a major air base and at a nuclear site near the central city of Isfahan were employed against an assault in retaliation for Tehran's unprecedented drone-

and-missile assault on Israel. In January 2023, bomb-carrying drones struck a defense factory in the central city of Isfahan, while in April 2023, the country's air defence systems shot down a drone strike on an Isfahan defence factory.

Tehran faces challenges as its nuclear programme rapidly enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels since the collapse of its atomic accord with world powers. Iran's central Isfahan province has been of interest to Israel because many of Iran's nuclear facilities are located there. The underground Natanz nuclear facility, located in the province, is the country's main uranium enrichment facility. There, centrifuges rapidly spin uranium hexafluoride gas to enrich uranium.

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

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

AP ■ BEIJING

A top Chinese military officer, in a rare meeting with a visiting American official, demanded Thursday that the United States stop "collusion" with Taiwan, the self-governing island that China says must come under its rule.

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

Sullivan was wrapping up a three-day trip to China, his first as national security adviser and one aimed at maintaining communication to avoid differences over Taiwan and other issues from

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

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

Sullivan said "it is rare that we have the opportunity to have this kind of exchange" and underscored "the need for us to responsibly manage US-China relations."

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

The announcement followed Sullivan's main talks on this

trip, a day and a half of meetings with Wang Yi, the foreign minister and the ruling Communist Party's top foreign policy official. The US doesn't recognise Taiwan as an independent country but is its main supplier of arms for its defence. China and Taiwan split in 1949 at the end of a civil war that brought the communists to power in China. The rival Nationalists fled to Taiwan, where they set up a government on the island about 160 kilometres across the Taiwan Strait from the Chinese coast.

"China demands that the United States stop military collusion between the US and Taiwan, stop arming Taiwan and stop spreading false narratives about Taiwan," the Chinese Defence Ministry statement said, without elaborating on what the false narratives are. A White House statement said the two had "recognised the progress in sustained, regular military-military

communications over the past ten months" and noted an agreement announced the previous day to hold a telephone call between commanders at the theatre-level in the near future. On Taiwan, the US statement said only that Sullivan had raised the importance of cross-strait peace and stability. China suspended communication between the two militaries and in a few other fields after a senior US lawmaker, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, visited Taiwan in August 2022. Talks were only gradually resumed more than a year later, after Xi and Biden met outside San Francisco in November.

A theatre-level call would be between Adm. Samuel Paparo, who heads the US Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii, and his Chinese counterpart, said Danny Russel, a vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute in New York.

Harris, Walz will sit down for first major TV interview

AP ■ SAVANNA

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

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



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

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

make inroads in GOP strongholds across the state. Harris, during her time as vice president, has done on-camera and print interviews with The Associated Press and many other outlets, a much more frequent pace than the president — except for Biden's late-stage media blitz following his disastrous debate performance that touched off the end of his campaign.

Harris' lack of media access over the past month has become one of Republicans' key attack lines. The Trump campaign has kept a tally of the days she has gone by as a candidate without giving an interview. On Wednesday, Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Trump's former press secretary, suggested Harris needed a "babysitter" and that's why Walz would be there. "They know Kamala Harris can't get through an interview all by herself. There is not a lot of confidence in somebody to

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

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

UK's Starmer confirms that his govt mulling crackdown on smoking

AP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ BERLIN

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



week in Maryland. "They were plotting to kill a huge number — tens of thousands of people at this concert, including I am sure many Americans — and were quite advanced in this," Cohen said on Wednesday. "The Austrians were able to make those arrests because the agency and our partners in the intelligence

community provided them information about what this ISIS-connected group was planning to do."

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

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

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

her silence about the cancellations last week after her London shows had concluded.

"Having our Vienna shows cancelled was devastating," she wrote in a statement posted to Instagram. "The reason for the cancellations filled me with a new sense of fear, and a tremendous amount of guilt because so many people had planned on coming to those shows." She thanked authorities — "thanks to them, we were grieving concerts and not lives", she wrote — and said she waited to speak until the European leg of her Eras Tour concluded to prioritise safety.

"Let me be very clear: I am not going to speak about something publicly if I think doing so might provoke those who would want to harm the fans who come to my shows," she wrote.

Denmark has record 25 govt mins after major reshuffle

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

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

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

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

Marie Bjerre left her job as minister for digitalisation and gender equality, to become in charge of the European Union affairs, ahead of Denmark's rotating EU presidency in the second half of 2025. Jeppe Bruus, the outgoing taxation minister, was brought in to head a brand new ministry, which will be coordinating Denmark's green policy. The Scandinavian country has a goal of 70 per cent emissions reductions by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2050. Bruus was replaced by Rasmus Stoklund while Bjerre's previous

job was given to Caroline Stage Olsen, who became the digitalisation minister. The gender equality portfolio was handed over to Environment Minister Magnus Heunicke. In one of the major surprises, Copenhagen mayor Sophie Hæstorp Andersen was appointed as minister in charge of social affairs instead of Pernille Rosenkrantz-Theil, who left the government. Frederiksen, who is the leader of the Social Democratic Party, announced Wednesday that she was doing a government reshuffle and creating three new ministries. In 2022, she presented the current majority government, consisting of her centre-left Social Democrats, the centre-right Liberal Party and the newly created centrist Moderates party.

Brazil's top court threatens to suspend X operations

Rio de Janeiro (AP): A Brazilian Supreme Court justice has threatened to shut down the local operations of X, formerly Twitter, unless its billionaire owner Elon Musk names an in-country legal representative within 24 hours. The order from Justice Alexandre de Moraes on Wednesday is the latest development in an ongoing feud with Musk's platform. The company has clashed with de Moraes earlier this year over free speech, accounts associated with the far-right and misinformation, and it claims to be a victim of censorship. Earlier this month, X said it was removing all remaining Brazil staff in the country "effective immediately," saying de Moraes had threatened its legal representative with arrest.

Russia continues heavy missile, drone bombardment of Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

Russia conducted a heavy aerial attack on Ukraine for the third time in four days Thursday, again launching missiles and scores of drones that mostly were intercepted, Ukraine's air force said. Russian forces fired five missiles and 74 Shahed drones at Ukrainian targets, an air force statement said. Air defences stopped two missiles and 60 drones, and 14 other drones presumably fell before reaching their target, it said. Authorities in the capital, Kyiv, said debris of destroyed drones fell in three districts of the city, causing minor damage to civilian infrastructure but no injuries. Russia's relentless and unnerving long-range strikes on civilian areas have been a feature of the war since it invaded its neighbour in February 2022.

