



CITY 3 AYODHYA GANG-RAPE ACCUSED'S BAKERY FACES BULLDOZER

WORLD 6 HUNTER BIDEN SET TO BE SENTENCED

SPORT 7 HEARTBREAK FOR SHOOTER MANU BHAKER

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## Modi reaffirms India's role as Vishwa Bandhu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India has become a food surplus country and is also working to provide solutions for global food and nutritional security. Inaugurating the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) at the National Agricultural Science Centre (NASC) Complex in the national Capital, which is being organised in India after 65 years, Modi said, 'now India is a food surplus country,' he said, adding that the country is the number one producer of milk, pulses and spices across the world. Also, the country has become the second-largest producer of foodgrains, fruits, vegetables, cotton, sugar and tea.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking at the inauguration of the 32nd International Conference of Agricultural Economists (ICAE) at the National Agricultural Science Centre (NASC) Complex, in New Delhi on Saturday. Photo: PIB

"There was a time when India's food security was a concern for the world. Now, India is working to provide solutions for global food security and global nutritional security," he said at the conference, attended by about 1,000 delegates from around 70 countries. Therefore, Modi said, India's experience is valuable for discussions on food system transformation and will benefit the global south. The Prime Minister reiterated India's commitment to global welfare as a 'Vishwa Bandhu'.

He highlighted various mantras put forward by India on various fora, including 'One Earth, One Family and One Future', 'Mission Life' and 'One Earth One Health'. He underlined India's approach of not viewing the health of humans, plants and animals in silos. "Challenges before sustainable agriculture and food systems can only be

tackled under the holistic approach of One Earth, One Family and One Future," he said. Modi emphasised the importance of the agriculture sector in the Indian economy and highlighted the work done by his government in the last 10 years for the growth of the farm sector in a sustainable manner. "Agriculture is at the centre of India's

economic policies," he said. In Indian agriculture, 90 per cent of farmers own very little land, and these small farmers are the biggest strength of India's food security, Modi said. He pointed out that a similar situation is prevalent in several developing countries in Asia, making India's model applicable. The Prime Minister also said India has provided 1,900 new climate-resilient varieties of crops in the last 10 years. India is promoting chemical-free natural farming, he added. He also said the country is moving towards achieving the 20 per cent ethanol blending target petrol.

The conference will highlight India's proactive approach to global agricultural challenges and showcase the nation's advancements in agricultural research and policy. The Prime Minister also acknowledged the seriousness of the nutrition challenge, along with water scarcity and climate change. He presented Anna, Millet, as a solution given the superfood's quality of minimum water and maximum production. Modi expressed India's willingness to share millet basket with the world. In his speech, he also talked about how India is leveraging digital technology in the agriculture sector.

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## Ripple effect of Israel, Iran tension in Delhi



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

Even as tension flares up in West Asia, the Delhi Police has reviewed the security of the Israeli Embassy and Chabad House following alerts from the intelligence agencies in the wake of the killing of a Hamas leader in Tehran. A multi-layered security has already been put in place with several CCTV cameras installed around both the structures. According to a senior officer, more personnel may be deployed, if required. On July 31, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard were killed in an airstrike that hit a residence where Haniyeh was staying in Tehran as a guest. According to sources, senior officers of the Delhi Police force have held a meeting to plan a massive security net around the two Israeli buildings in the national Capital. This came after the Delhi Police debunked rumours of an "explosion" at

the Embassy, calling it a hoax. The police said on X that it was a fake alert before deleting the post. Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Israel on Friday issued an advisory for the Indian nationals living in the country to stay vigilant and "adhere to safety protocols".

"In view of the prevailing situation in the region, all Indian nationals in Israel are advised to stay vigilant and adhere to the safety protocols as advised by the local authorities. Please exercise caution, avoid unnecessary travel within the country and stay close to safety shelters," the Embassy of India in Israel posted on X. Air India has already cancelled its flight to Tel Aviv in the wake of escalating tensions in West Asia.

In the past three years, two low-intensity blasts have taken place near Israeli Embassy in the national Capital. No one was injured in the both attacks. Security around the Israel Embassy was upped after a war between Israel and Hamas broke out last year.

In December last year, a low-intensity blast was heard near the Israel Embassy in the high-security Lutyens' zone, triggering concern among the Indian security and intelligence agencies and prompting them to carry out an extensive search in the area. During this operation, a letter addressed to the Israeli Ambassador was recovered at the spot.

Following the back-to-back assassinations of Haniyeh in Tehran early on Wednesday and top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur in Beirut the evening before, international diplomats have scrambled to head off a full-fledged regional war after Iran and its regional proxies vowed to retaliate.

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## Fresh trouble in Manipur

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Shots were fired and an abandoned Shouse was torched in Manipur's Jiribam, triggering fresh tensions within a day of the Meitei and Hmar communities reaching an agreement to make efforts to restore normalcy in the district, officials said on Saturday. An abandoned house in Lalpani village was torched by armed men on Friday night, they said.

"It is an isolated settlement consisting of a few Meitei houses, and most of those were abandoned after violence broke out in the district. Miscreants, who are yet to be identified, took advantage of security lapses in the area to commit the arson," an official said. The armed men also fired several rounds of shells and gunshots, targeting the village, he said. Security forces were rushed to the area following the incident, he added.

Representatives of the Meitei and Hmar communities reached an agreement in a meeting held at a CRPF facility in adjoining Assam's Cachar on Thursday. The meeting was moderated by Jiribam district administration, Assam Rifles and CRPF personnel. Representatives of the Thadou, Paite and Mizo communities of the district were also present in the meeting.

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## Narco-terror links cost J&K Govt staffers' job



File Photo/Representative

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Saturday dismissed six employees, including five constables of the Jammu and Kashmir police and one teacher of the Education Department for terror links and involvement in illegal and anti-national activities. According to a statement issued by the Department of Information and Public Relations, J&K Government, the activities of all these employees had come to the notice of law enforcement and intelligence agencies, as they found them deeply involved in activities prejudicial to the interests of the State. So far fourteen employees have been dismissed from their services since June 2024. Four employees, including two

police constables, one school teacher and one lineman of the Jal Shakti Department were dismissed from their services on July 24, and four others were dismissed on June 8. In November 2023, while addressing a gathering in New Delhi, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha claimed that approximately 55 Government employees and workers have been dismissed for promoting terrorism. This action will continue until such individuals who have facilitated terrorism are dealt with, he said. The Lieutenant Governor invoked Article 311(2)(c) of the Constitution to sack the six employees after a thorough investigation revealed their links with a narco-terror network run by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and terror outfits operating from Pakistani soil.

Sharing details, the spokesman of the DIPR, J&K, in a statement said, one of the dismissed selection grade constables identified as Saif Din son/of Quasim Din resident/of Shigani Bhalles District Doda A/P Javid Nagar, Bali Charana Naki Tawi, Jammu, was a notorious drug peddler, a habitual offender and a mastermind for distribution of narco terror funding. He is a deeply motivated and committed drug peddler as well as an Over Ground Worker for the terrorists of a proscribed terrorist organisations like Hizbul Mujahideen. He had established drug channels which are being used by anti-national agencies/elements to smuggle weapons, and narcotics and to facilitate infiltration of terrorists in J&K, he said. The spokesman said, Farooq Ahmad Sheikh, Head Constable in Police Department son/of Ab Aziz Sheikh resident/of Ibkoote Tangdar, District Kupwara, along with two other employees namely Khalid Hussain Shah and Rahmat Shah (both working as Constables in J&K police) received huge consignment of narcotics from drug smugglers across the LoC from Pakistan occupied J&K.

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Officials during a rescue operation for stranded Kedarnath pilgrims, in Rudraprayag district. PTI

## Over 10K stranded pilgrims rescued from Kedarnath

PTI ■ RUDRAPRAYAG

The operation to rescue pilgrims stranded along a rain-ravaged trek route to the Himalayan Kedarnath shrine in Uttarakhand entered its third day on Sunday. More than 10,500 people have been evacuated, some airlifted by air force helicopters. Officials said around 1,300 pilgrims are stranded in Kedarnath, Bhimbali and Gaurikund, and are safe. Personnel of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and police are engaged in the rescue operation. The Indian Air Force's Chinook and Mi17 helicopters airlifted some pilgrims from the area on Friday.

Rudraprayag Superintendent of Police (SP) Vishakha Ashok Bhadane dismissed rumours of a large number of people missing following a cloudburst near the trek-route. "Almost all reported individuals have reached home," the official said and appealed to the public not to believe rumours. She said, "Many people may not be able to contact their families due to poor network and bad weather." The pilgrim, who died in a landslide near Tharu camp at Lincholi on Friday, was identified as Shubham Kashyap. He was a resident of Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said.

## Kejriwal Govt took most Cabinet decisions sans discussion: Docu

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In an unusual practice, the Arvind Kejriwal Government has taken majority of the Cabinet decisions by "circulation" in the past three years. This means no discussion has taken place among the Ministers and officers concerned of the Delhi Government and Cabinet agenda dictated from the top. Even the Chief Secretary and concern Heads of Departments were not kept in the loop during the Cabinet discussion. The document accessed by The Pioneer shows the numbers of decisions taken by the Cabinet through circulation were 15 in 2024 (as on July 31, 2024) and only six were in physical modes. Similarly, the number of decisions taken through circulation in 2022 are 17 out of 21 and in the year 2023 this number rose to 29 circulation and only a meager five are through deliberations and physical mode. The Cabinet decisions taken through circulation in 2024 include Delhi Solar Energy Policy, 2023, Budget Session of Delhi Legislative



Assembly, approval of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Corridor of Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), proposal for implementation of Business Blasters Scheme (seniors) for GNCTD Universities and it is, proposal for approval of additional project cost due to enhanced compensation of land in Delhi Mass Rapid Transit System (DMRTS) Phase-I & II and its release thereof. "Cabinet meetings (Council of Ministers) are central to governance. In the meetings,

deliberation takes place at length and views of every Minister are ascertained along with the presentation by the department. "The Department concerned pilots the proposal through the proper presentation before the Cabinet and thereafter it is deliberated upon and discussed before giving the final decision by the Cabinet," the document said. Notably, the Government approves agenda or proposal through circulation only in an emergency situation.