Ukrainian officials have recently become more vocal in their long-standing insistence that Western countries supporting their war effort should scrap restrictions on what Ukraine is allowed to target inside Russia with long-range weapons they have provided. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy renewed his pleas for Western allies to untie his hands in deciding what to strike on Russian soil. "All our partners should be more active — much more active — in countering Russian terror," Zelenskyy said late Wednesday. "We continue to insist that their determination now — lifting the restrictions on long-range strikes for Ukraine now — will help us to end the war as soon as possible in a fair way for Ukraine and the world as a whole."

The European Union's top diplomat on Thursday backed Zelenskyy's push for international backers to end their limits. Ukraine has deployed domestically produced drones to strike Russia. The Russian military said on Thursday it had thwarted an overnight attack on Crimea. The Russian Defence Ministry said its forces destroyed three Ukrainian sea drones aimed at

Former Russian defence official detained suspected of fraud

AP ■ MOSCOW

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

The case against Popov relates to business activities at a sprawling park in Moscow sometimes called Russia's "military Disneyland." Patriot Park, a pet project of former Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, is designed to inspire patriotism in Russia's younger generations and showcases Soviet and Russian weaponry. It has a firing range, air base, museums and conference center and a massive, khaki-colored Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces, which features mosaics of Soviet and Russian soldiers. Russian President Vladimir Putin personally donated money to commission the main icon for the church, according to the Kremlin. Popov is now the eighth top military figure to be arrested on charges of fraud, bribery or abuse of office in recent months, including Deputy Defence Minister Timur Ivanov, who was arrested for bribery in April and later dismissed from his position. The



arrests began shortly before Putin replaced long-time defence minister Sergei Shoigu with an economist, Andrei Belousov. Analysts suggest the arrests are a sign that the most egregious corruption in the defence ministry will no longer be tolerated. Former deputy defence minister Popov was responsible for developing and maintaining Patriot Park and is accused of renovating his own properties in the Moscow region at the park's expense, Tass said. He is accused of fraud alongside the director of the park and Maj. Gen Vladimir Shestov, deputy of the Defence Ministry's innovations department, both of whom have already been detained. Popov forced companies that had contracts with Patriot Park to do work on his "out-of-town apartments without paying for them," Svetlana Petrenko from Russia's Investigative Committee told state news agency Tass. In addition to a plot of land with houses outside Moscow, Popov and his family own "numerous properties in prestigious areas of Moscow, the

Black Sea peninsula that Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014. The Russia-installed governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev added that four Ukrainian aerial drones and

three sea drones were destroyed "at a significant distance" from the peninsula's shore. In the meantime, Ukraine's Army General Staff acknowledged Thursday Ukraine's involvement in strikes this week

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

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

The US restricts the use of long-range ballistic missiles it provides to Ukraine and some EU members also limit the use of their weapons. Ukraine is desperate to target airfields and other military installations inside Russia that are used to stage attacks on its armed forces and civilians. "We need to lift restrictions on the use of weaponry against Russian military targets, in accordance with international law," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said as the bloc's foreign ministers gathered in Brussels to discuss Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "The weaponry that we are providing to Ukraine has to have full use, and the restrictions have to be lifted in order for the Ukrainians to be able to target the places where Russia is bombing them. Otherwise, the weaponry is useless," Borrell told reporters.

Speaking alongside Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, Borrell condemned Russia's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. "Russia wants to bomb a European country into full capitulation," he said. Kuleba said that Ukraine's backers would only have themselves to blame if Russia wins. "The success of Russia depends on one thing: on the preparedness of partners to make bold decisions. If decisions are taken, Ukraine is successful on the ground. If they are not taken, then do not complain on Ukraine, complain on yourself," he said. Kuleba insisted that Ukraine only wants to attack "legitimate military targets" inside Russia. "If we are supplied a sufficient amount of missiles, if we are allowed to strike, we will significantly decrease the capacity of Russia to inflict damage on our critical infrastructure and we will improve the situation of our forces on the ground," he said.



South Korean firefighters prepare to lift a vehicle that fell into a sinkhole on a street in Seoul on Thursday. AP/PTI

'Over 1,000 killed during protests in Bangladesh'

PTI ■ DHAKA

Over 1,000 people have been killed during the protests against the Sheikh Hasina-led government in Bangladesh while more than 400 were blinded by police fire, with some of them losing sight in one or both eyes, a top adviser of the interim government said on Thursday. Health Adviser Nurjahan Begum disclosed this during a visit to the Central Police Hospital in the capital's Rajarbagh where she interacted with the police personnel injured in clashes and spoke to those at the surgical department to ask about their condition. "So far 1,000 people have been killed and more than 400 students and members of the general public have lost their sight. Many have been blind in one eye, while others are blind in both," Nurjahan was quoted as saying by the bdnews24.com news portal. An anti-discrimination student

movement against the government started in mid-July over a controversial quota system in jobs. The protests turned violent after crackdown by the forces. Several protesters were killed and injured during clashes with the police in different parts of the country. The protest movement then transformed into an anti-government movement, demanding prime minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation. Hasina resigned and fled to India on August 5 following the mass movement against her government. An interim government replaced her regime and 84-year-old Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was named its Chief Adviser - a position equivalent to prime minister. Nurjahan told the media that many police personnel who had sought treatment had injuries on their heads and legs. She said they were speaking to an American-based institution called Sheba regarding the treat-

ment of those who had lost vision in their eyes. A list of those having eye issues had been provided to them. "We have given the Sheba Foundation a list of those who have lost vision in their eyes or are having eye-related issues. They said they would send doctors to our country as soon as possible. They would be treated at the Ispahani Islamia Eye Institute, the National Eye Science Institute and Hospital, the Chattogram Eye Hospital, and in Dinajpur," she said. She said the government has taken responsibility for the families of those who have died and to provide free treatment for the injured. "Some have had severe leg injuries and even had to have their legs amputated. We are in discussions with various donor organizations and the World Bank to bring in a team of doctors from abroad for proper treatment. We are making efforts in this regard," she said.

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

AP ■ BAGUIO

American forces are ready with a "range of options" to deal with increasing acts of aggression in the disputed South China Sea if ordered to carry them out jointly and after consultations with treaty ally the Philippines, a US admiral said on Thursday. US Indo-Pacific Command chief Adm Samuel Paparo, who heads the biggest number of combat forces outside the US mainland, refused to provide details of the contingency options. Paparo's comments came when asked at a news conference what the long-time treaty allies could do to deal with China's so-called gray-zone tactics in the disputed waters. The "gray-zone tactics" refer to types of assault, like water cannon fire and the blocking and ramming of rival ships in the disputed waters, that are under the threshold of an actual armed attack and wouldn't allow the Philippines to invoke its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty with the US. The treaty obligates either

country to help the other in case of an armed external attack. "We certainly have prepared a range of options and USIN-DOPACOM stands ready, if so called, after consultations in accordance with the treaty to execute those shoulder to shoulder with our ally," Paparo said. Detailing those US military options would allow "the potential adversary" to "build a countermeasure to those," he said. Paparo held a joint news conference with Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen Romero Brawner Jr, after both led an annual meeting in the northern Philippine mountain city of Baguio to discuss security challenges and military plans. They include the Balikatan — Tagalog for shoulder to shoulder — the treaty allies' largest combat exercises, which in April involved more than 16,000 American and Filipino forces and were partly staged in the South China Sea. In response to a question, Paparo repeated that the US military is open, after treaty consultations with the Philippines, to escorting Philippine ships in the South