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## Inspiring tales of human valour emerge from heart of Wayanad

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

In the midst of a tragedy of Wayanad's scale, many heart-warming tales of bravery and humanitarian deeds involving high personal risks have come to light as the jumbo efforts to rescue the survivors, if any, of the catastrophic landslides continued on the fifth day. In one instance, while the Indian Air Force played Good Samaritan in saving the lives of two youths from Malappuram district who had reached Soojippara in Wayanad district as part of a rescue team, the fire brigade saved a third youth from the inaccessible rocky terrains in the region on Saturday. The trio had lost their way

on Friday while searching for those trapped in Tuesday's landslides. They spent the whole night atop the rocky hills as they found it difficult to move in the slippery and slushy area. Two of them suffered minor fractures in the fall and they themselves got trapped in the rocky terrain. The police and other State agencies found the going tough and the IAF team was summoned to save the youths. While the helicopter piloted by the IAF crew had to do dangerous manoeuvring to air-lift two of the youths from the treacherous terrain, the third one was saved by the fire brigade using specially made coir.



Representative Image

All the three have been hospitalised as they had suffered minor fractures and exhaustion. In yet another daring rescue operation, officials of the Forest Department saved six members of a family (including four children and their father and mother) who were trapped in a rocky cave atop the Wayanad hills. The family, having lost their dwelling in Tuesday's landslide at Mundakkai, had managed to reach the cave and huddled together amid heavy rain. Officials led by Kalpetta Range Forest Officer K Hashis rescued the tribal family which included four kids aged between one and four. The rescue mission

took four and a half hours one way. "The family is from the Paniya community of Wayanad, and had been stranded in a cave atop a hill overlooking a deep gorge," said Hashis after the family members were brought to a relief camp. Hashis said they had found the mother and a four-year-old child wandering around to find food for her other children and their father who were stranded in the cave. The rescue team of the forest officials has shifted most of the members of the tribal communities in Wayanad to safer places. Hashis said the tribal community survived on forest products and generally avoided interactions with

others. "However, it seems like, due to the landslide and the heavy rain, they were unable to procure any food," he said. The road to be taken to reach the cave where the tribal survivors were trapped was literally a steep slope, very difficult to traverse, especially amidst heavy rainfall. The officers had to tie ropes to trees and rocks to climb, a very risky exercise indeed as they said. He added, "The children were tired, and we fed them with whatever we had carried. Later, after much persuasion, their father agreed to come with us, and we tied the children to our bodies and started our trek back."

# Woman alleges sexual abuse by husband

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A woman from Naka area accused her husband of severe mistreatment, alleging that he pressured her to engage in a physical relationship with an African man and forced her to watch pornographic films with him while they were in China, supposedly to press a dowry demand. She also claimed that he physically assaulted her and stole her money when she resisted. In her complaint to the Naka police, the victim detailed how she managed to contact the Indian Embassy in China, which helped her return to Lucknow. Embassy officials advised her to file a complaint in India. A case was registered at the Naka police station. The woman further alleged that her husband filmed her in compromising situations and threatened to make the videos viral to defame her. According to her complaint, she married a man from Ganesh Ganj in 2015, who was

employed by a company in China. She claimed that her parents were coerced into paying Rs 15 lakh as dowry within a week of the marriage because her husband used this as leverage to demand more. Her husband initially went to China alone, but after a month, he returned and began drinking excessively and physically abusing her. The woman discovered that he was using stimulants to enhance his sexual drive and had been undergoing treatment for this issue. Over time, he became increasingly distant, did not provide her with money, and began taking her salary, which she earned from working in China, to spend on alcohol. The victim also reported that after the birth of their daughter, her husband and in-laws taunted her. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he allegedly seized her visa, air ticket, and Rs 2 lakh, subjecting her to further dowry-related harassment. On September 11, 2022, the victim claimed that her husband forcibly took Rs 2.5 lakh from her and assaulted her when she protested. Despite this, she managed to return to China, where her husband continued his abusive behaviour. He allegedly forced her to have unnatural sex with him while showing her pornographic films daily and made videos of these acts, which he shared with his friends. He

also coerced her into having sex with an African man and sent some of these pornographic videos to her family. When she reported an attempt on her life to the Chinese police, they only issued a mild warning to her husband. Shortly thereafter, he stole her jewellery worth Rs 10 lakh and fled. The police eventually recovered the jewellery. Upon returning to Lucknow and filing a complaint, her husband apologised and resolved the matter in front of the police. The woman returned to China with her husband on March 4, 2024. However, he resumed his abusive behaviour and attempted to kill her. Fearing for her life, she contacted the Indian Embassy in China, where officials advised her to register a complaint with the local police station upon her return to India. Following this advice, she came back to Lucknow and filed a formal complaint. She alleged that her husband had installed a hidden camera in their room to make obscene videos of her and threatened to make them public. She also claimed that he made derogatory remarks about their daughter. The woman said that her husband fled to China and continued to threaten her, believing he was beyond the reach of Indian law. The police registered a case against the accused and others under relevant sections of the law.

# Couple found hanging in hotel room

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A couple was found hanging in their hotel room at Rajveer Hotel in the Naka area on Friday. The couple had checked into the hotel on Thursday and booked the room for one night. According to reports, the incident came to light on Friday morning when a hotel employee knocked on their door to provide services, but there was no response. After repeated attempts by the employee and then the hotel manager to get a response, the latter called police. Upon arrival, the police

broke open the door only to find the couple hanging from the ceiling. The deceased were identified as Mehboob Alam and Zeba Ansari, both residents of Kareli in Prayagraj. According to ADCP (Central) Manisha Singh, Mehboob and Zeba were found hanging from the ceiling fan and a wall peg in room number 302. A suicide note was discovered at the scene, and authorities are currently verifying its contents with the couple's family to understand the motive behind their drastic action. Naka Inspector Virendra

Tripathi, who is leading the investigation, said the police were gathering detailed information about the circumstances surrounding the incident. While the exact reason for the suicide remains unclear, preliminary information suggested that financial troubles might have played a role. Sources privy to the investigation claimed that the couple was reportedly facing severe financial difficulties, which could have contributed to their decision to take their own lives. The police are conducting a thorough investigation to piece together the events lead-

ing up to the incident. Manisha Singh emphasised that the police were alerted to the situation and were diligently working to uncover the reasons behind the incident. The investigation included questioning the family members to gain insights into the couple's circumstances and any potential stressors they might have faced. The hotel where this distressing event took place is owned by Rajveer Soni. The property has been leased to Zeeshan Ahmed and Akanshu, who have been managing the hotel since February 2024. The forensic team was also present

at the scene to assist with the investigation. This incident is particularly alarming as it marks the third such case in a hotel in Naka area since July 1. On July 1, a couple who had come to visit Lucknow also committed suicide by hanging themselves at Mini Mahal Hotel in the area. On July 17, a young man took his own life at Shivganga Hotel in the same area. The pattern of such incidents in the region raises concerns and underscores the urgent need for attention to mental health and support systems.

# Cashier injured as security guard's gun goes off

Lucknow (PNS): An assistant cashier at Awadh Bus Stand in Alambagh sustained firearm injuries after a security guard's double-barrel gun went off under mysterious circumstances on Saturday afternoon. DCP (East) Shashank Singh stated that the gun went off accidentally, dismissing any potential foul play. The injured, identified as Ramesh Chandra Sharma, was admitted to a hospital where his condition is reported to be stable. The victim's family has not yet filed a complaint against the security guard, Musharraf Ali. Preliminary investigations suggest that Musharraf Ali mishandled the gun, leading to the accidental discharge. "The security guard has been detained, and his double-barrel gun has been seized. The investigation is

ongoing," DCP Singh confirmed. Following the incident, there was a tense silence in the cashier's room until employees heard Ramesh moaning in pain. He had suffered injuries to his shoulder from the accidental shooting. Meanwhile, a man, Saravan from Bhadawana in Malihabad, was killed in a road accident in Kakori police station area. The incident occurred on July 31 when Saravan was struck by an unidentified overspeeding vehicle while riding his motorcycle. The collision caused severe injuries, and Saravan was rushed to KGMU Trauma Center, where he was declared dead. The accident happened around 3 pm in Halwapur locality. The police have registered a case against the driver for speeding and careless driving.



Congress workers protest unscheduled power cuts in front of the MVNL private office in Lucknow on Saturday

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I have changed my name from PREETI SINGH SINGH to PREETI SINGH. In future I shall be known as PREETI SINGH. PREETI SINGH W/o Mahendra Narain Singh, 19, Kamla Nehru Road, Near Hindu Hostel, Old Katra, Prayagraj, UP

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I have changed my name from MOHAMMAD OBAIDULLAH ANSARI to OBAID ULLAH ANSARI. In future I shall be known as OBAID ULLAH ANSARI. OBAID ULLAH ANSARI S/o Sami Ullah Ansari, 228-212/A, Sadiyabad, Teliyaganj, Prayagraj, UP

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I hereby declare that in my passport my name is registered as Anand Kumar Singh which is incorrect, while in other documents my name is registered as ANAND BHADOURIA which is correct. Hence in all documents my name will be known and written as ANAND BHADOURIA only. Anand Bhadouria S/O Lal Bahadur Singh R/O Village and post-Patabojh, Tenseel-Maholi, District-Sitapur

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I Sudhakar Pandey Army No. /Service No. 1466251F hereby declare that in my service record the spelling of my wife's name has been recorded as SHAKUNTALA, whereas the correct spelling of my wife's name is SHAKUNTALA. Sudhakar Pandey S/O Inder Bahadur Pandey Resident - Bhuiyan Baba Mandir, Nilmatha, Bhagwant Nagar post Dilkusha, Cantt, Lucknow (U.P.)

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

My wife first name was Priya Bisariya, whom she name Insha at the time of marriage. Later after being registered under the Special Marriage Act, it was changed back to priya Bisaria. Syed Mohammad Kashif R/o R-113 Sanjay Gandhi Puram Faizabad Road Lucknow

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I have Loss my original sale deed which was in favour of Sheyam Narain S/o Mulla sale deed had registered on date 8/4/1969 book no. 1 vol. no 2637 of Page 388 to 390 and no 2552 regarding property no. Arajai 955. 1 biswa mauja chandari, district Kanpur

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

Be it known to all that earlier my name in my passport was Tahseen Fatima Zaidi which I have now changed to Tahseen Fatima. Now I should be known and regarded as Tahseen Fatima for all future purposes. Tahseen Fatima wife of Syed Kamrul Haq Hashmi R/o - 1109 B Awaz Vikas Colony Unnao

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I have changed my name from DHANANJAY KUMAR SAHU to DHANANJAY KUMAR. In future I shall be known as DHANANJAY KUMAR S/O Rameswark Sirathu Road, Near Fire Brigade, Saini, Kaushambi, UP

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I hereby declare that in my passport my name is registered as Anand Kumar Singh which is incorrect, while in other documents my name is registered as ANAND BHADOURIA which is correct. Hence in all documents my name will be known and written as ANAND BHADOURIA only. Anand Bhadouria S/O Lal Bahadur Singh R/O Village and post-Patabojh, Tenseel-Maholi, District-Sitapur

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

My daughter's name has been erroneously mentioned as Rhythem Gupta in the Aadhar card, which is wrong, the correct name is Rhythm Gupta. In future it will be known as Rhythm Gupta. Manoj Kumar Gupta, S/O Late Jagdev Prasad Gupta, resident of Rabbania Aliganj city, district Banda.

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I have changed my name from FAIZEEN to FAIZEEN SAEED W/O EJAZ AHMAD for future purpose. Add- H.No. 222 TAKI NAGAR UNNAO.

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
NOTICE

I have Loss my original sale deed which was in favour of Sheyam Narain S/o Mulla sale deed had registered on date 8/4/1969 book no. 1 vol. no 2637 of Page 388 to 390 and no 2552 regarding property no. Arajai 955. 1 biswa mauja chandari, district Kanpur

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# No headway yet in case of robbery

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police have yet to make significant progress in the road hold-up incident that occurred on Friday afternoon. Four armed miscreants looted Rs 1.85 lakh a plywood factory from employees who were returning to Sitapur in a pick-up truck after delivering goods in Prayagraj. The robbery took place on the outer ring road of PGI, where the victims were held at the gun-point. The police have also placed the employees under suspicion and are using their informers to assist in solving the case. The miscreants threatened the victims and forcibly took a bag full of cash from the clerk. After the robbery, the four miscreants, who were riding three bikes, fled in different directions. The police reached at the scene shortly after receiving information about the daylight robbery. Initial investigations suggest that someone may have tipped

off the miscreants about the cash the victims were carrying after they left Prayagraj. According to reports, Krishna Kant, a clerk at Hindustan Ply Industries Pvt Ltd in Tambour, Sitapur, was among those targeted. Krishna Kant, along with pick-up driver Wasim and helper Altaf Alam, went to Prayagraj on Thursday to deliver goods. After unloading, they left Prayagraj around 10 am on Friday. At around 3:15 pm, four miscreants on a sports bike, a regular motorcycle, and a scooter approached them near the Daluna railway bridge on the outer ring road in PGI police station area. They signalled the driver to stop, and the miscreant on the sports bike brandished a weapon, threatening to kill Wasim. Terrified, Wasim stopped the vehicle, and the miscreants then assaulted Krishna Kant, snatched the bag containing Rs 1,85,200, and sped off the scene.

Upon learning of the robbery, DCP (East) Shashank Singh and ADCP Pankaj Singh reached the scene. The police believe the robbers were familiar with the route, and suspect that information about the cash might have been leaked from the delivery point. To trace the suspects, the police are reviewing surveillance footage and interrogating the driver, helper, and accountant. DCP Shashank Singh stated that three teams had been formed to work out the case and apprehend the criminals. A Vigilance Establishment team arrested Sub-Inspector Ameen Khan, posted at the Mall police station under Lucknow police commissionerate, for accepting a bribe of Rs 30,000. The arrest followed a complaint from Sameer Kumar, a resident of Ibrahimpur village within

the Mall police station jurisdiction. Kumar alleged that Khan demanded Rs 30,000 to remove the names of his sister, brother-in-law, and brothers from an ongoing dowry harassment case. Khan reportedly threatened that if the bribe was not paid, he would incarcerate all the individuals involved. A confidential inquiry by the Vigilance Directorate confirmed the validity of the complaint. Subsequently, a trap team was formed and coordinated with Kumar. The team apprehended Khan while he was accepting the bribe outside the police station. An FIR has been filed against Sub-Inspector Ameen Khan with the Uttar Pradesh Vigilance Directorate, and legal proceedings are underway. "Anyone facing bribery demands from public officials can report such incidents to our anti-bribery helpline at 9454401866," a senior officer said.

# Met dept predicts normal rainfall this month

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Meteorological department has forecast normal rainfall for August in Uttar Pradesh. Senior scientist from the department Mohammed Danish said that while Lucknow experienced a rainfall deficit of 26 per cent, the state had an overall deficit of 11 per cent. Eastern Uttar Pradesh saw a deficit of 15 per cent, whereas western Uttar Pradesh has received normal rainfall so far. Lucknow recorded 237.8 mm of rainfall compared to the expected 322.4 mm. Danish also said that temperatures, both maximum and

minimum, are expected to remain normal throughout August. He noted that parts of Uttar Pradesh are likely to experience heavy rainfall as the monsoon progresses. "In July, Uttar Pradesh had a 9 per cent rainfall deficit, but the overall rainfall was considered normal for the month," he said. On July 31, Lucknow received substantial rainfall over an hour due to the interaction of westerly and easterly winds. Danish explained that the southwest monsoon had moved south and then north, leading to this interaction and resulting in significant thunder and rain.

# UP's 102 Ambulance Service leads nation in response time

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The 102 Ambulance Service (Mother and Child Services) is proving to be a significant benefit for pregnant women and newborns in Uttar Pradesh. Previously, delays in medical care for pregnant women often jeopardised the lives of both mothers and their babies. In response, the government has strengthened the 102 Ambulance Service, playing a crucial role in reducing the maternal and infant mortality rates. As a result of these efforts, the response time for the 102 Ambulance Service has now decreased to just 7 minutes. This means that in emergency situations, mothers and their babies receive medical care within seven minutes. Uttar Pradesh now leads the nation with the fastest response time, while Jharkhand records the slowest. Principal Secretary of Medical and Health) Parth Sarthi Sen Sharma, said that the government had taken major steps to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. "Hospitals in both urban and rural areas of the state have been strengthened while various measures have been taken to reduce the response time of the 102 Ambulance Service. The results are now visible." He said that the current response time of the 102

Ambulance Service was just 7 minutes and 6 seconds, compared to 11 minutes and 28 seconds in 2016. This improvement did not happen overnight but is the result of continuous efforts and initiatives over the past seven years by Chief Minister Yogi, he pointed out. He also informed that to achieve this goal, the old ambulances have been replaced with new, technology-equipped ones in 2019 and 2023, removing 1554 and 674 outdated ambulances, respectively. Additionally, 306 new ambulances have been added to improve the service. Currently, there are 2,270 ambulances operating under the 102 service in the state, providing assistance to an average of 40,524 mothers and babies daily. Mission Director of National Health Mission, Dr Pinky Jowal said that the reduction in response time of the 102 Ambulance Service had significantly decreased the maternal and infant mortality rates in the state. She mentioned that according to the Sample Registration Survey (SRS), the maternal mortality ratio in the state was 216 per one lakh during 2015-17, which has dropped to 167 per one lakh in 2018-2020. Similarly, the infant mortality rate was 23 per thousand in 2016, which has decreased to 21 per thousand in 2020-2022.

## FILM FESTIVAL

The valedictory session of the 'Wetlands for Life' film festival took place at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University's Shri Atal Bihari Bajpayee Auditorium on Saturday. Organised by the Centre for Media Studies (New Delhi) in collaboration with BBAU, the department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GIZ, and WWF India, the festival showcased national and international award-winning films on wetlands, water, and climate

## CITYBRIEFS

change. Directed by Dr Vasanthi Rao and Ritesh Taksande, the event also featured a 'Social Impact Filmmaking' workshop and the 'Wetland Mitra' programme, where students pledged to protect local wetlands. Certificates were awarded to participants, new Wetland Mitra volunteers, and winners of the painting competition, including Shatakshi Chauhan, Jiya Parveen, and Sonam Maurya.

## JOB FAIR

GCRG Group of Institutions hosted a Mega Job Fair on August 3, featuring over 40 companies and attracting more than 1,000 students from GCRG and other colleges. The event aimed to connect students with leading national and international companies, resulting in over 400 job placements. Enthusiastic students included Ayushi Shukla (B'Tech Computer Science),

Shashank (B'Tech Computer Science), Kamaljit Singh (B'Tech Electrical), Shivam Kashyap (B'Tech Electronics), Vipul (B'Tech Mechanical), Komal (MBA), Karuna Shankar (BBA), Diksha, Manish Gaur (Polytechnic), and others. Chairman Dr Abhishek Yadav, Director General Prof AN Singh, and Deputy Director Dr Abhishek Kumar congratulated the new recruits. The event was organised by Training and placement officer Sunil Kumar and supported by department heads.