China Sea amid a spike in hostilities between Beijing and Manila in the disputed waters. Such a prospect would risk putting US Navy ships in direct collisions with those of China. Washington and Beijing have been on a collision course over China's increasingly assertive actions to defend its territorial claims in the South China Sea, and Beijing's stated goal of annexing Taiwan, by force if necessary. Brawner said the Philippines could still fend for itself in the disputed waters, where hostilities with the Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships have alarmingly spiked since last year. "If we exhaust all the options and nothing works, then that's the time we can ask for help," Brawner told reporters. When Filipino forces in the disputed waters "are at the verge of dying," because food supplies were being blocked by Chinese forces, "then that's the time that we are going to seek the help of the United States," Brawner said, but added that "we still have a lot of options."

Typhoon lashes Japan with torrential rain and strong winds

Tokyo (AP): A typhoon lashed southern Japan with torrential rain and strong winds Thursday, causing at least three deaths as it started a crawl up the length of the archipelago and raised concerns of flooding, landslides and extensive damage.

Typhoon Shanshan made landfall in the morning on the southern island of Kyushu and about 60 centimetres of rainfall had fallen in parts of Miyazaki prefecture, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. That 24-hour total was more than the August rainfall average and swollen rivers were threatening floods, it said. The typhoon was forecast to bring strong winds, high waves and significant rainfall to most of the country, particularly the southern prefectures of Kyushu. Around midday, Shanshan was moving north at 15 kph and its winds had weakened to 126 kph, JMA said. More than a dozen people were injured in Miyazaki, many of them thrown to the ground. One each was also injured nearby Kumamoto and Kagoshima

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

Thai court hands YouTube chef life sentence for murder

AP ■ BANGKOK

A court in Thailand on Thursday found Daniel Sancho Bronchalo, a member of a famous Spanish acting family, guilty of premeditated murder and sentenced him to life in prison, in a lurid case that involved the victim being dismembered. The Koh Samui Provincial Court issued an initial sentence of death for Sancho, but in its ruling commuted it to life imprisonment due to his cooperation during the trial, Police Col Paisan Sangthep, deputy commander of the Surat Thani Provincial Police, who attended the hearing, told The Associated Press. Sancho, a 30-year-old chef with a YouTube channel, had been charged with the murder of Edwin Arrieta Artega, a 44-year-old plastic surgeon from Colombia, when both were vacationing on the Thai holiday island of Koh Pha-ngan in August last year.

Bangladesh signs int'l convention on forced disappearances

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh on Thursday signed the UN convention against forced disappearance, two days after it formed a commission to trace and identify "each and every" case of forced disappearance during deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's nearly 16-year regime. "It is a historic occasion," the press wing of the interim government chief Muhammad Yunus quoted him as saying after he inked the Instrument of Accession to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances. The development comes a day ahead of the UN-declared International Day for the Victims of Enforced Disappearances, observed on August 30, for the convention adopted by the United Nations on December 20, 2006. "Now, therefore I, Professor Muhammad Yunus, Chief

Adviser, declare that the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, having considered the above-mentioned Convention, accedes to the same and undertakes faithfully to perform and carry out the stipulations therein contained," the instrument reads. Yunus, 84, who comes from the development sector, took over as the Chief Adviser of the interim government in the country on August 8 after Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India on August 5 after protracted violent demonstrations. Later, Yunus posted on X from his official account of the Chief Adviser of the Government of Bangladesh: "Bangladesh on Thursday signed the instrument of accession to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, demonstrating its commitment to investigate each and every case of enforced disappearances."

SL Prez offers continuity for eco recovery in election manifesto

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

creditor committee comprising 17 countries, China, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Sri Lanka's bankrupt economy has recorded positive growth under Wickremesinghe's leadership after the island nation reported six quarters of negative growth following the unprecedented economic crisis caused by massive forex shortages in 2022. The public protests due to shortages of essentials, power and cooking gas led to the ouster of Wickremesinghe's predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa who resigned following mass protests in 2022. The IMF-led reform programme has made the president unpopular, resulting in the lead of other front runners - Sajith Premadasa and Anura Kumara Dissanayake — in unofficial polls.

'Pak has no plans for talks with TTP'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Thursday said it has no plans to hold talks with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and asked Afghanistan's Taliban government to take "robust action" against these terror groups and prevent their activities. Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that the presence of terror groups, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), in Afghanistan was confirmed by multiple international reports including the United Nations. "We expect the Afghan authorities to take robust action against these terror groups and prevent their activities that endanger Pakistan's security," she said at the weekly press briefing here. "Pakistan has no plans to

engage in any talks with the TTP," she added. She said Islamabad has repeatedly raised concerns about the use of Afghan territory against Pakistan. She added that Pakistan also provided intelligence to Afghanistan on terrorism but refused to disclose the details of the intelligence-sharing arrangements. Pakistan has repeatedly called on the Afghan government to prevent its soil from being used against it by the TTP and other terrorist groups - a claim denied by Kabul. There has been an uptick in the incidents of terrorism in Pakistan since the Taliban took over the government in Kabul in 2021, dashing hopes in Islamabad that a friendly government in Afghanistan would help to tackle militancy. Relations between the two

countries have lately become strained, largely because of the TTP but also due to frequent border skirmishes. In March, Pakistani air force jets carried out air strikes against terrorists in the border regions of Khost and Paktika inside the neighbouring country. Baloch said that Pakistan's decision to recognise the Afghan Taliban government would be made in consultation with regional partners. Separately, in a statement issued on the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, the Foreign Office paid tribute to those who lost their lives in counterterrorism efforts and reiterated Pakistan's firm stance against the TTP. The spokesperson also condemned the recent terrorist activities in Balochistan, reaffirming the government's commitment to ensuring the safety of its citizens.

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

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Sl. No.	Work	Estimate No.	EOI Closing Date	EOI Opening Date
1.	Network strengthening in remaining area and central verge of IA, Sikandra Site-C Distt. Agra	2024/SIDC/944508.1	29.08.2024 upto 6.00 PM	30.08.2024 upto 11.00 AM
2.	Supply and Installation of high mast lighting system and street light network in dark zone at IA, Kosi Kotwan Ext.1&II (Malthura)	2024/SIDC/945014.1	30.08.2024 upto 6.00 PM	31.08.2024 upto 11.00 AM

उपरोक्त निविदाएं अपरिहार्य कारणां के अन्तर्गत आमंत्रित निविदा दिनांक 07.09.2024 को सां. 6:00 बजे तक निविदा आवेदन किने जाने हेतु विस्तारित किने जाते हैं, विधि दिनांक 09.09.2024 को सां. 11:00 बजे सांको कार्यालय शेष निम्न वक्त अन्तर्गत रहेगी। **बतौर प्रत्येक (नि.) उपरोक्त/प्रतिष्ठान, प्राधिकार**

Sensex, Nifty scale all-time high levels

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit their all-time high levels on Thursday, driven by a rally in index majors Reliance Industries and Tata Motors. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 349.05 points or 0.43 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,134.61, extending its winning momentum to the eighth day in a row. During the day, it soared 500.27 points or 0.61 per cent to hit a lifetime intra-day peak of 82,285.83. Rallying for the 11th straight session, the NSE Nifty surged 99.60 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,151.95. During the trade, the benchmark climbed 140.55 points or 0.56 per cent to hit a fresh record intra-day peak of 25,192.90. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Tata Motors jumped over 4 per cent, followed by Bajaj



Finserv, Bajaj Finance, HCL Technologies, ITC, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, Maruti and State Bank of India. Reliance Industries climbed nearly 2 per cent after Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of the firm, said the board of the company will meet on September 5 to consider

issuing bonus shares in the ratio of 1:1. "When Reliance grows, we reward our shareholders handsomely," Ambani said. Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, JSW Steel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Infosys and Tata Steel were among the biggest laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled

in the negative territory, while Hong Kong ended higher. European markets were trading in the positive zone. The US markets ended lower on Wednesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,347.53 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.60 per cent to USD 78.27 a barrel. Rising for the tenth straight session on Wednesday, the NSE Nifty went up by 34.60 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,052.35. The benchmark surged 111.85 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day all-time peak of 25,129.60. Extending its winning run to the seventh day in a row, the BSE benchmark climbed 73.80 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at 81,785.56.

SEBI proposes mandatory UPI block mechanism facility for secondary marketing trading

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has proposed mandating Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) to offer the facility of trading in the secondary market using the UPI-based block mechanism to their clients, similar to the ASBA facility. In the UPI block mechanism, clients can trade in the secondary market based on blocked funds in their bank accounts, instead of transferring the funds upfront to the trading member. The facility is currently optional for investors, and not mandatory for Trading Members (TMs) to offer as a service to clients. Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)-like facility already available for the primary market which ensures that money from an investor gets moved only when an allotment happens. In its consultation paper on Wednesday, Sebi has suggested that QSBs must provide the facility of trading using the UPI block mechanism in the cash



segment for their clients — individuals and HUFs — with an appropriate glide path for implementation. Also, it has been suggested that QSBs can offer a "3-in-1 trading account facility" as an alternative to making the ASBA-like facility mandatory. In the case of 3-in-1 trading accounts, the clients would have their funds in their bank account, earning interest on the cash balances. In addition, the 3-in-1 facility would be available for cash as well as derivatives segment, without any amount restrictions, while

proposals. Trading Members are classified as Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) based on factors such as the size and scale of their operations, including the number of active clients, the total assets held by clients with the TM, the end-of-day margin of all clients, and the trading volume of the TM. Being designated as a QSB, brings with it enhanced responsibilities and obligations. Further, QSBs are also subjected to enhanced monitoring by Market Infrastructure Institutions. The regulator had introduced the use of RBI-approved Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with the facility of blocking of funds, as a payment mechanism for retail investor applications submitted through intermediaries for public issues such as IPO from January 2019. The Beta version of trading through block mechanism for secondary markets was launched on January 1, 2024, for individuals and HUFs, and was made applicable only to the cash segment.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is planning a reparability index for mobile phones and electronic products to address the growing e-waste problem and encourage manufacturers to produce more easily repairable items, officials said on Thursday. The Consumer Affairs Ministry is spearheading the initiative, which will provide a score on key parameters to inform consumers about the ease with which a product can be repaired, the officials said at a national workshop on the issue. Addressing the workshop, Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare said: "As India emerges as the third largest economy in the world, we should have a vibrant and tech-savvy repair system." She also added, "India can become a repair hub for the world." The proposed index will be



similar to initiatives in other countries, such as France's reparability index. It will rate products on criteria including availability of technical documents, ease of disassembly, spare parts availability and pricing. The workshop was aimed at establishing a consensus among industry stakeholders on "key parameters for accessing and evaluating reparability index" besides promoting longevity in product design, and democratizing repair information to enhance consumer experiences in reusing the mobile and

electronics products they own. Additional Secretary Bharat Khara emphasized the need for transparent and affordable repair solutions, increased consumer awareness, and support for local repairers. Joint Secretary Anupam Mishra highlighted concerns about the lack of genuine spare parts in local markets, compatibility issues with product components, and the absence of information for consumers to repair their own devices. He also mentioned that the Reparability Index of France rates products on five criteria, while the EU has additional parameters. HCL Technologies Founder Ajai Chowdhry called for legislation to drive change. "Today, most products are not repairable. We need to design products which can be repaired... Unless we create a law, things will not change," he said.

Infosys, NVIDIA expand partnership to develop GenAI-powered solutions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Infosys on Thursday said it has expanded its partnership with American chipmaker NVIDIA to develop GenAI-powered solutions for telecom operators. The IT major has developed three generative AI solutions powered by its AI-offering Topaz, which make use of NVIDIA NIM inference microservices, NVIDIA NeMo Retriever embedding models, and NeMo Guardrails to customise and deploy generative AI telco domain-specific large-language models. It has also used NVIDIA Riva to allow real-time transcription and translations for call centre agents, according to a regulatory filing.

"Telcos are increasingly adopting generative AI solutions to improve the productivity of their businesses with smarter networks, more efficient operations, and enhanced customer service. "Leveraging NVIDIA's full-stack accelerated computing and AI platform, Infosys Topaz is delivering a suite of domain-specific solutions that will help telcos accelerate and streamline their adoption of generative AI," Ronnie Vasishtha, Senior Vice President of Telecom at NVIDIA, said. These generative-AI solutions have resulted in up to 61 per cent lower latency and 22 per cent absolute improvement in accuracy, the filing said. Shares of Infosys settled 0.35 per cent lower at Rs 1,932.40 apiece on the BSE.