		<b>Indian Bank</b>					
<b>ALLAHABAD</b>							
Zonal Office Lucknow, New Building, 2nd Floor, Hazratganj, Lucknow-226001, Ph. 0522-2286272, 2287283, Fax: 0522-2288033, E-mail id: zolucknow@indianbank.co.in							
<b>NOTICE OF SALE E-AUCTION</b>							
Notice in intended sale under rule 8(6) of The Security Interest (Enforcement Rules) 2002 under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002							
Whereas, the Authorized Officer of Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank) had taken constructive possession of the following property /ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same of "AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHAT IS, AS IS WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upto failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act platform provided by the Service Provider, contact & detail for Symbolic Possession of property is available at present.							
Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/Proprietor/Partners/ Director(s)/Guarantor(s)	Description of the Immovable Property mortgaged	Dt. of Demand Notice Dt. of Possession Notice Out.Amt. as per Demand Notice	a) Reserve Price b) Earnest Money c) Account Details for EMD d) Incremental Bid Amt.	Date for submission of EMD Date & Time of E-Auction		
<b>Branch : Alliganj</b>							
1.	M/s Malik furniture Prop: Mr.Syed Anwar Ali s/o Late Syed Mubarak Ali (Borrower), Address: E-S2/143, Sector-F Jankipuram, Lucknow	House No. ES-2/143, Sec-F, Jankipuram yojna, belonging to Mr. Syed Anwar Ali and Ms. Nahid Afroz, Measuring area 35.06 Sqmtr. Boundries as Under: NORTH: 6 mtr. Wide road, SOUTH: H NO. ES-2/132, EAST: H. N. ES-2/144, West- H. N. ES-2/142	06.05.2021 13.09.2021	a) Rs. 20,35,000/- b) Rs. 2,04,000/- c) 6127853725 IFSC: IDIB000H561 Hazratganj Branch	Till 20.08.2024 21.08.2024 at 11.00 AM to 03.30 PM		
Bank Website www.indianbank.in		E-Auction Website	Document (Sale Notice Image)	Property Location	Video of Property	Photo of Property	Name & Mobile Number of Authorised Officer/Branch Manager  Authorised Officer: Fatehniauddin, Mob.: 9748629386 Branch Manager: Chandrabhan Mob.: 8052055267
For verification about be document, property & inspection thereof, the intending bidders may contact Indian Bank (erstwhile Allahabad Bank), above mentioned Branch, Lucknow during office hours before on 17.08.2024 and for auction related query intending bidders may contact above mentioned Branch.							
For downloading further details and Terms & conditions, please visit : <a href="https://www.ebkroy.in">https://www.ebkroy.in</a> THE BORROWER(S)/GUARANTOR(S) ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED ABOUT THE SALE NOTICE UNDER THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002 Place : Lucknow, Date : 04.08.2024							
INDIAN BANK (erstwhile Allahabad Bank)							

# Ayodhya gang-rape accused's bakery faces bulldozer action

PNS ■ AYODHYA

In a swift action against the gang-rape of a minor girl in Bhadarsa town of Ayodhya, the Yogi Adityanath government has taken bulldozer action against the prime accused. The police and district administration officials conducted a raid at the bakery of the prime accused on Saturday morning, where five samples of food items were collected and sealed for further investigation. Meanwhile, upon discovering that the accused's bakery was built on pond land, the tehsil administration proceeded to demolish the bakery's manufacturing unit with bulldozers. At 10 am on Saturday, the Food department team conducted a raid at the bakery, known as A-One, collected five food samples and sealed the premises. Assistant Commissioner of Food Safety Administration, Manik Chandra Singh, indicated that additional measures will be taken based on the results of the sample investigation.

On Saturday, Uttar Pradesh Fisheries Minister Dr Sanjay Nishad visited the Ayodhya District Women's Hospital to meet the minor gang-rape victim and assured her of full security and strict action against the accused.

While talking to journalists, Sanjay Nishad said, "Akhilesh Yadav's PDA is a lie. It appears he won with the support of these criminals, which is why he is protecting them and staying silent on the matter. I have raised my voice for the victim in the House. Until the accused are brought to justice, we will continue to fight for the victim and protest in front of the SP office."

He mentioned that Moid Khan is the nagar president of the Samajwadi Party in Bhadarsa town and is closely associated with Samajwadi Party MP Awadhesh Prasad. "Moid Khan owns multiple properties in Bhadarsa, including a bakery on the main road. A bank branch is also operat-

## Akhilesh for DNA test to avoid framing innocent person

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on Saturday, demanded a DNA test of the accused in the Ayodhya gang-rape case. He said the test must be conducted to avoid framing an innocent person. Yadav, in a post on X, wrote in Hindi, "In case of any misdeed, the way for justice should be found by getting a DNA test done of those who are accused, and not by merely making allegations and doing politics. Whoever is guilty should be punished according to the law, but if the allegations are proven false after the DNA test, then the government officials involved should also not be spared. This is the demand for justice."

Meanwhile, SP MP Awadhesh Prasad demanded a DNA test of the minor saying innocents should not be framed.

A 12-year-old girl was gang-raped in Ayodhya by two men, one of whom Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath said was a member of the Samajwadi Party. Chief Minister Yogi on Friday met the family members of the 12-year-old girl and assured strict action. "I met the family members of the victim from Ayodhya, along with Dr Amit Singh Chauhan, the MLA from Bikapur constituency in Ayodhya district," the chief minister said on X.

Sharing a picture of the meeting with the family members' faces blurred, he posted in Hindi, "The culprits will not be spared at any cost, (and) strict action will be taken against them. We are committed to getting justice for the girl."

Police arrested bakery owner Moid Khan and his employee Raju Khan from the Purakalanda area in connection with the July 30 case. Sources in the police said the duo raped the girl two months ago and also recorded the act. The incident came to light when a recent medical examination revealed that the vic-

tim was pregnant. Speaking in the state assembly on Thursday, Chief Minister Yogi claimed that Moid Khan belonged to the Samajwadi Party. "Moid Khan is from the Samajwadi Party and a member of the Ayodhya MP's team. He has been found involved in a case of rape of a 12-year-old. The Samajwadi Party has not taken action against him," he said.

A relative of the girl, after meeting the chief minister on Friday, said that Yogi Adityanath had assured the strictest punishment to the accused. Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh Police registered a fresh case on Friday in connection with the alleged gang-rape of a 12-year-old girl in Ayodhya. The case, registered in the Kotwali Nagar area, names SP leader and Bhadarsa Nagar Panchayat chairman Mohammad Rashid, SP leader Jai Singh Rana, and another individual for allegedly threatening the victim's family to settle the matter.

Chauhan is MLA from Bikapur in Ayodhya district. District Magistrate Chandra Vijay Singh and Senior Superintendent of Police Rajkaran Nayyar were also present. Chauhan said that the chief minister had assured that any further needs of the family would be promptly met. When the MLA asked the victim's mother if she was satisfied with the action taken, she affirmed that the government was taking the right steps. The MLA also stated that the Yogi government would always support the victim's family.

11 pm. The family claims that they initially pressured them to settle the matter. When the family refused, the individuals threatened to kill them.

### RS 5 LAKH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO VICTIM'S KIN

Taking swift action in the Bhadarsa gang-rape case in Ayodhya district, a financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh was provided to the family of the victim on Saturday afternoon. Local MLA Amit Singh Chauhan visited the victim's house and handed over a cheque of Rs 5 lakh to the family.

## Mayawati supports govt move

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati, has backed the bulldozer action against the Samajwadi Party leader and Ayodhya gang-rape accused. After the arrest of a Samajwadi Party leader over the alleged gang-rape of a minor in Ayodhya, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Saturday said that the Uttar Pradesh government's strict action against the accused in the Ayodhya gang-rape case was justified.

The BSP chief and four term chief minister of Uttar Pradesh also questioned Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's demand for a DNA test, asking how many such tests were conducted during the Samajwadi Party regime. Moid Khan, a bakery owner and SP functionary, along with his employee Raju Khan, were arrested by Ayodhya police on Thursday for the alleged gang-rape of a 12-year-old girl who worked for them as a daily wage labourer.

"The strict action being taken by the Uttar Pradesh government against the accused in the Ayodhya gang-rape case is justified, but what should be understood by SP saying that the DNA test of the accused should be done. Whereas SP should also tell how many DNA tests were done against such accused in their government," the BSP chief said in a post on X.

She urged the government to take strict measures to prevent such incidents, transcending caste, community and political biases.

"Also, amidst the growing concerns about crime control and law and order in Uttar Pradesh, especially about women's safety and harassment, the incidents in Ayodhya and Lucknow etc. are extremely sad and worrying. It would be better if the government takes strict steps to prevent these by rising above caste, community and politics," she said.

## KAKORI TRAIN ACTION CENTENARY

# Celebrations to inspire respect for national heroes, says Yogi



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Saturday, reviewed the preparations for the Kakori Train Action Centenary Festival and Har Ghar Tiranga programme in a high-level meeting and gave necessary guidelines to the officials. Describing the Kakori Train Action as an important event in India's freedom struggle, the chief minister said that the state government would celebrate the centenary festival of Kakori Train Action with great pomp throughout the year with various activities to be held across the state. He also informed that a statewide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign will be organised from August 13 to 15 this year. As per the guidelines issued by the government for Kakori Train Action centenary programme, the centenary festival will start from August 9. On this occasion, programmes would be organised on a large scale at the memorial/sites of martyrs and the banks of Amrit Sarovars in the state.

The families of the martyrs, the families of freedom fighters and ex-Servicemen would be honoured in the ceremony. The cooperation and participation of schoolchildren, teenagers and youth is to be ensured in these programmes. Booklets should be prepared on Kakori Train Action and other events of the freedom struggle from 1857 to 1947, places as well as known and anonymous heroes of the freedom struggle. Competitions like prabhat-pheri, general knowledge, painting, calligraphy-essay, debate, speech etc. would be organised. Winners of various competitions would be awarded at district and state levels and the winning children would also be taken on a tour of Kakori Memorial Site. Ministers in Central and

state governments and public representatives would also be connected with these programmes. Tourism and Culture department is the nodal department for this event. The department would coordinate with other departments and ensure preparation of events. The chief secretary and director general of police have been asked to instruct the districts through video conferencing regarding programmes related to Kakori Train Action and Har Ghar Tiranga. Along with this, additional chief secretary, principal secretary/heads of departments concerned would also give guidelines to departmental officers about these programmes at their levels. While training the bands of police, PAC, Home Guard, paramilitary, military, NCC and schools, the national anthem and patriotic songs are to be played at the martyr sites, monuments etc. of the state from August 9 to 15. Volunteers of Yuwak and Mahila Mangal Dal, Scout Guide, NCC, NSS would also be associated with the Kakori Train Action Centenary festival and Har Ghar Tiranga programmes. Blood donation camps would also be organised through coordination with various civil societies, social organisations, commercial entities and voluntary organisations while public participation would be ensured and fruits distributed in hospitals with public cooperation.