Rupee rises 10 paise to close at 83.87 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 10 paise to close at 83.87 (provisional) against the American currency on Thursday, supported by easing crude oil prices and a firm trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the market is awaiting cues from the US GDP and the US Personal Consumption Expenditure (PCE) inflation data, as this data point is crucial since it could sway the Federal Reserve's decision on whether to implement a 25 or 50 basis point rate cut at its September meeting. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.92 and touched an intra-day high of 83.84 against the US dollar. The domestic currency finally settled at 83.87 (provisional), 10 paise higher from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee



depreciated 4 paise to close at 83.97 against the American currency. According to Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst, Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, the rupee gained 10 paise, as expectations of interest rate cuts continue to provide support, preventing the rupee from falling below 84.00. "The strong demand around 84.00 keeps the rupee buoyant, with resistance seen at 83.75. The rupee is expected to trade in a positive range between 84.00-83.70," Trivedi said. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.11 per cent higher at 101.20. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.34 per cent to USD 78.38 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex rose 349.05 points, or 0.43 per cent, to close at 82,134.61 points. The Nifty closed 99.60 points, or 0.4 per cent, up at 25,151.95 points. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Wednesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,347.53 crore, according to exchange data.

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The final project loan guidelines are likely to be announced in the next two to three months, a senior RBI official said on Thursday. The norms regarding the Expected Credit Loss (ECL)-based provisioning are in an advanced stage of discussion, the official told reporters here. The Reserve Bank of India has proposed to set aside 5 per cent of the total exposure to a project till the construction of the project is on. Fearing a hit to profits, banks have been asking for a relook into it, as per reports. The RBI official said up to 60 responses have been received on the project loans draft, and the central bank is going



through all the suggestions. When asked about the timelines by when the final guidelines will come in, the official said it will take "at least 2-3 months", but did not give a specific answer on whether the guidelines will be implemented from April 1 next year onwards. To a question on the ECL framework, the official said the norms are in the "advance stages" of discussion. The official admitted that there is an "overlap" on both the ECL and project finance norms, but seemed non-

committal on whether both the guidelines will come in together. These are two concurrent streams running together, the official said, assuring that the intent of the RBI is to be non-disruptive and take into account all the impact of the guidelines before finalising. Meanwhile, on reports of higher delinquencies in microloans, the official said there is no systemic risk and entry-specific concerns are discussed bilaterally as part of the supervisory framework. If some regulatory interventions are required, they are also initiated, the official said, citing the November 2023 regulations on hiking risk weights on unsecured lending. There is "nothing on the table" right now on the MFI

sector, the official added. If any action is taken, it will be for the entire sector and not entity-specific, the official clarified. Speaking at the annual GFF here, RBI's chief general manager Vaibhav Chaturvedi asked financiers to be more "responsible" while engaging in their core lending activities and the industry to take steps towards this aim. The offerings need to be transparent and the regulated entities' dealings need to be fair, he underlined. At the same conference, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research professor Ashmita Goyal said the credit deposit ratios in India are much lower than in other countries and the government borrows a lot of resources.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Green hydrogen firm Ohmium on Thursday said it has secured financial assistance for setting up a 137-MW electrolyzer manufacturing capacity under the SIGHT scheme. Electrolyzer is a device that uses electricity to split water into hydrogen and oxygen through a chemical process called electrolysis. Ohmium International (Ohmium) has been selected for the second time as a SIGHT Incentive Program award winner by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), a company statement said. "Our selection for this award demonstrates both Ohmium team's commitment to excellence as well as to decarbonization in India and across the globe," said Arne



evolution as a global Energy hub. These funds will accelerate the expansion of Ohmium's Gigafactory in Bangalore as well as support future local manufacturing facilities", noted Ballantine. Ohmium is the PEM electrolyzer leader in India, with partnerships with industry leaders such as NTPC and Tata Projects. The company has an active green hydrogen project pipeline of over 2 GW across four continents, serving a diverse range of customers across energy, transportation, steel production, and heavy industry. Headquartered in the United States with manufacturing facilities in India and operations worldwide, Ohmium has a global green hydrogen project pipeline exceeding 2 GW across three continents.

Fitch retains India rating at BBB with stable outlook. Global rating agency Fitch Thursday affirmed India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook. India's rating has remained unchanged at 'BBB-', the lowest investment grade, since August 2006. "Fitch Ratings has affirmed India's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'BBB-' with a Stable Outlook," the global rating agency said in a statement. India's ratings are underpinned by its strong medium-term growth outlook, which will continue to drive improvement in structural aspects of its credit profile, including India's share of GDP in the global economy, as well as its solid external finance position, it said in a statement. Strengthening fiscal credibility from recent achievement of deficit targets, enhanced transparency and buoyant revenues, have increased the likelihood that government debt can follow a modest downward trend in the medium term, it said. Nevertheless, it said, fiscal metrics remain a credit weakness, with deficits, debt and debt service burden all high compared to 'BBB' range peers. Lagging structural metrics, including governance indicators and GDP per capita, also weigh on the rating, it added. Observing that India is set to remain among the fastest-growing sovereigns globally, it said, "we forecast GDP growth of 7.2 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2025 (FY25) and 6.5 per cent in FY26, down slightly from 8.2 per cent in FY24."

Gold slips ₹100; silver plunges ₹600

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices slipped Rs 100 to Rs 74,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had ended at Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver prices also plunged by Rs 600 to Rs 87,200 per kilogram, extending the losses in the second straight session on Thursday from the previous close of Rs 87,800 per kg. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also declined Rs 100 to Rs 73,900 per 10 grams



on Thursday. It had settled at Rs 74,000 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Traders attributed fall in the gold prices due to reduced demand by jewellers in the local markets. On the global front, comex gold is trading at USD 2,555.10 per ounce, higher by USD 17.30 per ounce or 0.68 per cent.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tyre exports from India grew 17 per cent year-on-year to reach Rs 6,219 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal with the US emerging as the biggest market, industry body Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) said on Thursday. Tyre exports from India recouped in the first quarter of FY25, increasing by 17 per cent YoY. Tyre exports had declined by 14 per cent in the corresponding quarter in the previous year, ATMA said citing data just released by the Ministry of Commerce. Sustained focus on R&D and



development of advanced technology products aided by competitive pricing and branding efforts helped Indian tyre manufacturers drive growth in exports despite a challenging environment, ATMA Chairman Arnab Banerjee said in a statement. "Improving demand prospects in key export destinations and expected monetary easing also helped growth," Banerjee

added. The rise in exports is a testament to the Indian tyre industry's enhanced integration with global supply chains, he added. "The globally aligned regulatory environment in the country for manufacturing of tyres also augurs well for increasing the addressable market for Indian manufactured tyres," Banerjee said. During Q1FY25, the US was the largest export destination for Indian manufactured tyres accounting for 17 per cent share. Other large export destinations included Brazil, Germany, France and Italy, the statement said.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) on Thursday handed over a dividend cheque of Rs 3,662.17 crore to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The cheque was presented by Siddhartha Mohanty, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director of LIC to the finance minister in the presence of M P Tangirala, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance. LIC also paid an interim dividend of Rs 2,441.45 crore on March 1, 2024, thus