A 'logo' for the Kakori Train Action Centenary Festival would be made and used in various programmes organised throughout the year. The Urban Development and Panchayati Raj departments would ensure proper cleanliness arrangements at all the places associated with the freedom struggle. They would also ensure better cleanliness

arrangements in the markets as well. Besides, patriotic songs/tunes would be played. Shaheed Mela would be organised in Lucknow and Shahjahanpur. Indigenous products would be encouraged in the exhibitions to be held as part of the Mela. Kavi Sammelans related to patriotism would also be organised. Shaheed Smriti Upan would be established by organising 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' programme at all the martyr memorials, Amrit Sarovars and Amrit Vatikas of the state. About 100 saplings should be planted in it. Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan would be organised in the entire state from August 13 to August 15. Uttar Pradesh has set a record of hoisting the maximum number of flags under the Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan in recent years. In view of the Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan, the supply of flags would be ensured by the departments concerned. Plastic flags are not to be used at all. Better arrangements would be made for people to buy flags and correct information about hoisting the flag would be provided using various mediums. Meanwhile, the chief minister was informed that under the Kakori Train Action Centenary Festival, postal cover will be issued in coordination with the Postal Department. Kakori Shaurya Gatha Express mobile exhibition train will be operated through the Ministry of Railways. The festival will feature various programmes related to the Kakori Train Action, covering topics such as 'Glorious saga of the Freedom Struggle', 'National Reflection and Thought', 'Salute to the Martyrs', 'Environmental Protection as a Lifestyle', 'Cultural Heritage and Glorious History', and 'Dedication and Service to the Nation', among others.

# Over 21 lakh youth in UP trained under PMKVY

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Over 21 lakh youth in Uttar Pradesh have been trained under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana over the past nine years, with approximately 17 lakh receiving their certificates.

Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July 2015, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) aims to enhance the skills of the youth and facilitate their employment based on their qualifications.

Under this scheme, 1.50 crore youth have been trained nation-

wide. The programme offers training with durations of three months, six months and one year, and provides a certificate upon completion, which is recognised across the country. Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship Kapil Dev said, "Following the directives of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, numerous programmes are being implemented to enhance the skills of the youth in our state. The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana is a key component of these efforts. So far, 21.60 lakh youth

### The scheme aims to enhance the skills of youth and facilitate their employment based on their qualifications

have been trained under this scheme in Uttar Pradesh, with 16.87 lakh receiving their certifications."

He further highlighted that through the state government's efforts to link trained youth with employment, 205 job fairs have been organised, resulting

in the selection of 64,589 candidates. A total of Rs 179.91 crore has been allocated for the implementation of PMKVY in the state.

Out of the 8.93 lakh trainees who received certificates under the short-term training (STT) component of the PMKVY, over 3.39 lakh have been registered on the Skill India Digital platform. In the latest version of the scheme, PMKVY 4.0, more than 4.61 lakh candidates have been enrolled through 1,367 Skill India Centres. These centres are established in various institutions including Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs),

AICTE-affiliated colleges, Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), PMKK, SSC, CBSE Schools, NIELIT, SDI Rae Bareilly, CIPET, DIAW, HARDICON Training Centres, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Cantonment Boards and JNV. Enrollment in training programmes related to new-age job roles is on the rise, with a total of 73,516 candidates registering for specialised courses such as Solar PV Installer (Suryamitra), Technician 5G - Active Network Installation, Solar PV Installer - Electrical, Electronics Machine Maintenance Executive, and Solar LED Technician.

## 2 held for 'defiling' Taj; Hindu outfit claims they poured Gangajal

Agra (PTI): Police arrested two youths from the Taj Mahal premises on Saturday after they were seen pouring water from a bottle there. A local right-wing Hindu outfit claimed that the two were its members and had offered holy 'Gangajal' as they believe the monument is a Hindu temple.

Suraj Kumar Rai, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Agra City), said the two youths were arrested following a written complaint by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel posted inside the Taj Mahal. "The youths entered the premises as tourists. The complaint said that the youths were seen pouring water inside the Taj Mahal premises," he told reporters.

They have been arrested after the incident and a case has been filed at the Tajganj Police Station, Rai said. The case has been registered under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 223 (disobedience to order promulgated by public servant), 298 (injuring or defiling place of worship), and 299 (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings), the police said, adding the matter is being investigated in detail.

A purported video of the incident also appeared on social media.

A local Hindu organisation Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM) has claimed that youths are its members and the two offered water of the holy Ganges on the premises as it is a Hindu temple, 'Tejo Mahalaya'.

The incident comes just days after a member of the group carrying Kanwar on her shoulders tried to enter the Taj Mahal to offer Gangajal. However, she was stopped by the policemen deployed at the barrier of the west gate of the Taj Mahal.

In a purported video of the Saturday incident, a youth is seen pouring water on the floor above the locked basement where the graves of Mughal emperor Shahjahan and his wife Mumtaz are located. Sanjay Jaat, a spokesperson of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (ABHM), said the two arrested youths — Vinesh Chaudhary and Shyam — are its members. "They entered the Taj Mahal. One of them offered 'Gangajal' inside the premises of the Taj Mahal which was a Hindu temple of Lord Shiva. We are proud of it and will keep doing it," he said.

## Kushinagar farmers increasingly embracing turmeric farming

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Kushinagar farmers are increasingly embracing turmeric farming with the support of the state government and renowned national institutions such as the Tata Trust and the Azim Premji Foundations. The national institutions are supporting the farmers in Purvanchal through the Sustainable Human Development Association (SHDA).

As a result, turmeric cultivation has expanded significantly in Kushinagar, reaching 300 hectares in recent years. By promoting the best yielding varieties after extensive trials, the yield and quality of turmeric per hectare have improved markedly. One of the main challenges in promoting turmeric cultivation is identifying high-yielding varieties. Traditionally, local species yielded only 175 quintals per hectare. To address this, SHDA conducted demonstrations of varieties such as Rajendra Sonia, Rajendra Sonali, Meva No.1, and Lakadang. Among these, Rajendra Sonia proved to be the most productive, yielding 450 quintals per hectare. This variety is now being widely encouraged among farmers. In 2023, with support from the Azim Premji Foundation,

farmers were encouraged to cultivate other spices like coriander, cumin, fennel, mangrela and ajwain alongside turmeric. The National Seed Research Centre in Ajmer is aiding this diversification effort, further enhancing agricultural prospects in the region.

According to Ashok Rai, in-charge of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Kushinagar which is affiliated with the National Agricultural Research Council, farmers are now cultivating turmeric across approximately 250 to 300 hectares in the district. Thanks to the encouragement from the Yogi Adityanath government, a Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) in Dudhi block is also engaged in turmeric cultivation, processing and marketing. Additionally, the SHDA, with the support of Tata Trust, is undertaking similar efforts in Ramkola. The head of the organisation, VM Tripathi, said that there was a lot of potential for turmeric cultivation in Kushinagar. If the government declares Kushinagar as One District One Product area, then with the facilities provided by it, it can become the second Guntur and Erode in terms of turmeric production, he added.

Kushinagar, a district in Purvanchal adjacent to Bihar, boasts excellent connectivity to Bengal and northeastern states via a four-lane road. The upcoming international airport will further enhance its reach.

The district's association with Lord Buddha offers branding potential similar to the famed Kala Namak rice. Kushinagar turmeric can become a recognised brand, leveraging its historical and geographical significance.

Turmeric is a staple in every household, known for its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. It aids in pain relief, injury recovery, dental health, and boosts immunity. As a blood purifier, it is beneficial for the skin and helps induce sleep due to its melatonin content. Notably, India dominates the global turmeric market, producing about 80 per cent of the world's supply and accounting for 60 per cent of exports. Major importers include the USA, UK and Bangladesh. The demand for turmeric surged post-COVID-19, especially in West Asia due to its health benefits. Within India, turmeric is predominantly produced in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra and northeastern states.

## Noida Metro's Aqua Line to be equipped with advanced PIDS

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As part of its ongoing efforts to equip Uttar Pradesh with modern transport facilities, the Yogi Adityanath government has initiated the process of equipping the Metro Aqua Line in Noida with the Advanced Passenger Information Display System (PIDS).

This initiative involves replacing the existing informational display systems with new, advanced ones. Additionally, necessary processes such as new software and hardware installation and updates will be completed.

Under this project, 21 metro stations of Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) will be equipped with PIDS. A total of 88 PIDS systems will be installed on both sides of the metro railway platforms. Similarly, 42 PIDS will be installed in the concourse of each station. The entire project will cost Rs 11.27 crore. To ensure the project's timely and effective completion, the NMRC has started the process of agency determination and work allocation through a Request for Proposal (RFP). Notably, the NMRC Metro Rail Corridor (Aqua Line) spans 29.7 kilo-

metres and is referred to as the Noida Greater Noida Metro Rail Corridor.

The Aqua Line includes 21 metro stations, starting from Noida Sector 51 and ending at the Depot Station in Greater Noida. Additionally, the Metro Depot/OCC is located ahead of the Depot Station in Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar.

As part of the project, two PIDS will be installed on both the up and down platforms of Sector 51 Metro Station, totaling four PIDS. Similarly, four PIDS each will be installed at the up and down platforms of the following stations: Sector 50, Sector 76, Sector 81, Sector 101, NSEZ, Sector 83, Sector 137, Sector 142, Sector 143, Sector 144, Sector 145, Sector 146, Sector 147, Sector 148, KP-2, Pari Chowk, Alpha-1, Delta-1, and Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority Metro Station. At the Depot Station, in addition to two PIDS each on the up and down platforms, two more PIDS will be installed on the third platform, making it a total of six PIDS at the Depot Station, the highest number among all stations. In total, 88 PIDS will be installed and upgraded across all 21 stations.

## History-sheeter among two found dead

Baghpat (PTI): Bullet-riddled bodies of two men, including a history-sheeter, were recovered from a forest area here, police said on Saturday. The bodies were found lying near a tube well in Khaila village in this district's Chandinagar area late Friday, Baghpat Superintendent of Police (SP) Arpit Vijay Vargiya said.

The deceased, identified as Kavinder alias Bittu (45) and Kuldeep alias Gullu (32), were brothers-in-law.

Kavinder hailed from Mansoorpur village of Chandinagar, while Kuldeep was from Muradnagar in Ghaziabad district, the police said.

According to Chandinagar Station House Officer (SHO) Sanjay Kumar, Kuldeep had on Friday come to visit Kavinder, who was a history-sheeter of the area. The family members of Kavinder alleged that some people called the duo outside and took them away, the SHO said. They claimed that the same people were involved in the double murder but denied any enmity angle in the incident, he added.

A case was registered on Saturday based on the family's complaint, the SP said. A suspect who had a dispute with Kavinder was detained and is being interrogated, he added. The bodies have been sent for postmortem, the police said.

## Lawyer in trouble for scuffle with woman as video goes viral

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A video showing a lawyer pulling the dupatta of a High Court employee's wife in front of Gate No. 8 of the Allahabad High Court on Friday has gone viral on social media. In response, the High Court Ministerial Officers' Association has written to the High Court Bar Association, demanding action against the accused. Consequently, the Bar Association has issued a show-cause notice to the accused lawyer, seeking an explanation.

The incident occurred when the wife of the High Court employee had come to drop her husband. While returning, her scooter collided with a lawyer's car, leading to a dispute. The video of the altercation, which shows a heated argument between the lawyer and the woman, was widely circulated on social media. During the dispute, the lawyer is seen pushing the woman and pulling her dupatta.

The High Court Ministerial Officers' Association has expressed strong displeasure over the incident, stating that the lawyer has undermined the woman's dignity. The woman fell to the ground and sustained injuries. The association has issued a letter identifying the accused lawyer as Ram Bahadur Gupta and has demanded strict action against him. The video has also been posted on X to the Prayagraj DCP, urging action. The DCP has acknowledged the post and instructed the Cantt police station in charge to take necessary measures.

Meanwhile, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) apprehended a YouTuber for endangering public safety by tampering with railway tracks for publicity. Viral videos on X had showed the YouTuber placing various objects on railway tracks, prompting an urgent investigation.

The suspect, Gulzar Sheikh, has uploaded over 250 videos to his YouTube channel and has more than 2,00,000 subscribers. His activities posed significant risks to railway safety and operations.

Following a thorough analysis of Sheikh's YouTube profile and social media presence, the RPF, Unchahar, Northern Railway, registered a case under various provisions of the Railway Act on August 2. On the same day, a joint team of the RPF and local police arrested Gulzar Sheikh, son of Syed Ahmed, at his residence in Khandrauli Village, Soraon (Prayagraj).

While commencing the RPF, Lucknow division for their prompt and effective action, the RPF DG emphasised that legal action against Gulzar Sheikh would serve as a strong deterrent to those attempting to compromise railway safety. He reiterated the importance of maintaining railway safety and assured the public that any attempts to undermine it would be met with firm resolve and strict legal action, with those engaging in such activities prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The DG also appealed to the public to avoid such dangerous activities and to report any actions compromising railway security. Reports can be made to the Railway Protection Force or through the Rail Madad toll-free helpline number 139.

## Training session on good clinical practice

**Prayagraj (PNS):** A training session on 'Good Clinical Practice' (GCP) in research was held by the department of obstetrics and gynecology at Motilal Nehru Medical College on Saturday. The session was organised by Dr Amrita Chaurasia, head of the department and coordinator of the college's ethical committee, and inaugurated by principal Dr Vatsala Mishra.

Dr Mishra emphasised the importance of such training programmes for enhancing the knowledge and skills of both students and doctors. During the session, Dr Abhinav Shukla provided comprehensive insights into GCP, an international standard for ethical and scientific quality in medical research, ensuring the safety,

rights, and welfare of participants.

Dr Shukla also discussed the role of the institutional ethical committee, which reviews and approves research involving human participants to maintain ethical and scientific standards.

Dr Amrita Chaurasia further elaborated on various medical methods, ethical norms, and modern treatment techniques. She highlighted the significance of such training for both students and doctors in achieving excellence in their respective fields.

The session was attended by heads of various departments and senior medical staff, including Dr Santosh Singh. Dr Vidhi Singh conducted the programme.

## BHU to train students in ethical leadership

PNS ■ VARANASI

Holistic development of students is one of the prime objectives with which the founding fathers of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) established this great seat of learning. The university, over the past few years, has been taking a number of new initiatives to inculcate in students qualities and skills that not only help them shine academically but also excel individually as well as professionally. The Finding Leader in You Scholar (FLY) programme is one such initiative that has significantly benefited hundreds of students of the university. Remarkably, over 1,300 students have received the FLY training over the past one and a half years, since the start of the programme in BHU. The training, being conducted in collaboration with Competitiveness Mindset Institute (CMI), aims to foster a new generation of leaders who are not only skilled and knowledgeable but also deeply committed to ethical principles and social responsibility.

Taking this initiative further, BHU on Saturday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with CMI. As part of the understanding, the not-for-profit institute will teach and build the Big Five competiveness non-cognitive skills to students in order to improve effectiveness and performance in class and in the workplace. Besides, it will help in building the foundation of skills for ethical leadership and facilitate them in acquiring a competitive mindset in order to improve employability.

As part of the MoU, over the course of the next three years, students will also be offered training to develop advanced communication skills, which would help them build relationships, trust and credibility.



BHU and CMI exchanging an MoU in Varanasi on Saturday

BHU Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh and CMI India President Prof Havovi Trivedi signed the MoU in the presence of Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain and other senior functionaries of the university at the Kamdhenu auditorium of the Dairy Science and Food Technology Department. The VC also inaugurated the FLY Senior Programme, especially curated for the top academic and administrative leaders of the university. The interactive and activity based programme covered various areas key to leadership as participants shared their inputs on innovativeness, taking initiatives, as well as problem solving. The session was attended by directors of institutes, deans of faculties, heads of departments, coordinators and professors in charge of various units, among other senior officials of the university.

Sharing his inputs during one of the sessions, VC Prof Jain underlined the need to have an approach that is student and institution-oriented and is aimed at their welfare and bet-

terment. He said that the FLY programme had been efficiently helping participants strive to achieve competitive mindset skills. The VC stated that during his interactions with students who have attended the FLY training, he has witnessed the change in their attitude, outlook and personalities.

Prof Havovi Trivedi commended the initiative taken by the BHU vice-chancellor that provides an opportunity to the senior leadership of BHU to bond with each other, explore the nuances of what a structured process of decision-making is, and share with each other their experiences. She said that CMI was enriched by interacting with the senior leadership team of Banaras Hindu University.

Dr Aparna Rajagopal, Director and Lead Architect of the FLY programme, CMI-United States, said the purpose of the FLY Senior Professional programme was at least twofold - one to create awareness of what students were experiencing in the FLY programme, and the second to provide a concrete framework that senior leadership could share with their teams as they tackled initiatives and solved problems. CMI India Director Oma Oza said the programme gave an opportunity to the BHU leadership to engage in

metacognition -- thinking about their thinking, share strategies and construct learning together.

During various sessions of the day-long programme, the participants were given several tasks, including identifying various issues and challenges they see as potential problems, defining the problems and taking measures to address the issues. The activities also included making an assessment of the scenarios when measures were taken and when no measures were taken.

Senior members of the university shared their insightful inputs as they pondered on various issues they face on a daily basis. The university has already launched the FLY training programme across faculties for the academic session 2024-25. Currently, three cohorts are underway in Mahila Mahavidyalaya, the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the College of Nursing, with 120 participants. The batches comprising 110 students in the Institute of Management Studies have already completed their training. Prof Lalita Vatta, coordinator of FLY programmes in the university, informed that training for three batches comprising nearly 120 students of the Institute of Agricultural Sciences will be taking place from August 4 to 7.

## FDP on effective research begins



PNS ■ VARANASI

A seven-day faculty development programme (FDP) started at the School of Management Science (SMS) here on Friday. The main topic of this FDP is 'Advanced Analytical Tools for Effective Research'.

Prof PK Mishra from IIT (BHU) and Prof Pooja Khatri from Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University were present as the chief and special guests respectively in the inaugural session.

Welcoming the guests, SMS-Varanasi Director Prof PN Jha said that this FDP had been prepared for better teaching and research. "This will help teachers adapt to the rapidly changing educational scenario," he said, adding that a good teacher should develop a research-oriented approach along with teaching.

Outlining the objectives of the

FDP, Prof Jha said that it was essential to analyse the data in research through appropriate tools.

Prof PK Mishra said that the role of continuous learning and analytical tools was important in solving complex research problems. He said that new technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) had brought about rapid changes in the field of research. "Today, facts are available at the fingertips but along with this, it becomes difficult to identify the correct and accurate facts," he said.

Highlighting the role of teachers, he added that today teachers have a great role in developing a student-centric educational environment and this goal can be achieved only from a scientific point of view.

Prof Pooja Khatri said that today it was very important to have an understanding of major techniques like dimension, item analysis and scale purification.

She said that these were the basic elements to ensure the reliability and validity of research tools. Prof Khatri said that generalisation and invariance test were necessary in research.

In the technical session of the first day, Prof Pooja Khatri discussed in detail important research elements like concept, construct, scale and dimension.

The inaugural session was conducted by Dr Sofiya Khan and Shruti Singh respectively. Prof Pallavi Pathak proposed the vote of thanks.