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



EXPLORING DELHI'S HIDDEN FORTRESSES

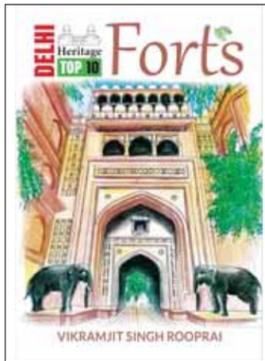
Photo: Pankaj Kumar

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

Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai is an engaging journey of ten prominent forts in Delhi. As part of the Delhi Heritage series, this book dives deep into the architectural and historical significance of these forts, offering readers a comprehensive view of Delhi's rich past. Rooprai, a dedicated heritage activist and educator has put together a guide that blends historical facts with intriguing stories, making it accessible to both history enthusiasts and casual readers. One of the highlights of the book is how it sheds light on not just the famous forts like the Red Fort and Purana Qila, but also on the lesser-known ones, such as Qila-i-Rai Pithora and Nai ka Kot. Rooprai takes readers on a journey through

the history of these forts, detailing their construction, purpose and the events they have witnessed over centuries. The book stands out because it goes beyond the typical tourist information, offering a more detailed look at how these forts fit into the broader historical and cultural context of Delhi. The book opens with a vivid portrayal of the Red Fort, a symbol of Mughal grandeur. Rooprai captures the momentous day of 18 May 1648, when Emperor Shahjahan inaugurated this architectural marvel. The description of Shahjahan's grand entry, with Prince Dara Shikoh showering him with coins, sets the tone for the book's rich narrative style. The Red Fort's formidable outer walls, crowned with ornate chhatris and punctuated by five

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



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

reputed curse by Sufi mystic Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya that condemned it to remain abandoned. The fort's role in defending Delhi from Mongol invasions underscores its military importance, a facet Rooprai explores with both depth and clarity. The book also highlights the contributions of Feroz Shah Tughlaq, whose focus on public works and irrigation earned him the title 'Father of the Indian Irrigation System'. Rooprai describes Feroz Shah's efforts to improve the lives of his subjects and his legacy of equality and prosperity. This section provides insight into the ruler's priorities and the architectural innovations that characterised his reign. Salimgarh, another significant fort, is

introduced as a strategic outpost built by Islam Shah Suri, son of Sher Shah Suri. Rooprai's account of Salimgarh's strategic location on a riverine island near the Yamuna and its role in defending Delhi adds a layer of understanding to the city's fortification network. Rooprai's narrative is enriched by his ability to convey the fort's historical and cultural significance. His engaging writing style and meticulous research offer readers a window into the past, highlighting how these structures reflect the evolving history of Delhi. The book is peppered with narrative and detailed descriptions that humanise the history of these fortresses, making their stories accessible and compelling. *Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts* by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai is more

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

BOOK DETAILS:
Book Name & Author: Delhi Heritage: Top 10 Forts by Vikramjit Singh Rooprai
Price: INR 499
Pages: 214
Publisher: Niyogi Books

NEW ARRIVAL

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

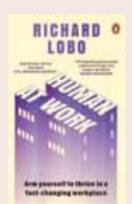


"The Battle of Haji Pir" by Kulpreet Yadav offers a profound exploration of the 1965 Indo-Pak war, focusing on the pivotal yet often overlooked Haji Pir battle, which was surrendered under the Tashkent Agreement. Yadav's book brings to life the valor and sacrifices of Indian soldiers, making the complexities of military

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

With over 15 books to his name, Kulpreet Yadav combines thorough research with engaging storytelling, making "The Battle of Haji Pir" a compelling read for military enthusiasts and history buffs. Available this September in major bookstores and online platforms.

Human at Work by Richard Lobo



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

human-centric technology, offering practical insights and real-world examples. Lobo underscores that every company today, regardless of industry, is fundamentally a tech company, driven by human expertise and strategy. "Human at Work" highlights the power of micro-transformations to spark significant change, making it a valuable read for HR professionals, managers and anyone navigating today's complex work landscape. Lobo's approach is particularly relevant to the Indian market, with timely discussions on hybrid work models and managing technological disruptions. Available this September in major bookstores and online, this book serves as a roadmap for leading with a human-first mindset in an increasingly digital world.

Genetic Study Refutes Eelam Tamil Origins

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

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

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

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



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

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

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

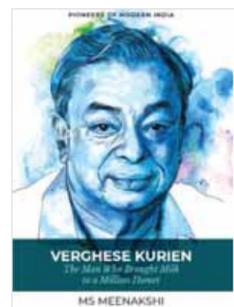
changed to Karavas, writes Raghavan in his book. Ramaswami Wijayabalan, a plantation owner and Tamil scholar based in Colombo, told The Pioneer that the Tamils in north and north east of Sri Lanka are descendants of migrant workers from Malabar province in present day Kerala. "The Tamil they speak, their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

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

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

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

MS Meenakshi vividly captures the essence of Kurien's pragmatic leadership and his many accomplishments in the development of cooperative societies, which became a bedrock of India's dairy sector. The book emphasises Kurien's commitment to sustainable development and social entrepreneurship, highlighting how he championed the interests of rural stakeholders. Through initiatives like the creation of AMUL and the Institute of Rural Management in Anand, Kurien not only revolutionised dairy management but also spurred significant changes in rural socio-economic structures, industries, and developmental policies. One of the book's strengths lies in its detailed portrayal of Kurien's partnerships with



entrepreneur whose initiatives under Operation Flood linked the entire country through milk, a staple necessity. Meenakshi's portrayal of Kurien's character is both respectful and intimate, offering a balanced view of a leader who was as astute as he was compassionate. MS Meenakshi's writing is both informative and engaging. Her expertise is evident in the way she presents complex economic and social concepts in a manner that is accessible to readers, making Kurien's achievements all the more inspiring. *Verghese Kurien: The Man Who Brought Milk to a Million Homes* is more than just a biography, it's an inspiring roadmap for future thinkers and leaders in sustainable development. It reminds us of the power of visionary leadership and the impact that one dedicated individual can have on a nation. For anyone interested in the history of India's economic development, social entrepreneurship or the story of a man whose legacy continues to feed millions, this book is a must-read.

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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



For the first time since 1991-92, India will tour Australia for a five-match Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, with the opening game scheduled to be played at Perth from November 22. Buchanan, who presided over Australia's golden run in all forms in the first decade of this millennium as head coach, said both India and Australia have plenty of ageing players at disposal but that will not be a deterrent to the competition between the sides. "Australia (has), since losing to India in the last series, the pace bowling attack with (off-spinner Nathan) Lyon, backed up now by Cameron Green or Mitch Marsh, is just a really, really powerful bowling lineup," Buchanan told PTI on Thursday after the launch of 'Ready Steady Go Kids' multi-sport program for the CP Goenka International School. "India's top order, (Yashasvi) Jaiswal, (Rohit) Sharma himself, (Virat) Kohli, possibly Iyer... they've got to bat really well to establish totals and then the likes of (Jasprit) Bumrah, (Mohammed) Shami, (Mohammed) Siraj will come into their own," he said. Buchanan said there won't be much of a psychological impact of India's wins in Australia on the previous two tours given that two of the mainstays then - Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane - are not likely to be a part of the touring squad for the upcoming series. "The previous series that India won - important from both, Indian perspective and an Australian perspective - a little bit of the mind games will go into the pre-series," he said. "But for all that, those games have passed, those players are gone and the current players we have both in the Australian side and the Indian side, they're at a stage of their careers where they all want to perform." "I looked at the ages and India

teams will be a hindrance that India will face as well. India will play a two-day pink-ball match against the Prime Minister's XI on November 30 and December 1 ahead of the day-night Test. "Australia is favourite going into the series right at this stage. When you look around world cricket these days - and it has been (the case) for some time - it's very difficult to tour other countries," he told reporters later. "(The) travelling teams no longer have that preparation in a country. They don't play two or three games prior to playing the first Test match to adjust to a country, because nobody wants to tour for that long. "That makes it very difficult when you go to Perth, when it's fast and bouncy, for a side that's coming from, they will have played Bangladesh (and New Zealand) obviously, but Bangladesh at home isn't it? "The wickets are going to be completely different, albeit it's fantastic lead-in that they're playing some Test cricket, but it's going to be quite difficult to go to Perth to start with," he said. Buchanan added that he was also not in favour of Steve Smith continuing as Australia's opener. "Not personally. He's made his mark at No 4. But I'm not a selector, and I'm not the captain, and I'm not Steve Smith and so those three people will end up making the decision that they think best fits the make-up of that side," he said.



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

AP ■ PARIS

Just weeks after hosting the Olympics, Paris inaugurated the 2024 Paralympics on Wednesday with a nearly four-hour-long opening ceremony in the heart of the city. Against the backdrop of a setting sun, thousands of athletes paraded down the famed Champs-Élysées avenue to Place de la Concorde in central Paris where French President Emmanuel Macron officially declared the Paralympic Games open. About 50,000 people watched the ceremony in stands built around the iconic square, which is the biggest in Paris and is visible from afar because of its ancient Egyptian Obelisk. Accessibility for athletes in wheelchairs was facilitated with strips of asphalt laid along the avenue and placed over the square. More than 4,000 athletes with physical, visual and intellectual impairments will compete in 22 sports from Thursday until Sept. 8. Organizers say more than 2 million of the 2.8 million tickets have been sold for the various Paralympic events. The opening ceremony was held outside the confines of a stadium, just like when the Olympics opened in the city on July 26. Fighter planes flew overhead, leaving red-white-and-blue vapors in the colors of the French national flag, before the delegations entered the square in alphabetical order. Some delegations were huge - more than 250 athletes from Brazil - and some were tiny - less than a handful from Barbados and just three from Myanmar. Ukraine's delegation got a loud cheer and some of the crowd stood to applaud them. Flag bearers Steve Serio and Nicky Nieves led the U.S. Team's delegation. The French arrived last and to roars from the crowd, which then sang along to popular French songs, including "Que Je T'aime" by late rocker Johnny Hallyday. Throughout the show, directed by Thomas Jolly who also led the Olympic opening ceremony, singers, dancers and musicians with and without disabilities performed on stage together seamlessly, projecting a theme of inclusion and overcoming physical differences. Lucky Love, a French singer who lost his left arm at birth, was joined by performers in wheelchairs. Other acts featured dancers with crutches. International Paralympic Committee President Andrew Parsons said he hoped the Paris Paralympics would start an "inclusion revolution" beyond the field of sport. "The Paris 2024 Paralympic Games will show what persons with disabilities can achieve at the highest level when the barriers to succeed are removed," he said in a speech. "The fact these opportunities largely exist only in sport in the year 2024 is shocking. It is proof we can and must do more to advance disability inclusion - whether on the field of play, in the classroom, concert hall or in the boardroom." As the ceremony concluded, the Paralympic torch was carried into the area by former Olympic wheelchair tennis gold medalist Michaël Jérémiasz, who was surrounded on stage by dozens of torchbearers. Five French Paralympians lit the Olympic cauldron, which is designed to look like a hot air balloon and glowed gold-like in the night.



Nitish-Thulasimathi duo makes winning start in Paralympics

PTI ■ PARIS

India's Nitesh Kumar and Thulasimathi Murugesan had little difficulty overcoming country-mates Suhas Yathiraj and Palak Kohli in the opening group stage match of badminton mixed doubles (SL3-SU5) at the Paralympic Games here on Thursday. However, mixed doubles duo of Sivarajan Solaimalai and Nithya Sre, seeded second, lost their SH6 group play stage match in straight games to the American pair of Miles Krajewski and Jayci Simon. The Nitesh-Thulasimathi duo won the Group A contest 21-14, 21-17 in 31 minutes. Nitesh, 29, who hails from Karnal district in Haryana, and young Thulasimathi, a veterinary science student from Tamil Nadu who had won the mixed bronze at the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, encountered little challenge in the first game and at one stage they were leading by seven points. Unable to counter the pair's net play and deep tosses, Suhas and Palak quickly

found themselves trailing, losing the game in just 14 minutes. The second game too went on similar lines with Palak clearly not able to match the prowess of her senior partner on court and giving away points. SL3 players have moderate impairment on one side of the body, affecting either both legs or the absence of limbs, while SU5 players have significant impairments in their upper limbs. In Group B, Sivarajan and Nithya gave a tough challenge to the American pair before going down 21-23, 11-21 in 35 minutes in SH6 category. SH6 is for badminton players with short stature. Sivarajan, who trains at the Pulella Gopichand Academy in Hyderabad, and partner Nithya were equal to the task in the opening game and also took a slender one-point lead but the young American pair, who are both in their late teens, were too agile on court and fought for every point. The second game turned out to be one-sided with the tiring Indians losing in just 14 minutes.