On this occasion, SMS Executive Secretary Dr MP Singh, Registrar Sanjay Gupta, FDP Coordinator Prof Amitabh Pandey, Prof Rajkumar Singh and many other teachers and participants were present.

## People made aware of organ donation's importance

PNS ■ VARANASI

In a significant step towards promoting the life-saving cause of organ donation, a public health awareness programme was organised under the joint auspices of the departments of Urology and Nephrology, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) on the occasion of Indian Organ Donation Day here on Saturday.

The initiative aims to educate the public about the critical importance of organ donation and inspire more individuals to register as organ donors. With thousands of patients in desperate need of organ transplants, the campaign focuses on bridging the gap between the demand and supply of organs through enhanced public awareness and education.

Besides, the campaign will disseminate vital information about organ donation, its benefits and the process involved through various media channels, including social media, television, radio and print. By addressing common myths and misconceptions about organ donation, the campaign aims to foster a more informed and supportive public attitude towards this life-saving act. The people will be encouraged to register as organ donors through easy and accessible



online platforms. IMS-BHU Director Prof SN Sankhwar, who was the chief guest, commended the efforts towards promoting the cause of organ donation and urged the public to actively pledge their organs for needy patients.

Urology department head Prof Sameer Trivedi, while welcoming the participants, stated that organ donation is a noble act that can save multiple lives. "Through this campaign, we aim to create a supportive environment where more people are motivated to become organ donors, ensuring that no one has to suffer due to the unavailability of organs," he

said. Nephrology department head Prof Shivendra Singh emphasised the need for organising such organ donation awareness programmes to cope up with the increasing demand for organs and the suffering of patients in need of organ transplantation.

The undergraduate (MBBS) students of IMS-BHU performed a short skit to spread awareness about the organ donation programme. It was greatly appreciated by the audience.

Dr Ujwal Kumar, associate professor of Urology department, informed about the organ donation pledge and proposed the vote of thanks.

## Benefits and methods of breastfeeding discussed



PNS ■ VARANASI

Under World Breastfeeding Week, a seminar and street play on the benefits and methods of breastfeeding were organised by the nursing students of Popular College of Nursing and Paramedical Institute at Central Hospital in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Saturday.

While inaugurating the programme, BLW Principal Chief Medical Officer Dr Devesh Kumar informed that this year's theme of the week is 'Closing the Gap - Breastfeeding Support for All' and its objective is to make breastfeeding easy for all mothers, so that a

happy future of mother, children and society can be protected.

Additional Chief Medical Superintendent Dr SK Sharma discussed in detail the benefits and methods of breastfeeding, in which more than 100 children and their parents and paramedical staff of the hospital participated.

On this occasion, problems related to breastfeeding were also resolved. Senior Divisional Medical Officers Dr Madhulika Singh and Dr Minhaj Ahmad, DMOs Dr Amit Gupta and Dr Saurabh Sagar, Dr Vishalakshi Mudgal, Geeta Kumari Chaudhary, nurses Anjana Tod, Kamala Srinivasan and others

also participated in the programme.

Meanwhile, a webinar on disaster management was organised by the safety department at Technical Training Centre (TTC) in BLW. The officers and employees of BLW participated in the webinar. Associate professor of the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, Dr Chandrani Bandyopadhyay, who was the keynote speaker, gave detailed information on various disasters like earthquake, flood, tsunami, train accident, collapse of bridges and cloudburst etc. The programme was conducted by Safety Officer Vijay Singh Yadav.

## Congmen protest unannounced power cuts

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Congress members expressed their frustration over erratic power cuts by staging a protest at the Collectorate on Saturday. District Congress office-bearers and leaders gathered in large numbers to demonstrate against the Power Corporation and the government, submitting a memorandum to the city magistrate. They alleged negligence on the part of the departmental officials.

District president Suresh Yadav criticised the electricity department for frequent, unpredictable power cuts affecting densely populated areas such as Jhansi, Naini, Phaphamau, and Chowk over the past week. The power cuts led to significant



inconvenience to residents.

City committee spokesperson Haseeb Ahmed highlighted the severe impact of unannounced power cuts in areas like Mohammad Ali Park, Rambagh, Karela Bagh, Kalyani Devi, Kareli, and Transport

Nagar. These disruptions have particularly affected local traders.

Additionally, power cuts have led to a shortage of drinking water in some city areas, exacerbating public distress. The protesting Congress members warned that if the power disruptions continued, they would escalate their protest into a major agitation.

Among those present at the protest were Sanjay Tiwari, Haseeb Ahmed, Rais Ahmed, Manoj Pasi, Rakesh Patel, Ehtesham Ahmed, Shajadul Haque, Rajneesh Vishramdas, Sunil Yadav, Rohit Kushwaha, Rajeshwari Patel, Dheeraj Vishwakarma, Nafees Ahmed, Narendra Adivasi, Munna Painter, Shees Ahmed, and Nandlal Pasi.

## Saplings planted

**Prayagraj (PNS):** Under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative, a large-scale tree plantation event was held at Saraswati Vidya Mandir Higher Secondary School, Shastri Nagar Sadiapur, on Saturday. The programme was organised in response to a call from the Government of India.

The event saw the participation of school's patron Dr Anil Kalra, High Court standing counsel Saurabh Trivedi, and principal Dinesh Kumar Dubey, who planted various types of trees on the school grounds, beginning with a Shami tree. Kalra highlighted the cultural significance of trees and stressed the need for tree plantation to maintain environmental balance. He encouraged everyone to participate voluntarily in the plantation campaign.

## Solo art exhibition held in BHU

**Varanasi (PNS):** The 13th solo art exhibition of Dr Zaheda Khanam, a prominent artist from Prayagraj and director of Khanam Art Gallery was held at at Bharat Kala Bhavan in Banaras Hindu University (BHU). It was inaugurated by Manjula Chaturvedi and Jasmin Kaur on Friday. The guests were welcomed by presenting them with angavastram, bouquets and mementoes. The nuances of art were discussed in the seminar.

Dr Zaheda Khanam, who brings colours to her dreams into reality, has creatively portrayed her emotions, thoughts, and colours through her paintings on canvas, which effortlessly attract people. The powerful strokes of the palette knife, used instead of a brush,



can be seen in the paintings. The paintings, created with complete freedom and immersion, evoke a beautiful feeling when seen. Even without faces, all the paintings seem to be full of emotions. Each artwork tells a different story. Understanding the depths of the inner world

and bringing them to the canvas is no less than a wonder. The artist has traveled a long journey to depict many neglected forms in the world. These beautiful and attractive artworks are no less than therapy, which provides comfort to people in this hectic age.

## Track doubling work started

**Varanasi (PNS):** North Eastern Railway (NER) is rapidly expanding its infrastructure with the aim of running additional trains as per the demand of passengers. In this sequence, the work of doubling the track on Gorakhpur Cantonment-Valmikinagar section under Varanasi Division of NER has been started. On completion of this project, the number of trains will increase apart from their speed, punctuality and operational capacity.

According to Public Relations Officer Ashok Kumar, the doubling of the Gorakhpur Cantonment-Valmikinagar section (95.95 km) was approved by the Railway Ministry at a cost of Rs 1,120.66 crore. This section includes nine crossing stations, three halt stations, 10 big and 43 small and one important bridge.

This doubling project will be completed in five phases. In the first phase, Gorakhpur Cantonment-Pipraich (16.09 km), in the second phase Pipraich-Kaptanganj (19.72 km), in the third phase Kaptanganj-Siswa Bazar (26.16 km), in the fourth phase Siswa Bazar-Paniyhawa (20.87 km) and in the fifth phase Paniyhawa-Valmikinagar (13.10 km) work will be completed. "Soil work is being done between Gorakhpur Cantonment and Kaptanganj and tenders are being finalised for the remaining works," he said.

# SC Dalit sub-quota verdict may help BJP boost outreach

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The BJP may not have taken a categorical stand at the national level on the Supreme court's landmark decision allowing States to create sub-categorisation within the SCs and STs, but several of its leaders are of the view that the verdict can help the party boost its outreach to the more disadvantaged sections of Dalits.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has assiduously cultivated the numerically-weaker Scheduled Castes (SCs) in many States, such as Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka, over the years, and the apex court's verdict may allow the party to promise these communities with their most coveted wish -- their fair share in Government jobs and schemes, they said. The erosion of Dalit votes that hit the BJP in the recent Lok Sabha polls has sent its brain trust to the drawing board, as the party looks to reinvigorate its outreach to the community after the opposition's allegation that the Narendra Modi

Government wanted to change the Constitution found some traction in the election. However, a section of the party is of the view that it should tread cautiously on an issue rife with political uncertainty and assess the overall mood within the Scheduled Castes and Tribes before outlining its position. "Most parties, be it the BJP or the Congress or many regional parties, have refrained from taking a categorical stand. It is because the reaction from within these communities is itself divided. There are divided views within even a party, depending on who you speak to," a party leader said. What has made things tricky for the BJP is the stand of its ally,

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), against the verdict, apparently driven by the fact that its support base of Paswans in Bihar is unhappy with the idea of dividing the Dalit quota along caste lines. LJP President and Union Minister Chirag Paswan has been a staunch BJP ally. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), the principal opposition party in Bihar, has also come out against any move to fix a sub-quota for different SC communities. However, several BJP leaders, especially in different States where the party has long sympathised with the more disadvantaged among the Dalit castes, have welcomed the Supreme court judgment. Tamil Nadu BJP

President K Annamalai noted in a post on X that the Centre, in its affidavit to the court, had favoured the sub-categorisation. He said the verdict will ensure that the Madiga community receives its due, a reference to the more disadvantaged Dalits who live mostly in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana but are also present in other southern States. BJP MP Brij Lal, who comes from the Dalit community, had also welcomed the verdict, saying it addresses the disparity within the SCs. Economically and numerically stronger Dalit groups, like Malas in Telangana or Jatavs in Uttar Pradesh, are not considered to be pro-BJP. The Centre formed a high-level committee in January to examine the administrative steps that can be taken to safeguard the interests of SC groups like the Madigas. The panel has been tasked with recommending ways to ensure a fair allocation of benefits for the most disadvantaged communities within the SCs, which have been cornered by comparatively affluent and influential groups.