Wimbledon champion Krejckikova out of US Open

AP ■ NEW YORK

Frances Tiafoe is getting the rematch he wants, a second shot at Ben Shelton at the U.S. Open. But there won't be a second straight Grand Slam title for Barbra Krejckikova. The Wimbledon champion was knocked out of the U.S. Open in the second round on Wednesday, defeated by Elena-Gabriela Ruse 6-4, 7-5. The No. 8-seeded Krejckikova won her second Grand Slam singles title this summer, but then she didn't play any matches after the Paris Olympics. She acknowledged last week not knowing where her level of play was. Turns out, it wasn't good enough. "I mean, winning Wimbledon is amazing. It's a great, great result,

I'm very proud about it and how I was able to handle everything there," said Krejckikova, who hadn't played a tournament on hard courts since February. "I think I was playing quite well, definitely better than in the first match. I think my game was improving, but it just wasn't enough." No woman has won Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in the same year since Serena Williams in 2012. Tiafoe had short work on the steamiest day of the tournament thus far, with temperatures in New York surpassing 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius). Three men's matches ended when an opponent stopped playing, the last one sending defending champion Novak Djokovic to the third round when Laslo Djere retired early in the third set with what



appeared to be pain near his hip after they played for more than two hours across the first two sets. "You know, in the end, not the kind of finish that we players or crowd wants to see, but I think it's probably due to that physical battle that we had in the opening two sets," the No. 2-seeded Djokovic said. Tiafoe, the No. 20 seed, won the first two sets before his opponent, Alexander Shevchenko, retired after the first game of the third set. Shelton, the No. 13 seed, later beat Roberto Bautista Agut 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. He ousted Tiafoe last year in the quarterfinals, stopping Tiafoe from what would have been a second straight trip to the U.S. Open semifinals. "Obviously he's very much like me in how excited and energetic he is on the

court," Tiafoe said, "and has such a big game and big shots and serves big and gets the crowd going." Well, maybe not quite as well as Tiafoe does. "I know that the people love him here. Probably more than me. He's electric here, and his crowds are electric here," the 21-year-old Shelton said. "It will be a battle. It will be a war just like the last two times we've played. Yeah, I'm more than excited to be out there with him again." They were two of the four American men to reach the third round in the bottom half of the draw. No. 12 Taylor Fritz got there by beating Matteo Berrettini 6-3, 7-6 (1), 6-1, while Brandon Nakashima beat Arthur Cazaux and will next play No. 18 Lorenzo Musetti, the bronze medalist at the Olympics.

Novak Djokovic reaches US Open third round

AP ■ NEW YORK

A U.S. Open match that Novak Djokovic already expected to be difficult was threatening to become a toss-up as he struggled with his serve. Missing more than he made, Djokovic couldn't get many quick points Wednesday night. He acknowledged that he should have lost the second set, and if his opponent didn't get injured and have to stop, maybe he wouldn't even have won that match. Once he had, the defending champion was only looking ahead. "The matches are only going to get tougher from here. I know that, but I'm fine," Djokovic said. "I'll find my way, as I have done many times in my career." Djokovic reached the third round when Laslo Djere had to retire with the No. 2 seed leading his Serbian countryman 6-4, 6-4, 2-0.



Djere was leading 4-2 in the second set when he appeared to be troubled by pain near his hip and was visited by a trainer later in the set. He finished that set, which lasted 69 minutes after the first one went 60, but didn't last much longer. "In the end, not the kind of finish that we players or crowd wants to see, but I think it's probably due to that physical battle that we had in the opening two sets," Djokovic said.

It was the 90th win at the U.S. Open for Djokovic, making him the first man to reach that total at all four Grand Slams. The 24-time major champion will play No. 28 seed Alexei Popyrin on Friday. Djere was the only player to win a set against Djokovic at last year's U.S. Open, grabbing the first two in their

third-round encounter before Djokovic rallied. "So I knew coming into the match that if I don't serve well, which was the case, I'm going to have to really grind and work for my points a lot," Djokovic said. "That's what I guess caused the two sets to be played over two hours." Djokovic made only 47% of his first serves and appeared to be struggling physically himself earlier in the match, which was just his second since winning the gold medal in the Olympics. Djere had two chances to break Djokovic's serve for would have given him a 5-2 lead in the second set. Instead, he wouldn't win another game, with Djokovic breaking to win the set when Djere yanked a forearm out of his bounds. "All in all, of course, I have to be happy with the win," Djokovic said, "and happy that in important moments I managed to play one ball more than him over the net, I guess find the right shots or anticipate well as I did in the set point in the second set.

Kush Maini completes second Formula 1 test at Imola

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Kush Maini, India's sole representative in Formula 2 series, has completed his second Formula 1 test at Italy's Imola circuit as a member of Alpine's junior driver program. Maini had driven Alpine's 2022 car for the first time at the Red Bull Ring in June. The two-day test at Imola, a track renowned for its challenging layout and rich motorsport history, saw Maini behind the wheel of the Alpine A522, the 2022 season race car. Maini was a part of a two-day testing event for the Alpine team alongside Jack Doohan, who recently secured a promotion to Formula 1. This latest test comes at a crucial time, as the team's reserve driver spot opened up earlier last week, presenting a significant opportunity for Maini. After 99 laps and close to 500 Km of high speed and adrenaline, the 23-year-old shared his thoughts. "Can't thank Alpine enough for this opportunity. Very strong day, both qualification and race pace looked very good. Can't wait for the next one." Representing Invicta in Formula 2, Maini will return to action at Monza over the weekend. In his second season in the F1 feeder series, Maini is ninth in the standings with 74 points. He bagged his first ever Formula 2 win by topping the sprint race at the Hungarian GP.

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (FLORIDA)

Messi joins group training with Inter Miami

ANOTHER STEP TOWARD HIS RETURN AFTER ANKLE INJURY

Lionel Messi returned to group training with Inter Miami on Wednesday, more than six weeks after the Argentina captain left the Copa America final with a badly sprained right ankle. There is still no official timetable for when Messi, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner, will play again for Inter Miami - which has the best record in Major League Soccer so far this season. Inter Miami visits Chicago on Saturday, then doesn't return to MLS play until a Sept. 14 match with Philadelphia. If Messi doesn't play this weekend, that means he'd

have two more weeks to continue rehabbing before returning to game action. Messi was not selected by Argentina to play in World Cup qualifiers in early September. "To see him on the field is great," Inter Miami goalkeeper Drake Callender said after the Wednesday workout. "I know he's been getting treatment every single day, training every single day. He's dealt with things before. He's been there, done that and he's still doing it at the highest level. To see him recoup from the kind of injury we saw at



Copa America and be available for us this season, it goes to show the quality of care we have here." Messi has 12 goals and 13 assists in 12 MLS games with Inter Miami this season. He's missed 14 of the club's league matches, including each of the last eight either because he was playing for Argentina or recovering from the ankle injury. Also missed by Messi in that span: all four of Inter Miami's matches in Leagues Cup play, as the team tried to defend the trophy it won a year ago. Messi last played on July 14,

leaving in the second half of Argentina's win over Colombia in the Copa America final. He was dealing with leg issues throughout that tournament, plus left the field briefly in the first half of the final because of a left ankle issue - then got hurt again in the second half and had to leave for good. If Messi doesn't play until the Sept. 14 match, he'll have had exactly two months to recover and rehab plus gear up for the MLS playoffs. Inter Miami is the only team so far to have clinched a playoff berth and is currently four points clear - with a match in hand - over the LA Galaxy for the best overall record in MLS.