# CJI highlights Lok Adalat's role in dispute settlement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



People get "so fed up" with the matters of courts that they just want a settlement, Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said on Saturday while highlighting the role of Lok Adalats as alternative dispute redressal mechanisms. Lok Adalats are forums where disputes and cases pending in courts or at pre-litigation stage are settled or compromised amicably. No appeal against the mutually accepted settlement can be filed. "Log itna trast ho jate hain court ke mamlon se wo koi bhi settlement chahte hain...Bas court se dur kara dijiye (People are so fed up with the matters of the court that they just want a settlement). This process is the punishment and that is a cause of concern for all of us as judges," Chandrachud said at the commencement of the special Lok Adalat week at the Supreme court. The CJI said he got tremendous support and cooperation from everyone including the Bar and the Bench in setting up of Lok Adalat at every stage.

Chandrachud said when the panels for the Lok Adalat were constituted, it was ensured that every panel would consist of two judges and two members of the Bar. "The purpose behind doing this was to give ownership to the advocates over the institution because this is not an institution which is only run by the judges, and this is not the institution of the judges, for the judges, by the judges," he said. "There is so much that we learn from each other. We learnt from the advocates about how much command they have over little procedural issues," the CJI said.

Chandrachud said he genuinely felt that the Supreme court may be located in Delhi but it is not the Supreme court of Delhi. It is the Supreme court of India, he said. "Since I took over as the CJI, we have made efforts to bring officers from all over the country in the Registry. They bring great amount of inclusion and diversity," he said. The CJI said the special Lok Adalat began with seven benches initially as "we were sceptical if we would be successful". "By Thursday we had 13 benches and there was so much work," he said. "Purpose of Lok Adalat has been to take justice to the homes of people and ensure people that we are constant presence in their lives," Chandrachud said. The week-long special Lok Adalat, celebrating 75 years of the Supreme court, began with the aim to "facilitate amicable settlements of suitable pending cases", in matters that have "elements of settlement". The top court held the special Lok Adalat till August 3 in an effort to reduce the pendency of cases.



# Coast Guard achieves significant milestone

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant milestone, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) successfully conducted its maiden night landing of the ICG Dornier aircraft at Agatti Airport in the Lakshadweep Islands on Friday, officials said here on Saturday. Giving details, they said located approximately 460 kilometers west of Kochi in the Arabian Sea, Agatti features the only airstrip in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. This successful operation marks a remarkable enhancement in the Indian Coast Guard's operational capabilities. The ability to conduct night landings will provide critical support to the local populace during natural disasters, medical evacuations, and other emergencies, even during the darkest hours. The night landing was achieved through excellent coordination between Coast Guard District Headquarters, Lakshadweep, the Airport Authority of India, Agatti, and Coast Guard Air Enclave, Kochi. This achievement ensures the round-the-clock presence of the ICG in the Lakshadweep archipelago, thereby strengthening the region's overall safety and security. The successful night landing at Agatti Airport underscores the Indian Coast Guard's commitment to operational excellence and its readiness to address challenges in the most demanding conditions. This capability significantly contributes to national security and regional stability.

# India set example for world by evacuating students from war-hit Ukraine: Kovind

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



India set an example for the world by evacuating its students from Ukraine and it could happen after Prime Minister Narendra Modi negotiated with both Russia and Ukraine for a 24-hour ceasefire, former President Ram Nath Kovind said on Saturday. Delivering the fifth Dr Rajaram Jaipuria Memorial Lecture here, the former President said India is on the path of being a 'vishwaguru' or global leader and called upon the youth to contribute to it. He also gave several examples of how India proved itself to be a global leader, including the recent Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam for giving reservation to women in legislature. Talking about the Russia-Ukraine war, the former President said everyone expected it to be over in a month or

two, which is why several Indian students got stuck in the war-struck Ukraine. "When six-eight months passed, the situation became such that it was difficult to survive. The concern of parents of the students was acknowledged by the Government. I am deliberately giving this example, I was in Rashtrapati Bhawan at that time," Kovind said. "I asked why so many Indian students go to Ukraine. I was told medical education is cheap there. Our students got stuck, if

something would have happened to them, the Government would have been held responsible. Though it was not the Government's responsibility, parents sent them there, but the Government would have been blamed," he added. Asserting "our Government set an example", Kovind said they played the role of a global leader and talked to both nations, Russia and Ukraine, to have a ceasefire for 24 hours. "Both are big nations. Would they have agreed if any other country would have intervened? No," he said. "Our Prime Minister talked to both Russia and Ukraine, and thank god both agreed. For 24 hours, war was paused," Kovind claimed. He also said the students from other countries like the US, Pakistan and China were also stuck, but their Governments

could not evacuate them. "Their leaders were also told to follow the example of India, but they refused. They told the parents you did not ask us before sending the students..." he said. "This is global leadership and India is being recognised as a global leader as of today," he said. Kovind also said that the idea of Vishwaguru does not mean there will be a global Government Headed by India. "There used to be a concept of universal Government - it is not that India will become the Head of State and there would be a world capital in India. Countries will remain the same, but our recognition of global leadership will take us to the top," he said. Kovind said the Indian Government has taken a lot of steps to empower the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and women.

# Closure of weather advisory offices for farmers slammed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Congress on Saturday alleged that 199 district agro-meteorological units, which provided farmers at the block-level free-of-cost weather advisory services, were shut down as the NITI Aayog 'misrepresented' their role to justify the decision. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared a media report on social media which claimed that the farm weather advisory offices were shut in March this year as the NITI Aayog 'misrepresented' their role and sought privatisation. "The India Meteorological Department shut down 199 district agro-meteorological units (DAMUs). These agromet units provided all farmers at the block-level free-of-cost weather advisory services, and crucial

information related to sowing, use of fertilisers, harvesting and storing crops," he said. Experts suggest that while the budget outlay for these units every year was around Rs 45 crore, the benefit was around Rs 15,000 crore, Ramesh pointed out. The shutdown was opposed by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, and by several key stakeholders, including the Gujarat-based Association of Agrometeorologists, he claimed. "RTI documents now reveal that it was the NITI Aayog that suggested that district agromet services be privatised and monetised. In fact, the Aayog misrepresented their role to justify

this decision, arguing that the agromet units be shut down because data was now automated," he said. "This is untrue-agromet staff customised central forecasts for local use and tailored data for other advisories, such as those related to the use of fertilisers," Ramesh said in his social media post. "The Aayog's deception and its lack of courage in standing up to the Government when faced with the Government's poor decision-making is illustrative of its role over the last ten years as a mere drumbeater and cheerleader for the non-biological PM," Ramesh said, slamming the public policy thinking-tank.

# Call for finding solutions to mushrooming coaching centres

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India needs a comprehensive policy solution to mushrooming of coaching institutes, the Congress said on Saturday and called for a revision of syllabi, more resources for all exam-takers and investments in the quality of education.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said data provided by the Department of Higher Education to the Rajya Sabha shows that GST collections from coaching institutes have risen rapidly between 2019 and 2024, from Rs 2,241 crore to Rs 5,517 crore. This represents an astonishing

146-per cent rise in Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, some part of which may be attributable to better enforcement, but it also likely comes from the growing market size, he said. "Worryingly, the GST collections of Rs 5,517 crore in FY24, collected at a rate of 18 per cent, suggests a market of Rs 30,653

crore for coaching institutes annually. This is an extremely worrying figure, since it corresponds to about two-thirds of the Union Budget's allocation for higher education in FY24," Ramesh said in a social media post. GST figures are likely underestimating the market for coaching institutes, which is notorious for its poor regu-

lation, the Congress leader added. "India needs a comprehensive policy solution to this mushrooming of coaching institutes syllabi need to be revised, and brought in line with school curriculum, more resources need to be made available for all exam-takers, and investments must be made in the quality of education," he

said. His remarks came amid a focus on coaching institutes following the death of three civil service aspirants after the basement of such an institute in Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar area was flooded due to rains. Ramesh also posted on social media a written answer on coaching institutes given by Minister of State in the Education Ministry Sukanta Mazumdar in Parliament last week, in which he said keeping in view the growth in the number of unregulated private



coaching Centres in the country in the absence of any land-down policy or regulation, the Ministry has circulated the Guidelines for Regulation of Coaching Centre among the States and Union territories on January 16 for consideration by way of an appropriate legal framework. Education being on the Concurrent list, the States and Union territories need to take further action by way of an appropriate legal framework, Mazumdar said.

# Modi reaffirms...

**From Page 1**  
He also mentioned the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, where money is transferred to the bank accounts of 10 crore farmers with a single click, and a digital public infrastructure for digital crop survey that provides real-time information to farmers and enables them to make data-driven decisions. He emphasised that cores of farmers will benefit from the initiative and improve their economic condition. Modi also spoke about a huge campaign for the digitisation of land, where farmers will be given a digital identification number for their land and the promotion of drones in

farming, where 'drone didis' are trained to operate them. These steps will not only benefit the farmers of India but also strengthen global food security, he added. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Member of NITI Aayog Ramesh Chand, Conference President Matin Qaim and Secretary of DARE and DG, ICA Himanshu Pathak were also present on the occasion. The conference will provide a platform for young researchers and leading professionals to present their work and network with global peers.

# Ripple effect of...

**From Page 1**  
Major airlines cancelled flights to Tel Aviv, Israel and Beirut, Lebanon. Meanwhile across the Muslim world — from Jordan and Morocco to Yemen and Somalia — angry crowds waving Palestinian flags rushed out of mosques after Friday prayers, calling for revenge. Iran has said it expects Lebanon's Tehran-backed Hezbollah group to hit deeper inside Israel and no longer be confined to military targets after Israel killed the Hezbollah commander. Hezbollah has been exchanging near-daily fire with Israeli forces. In Washington, the US Defense Department will move a fighter jet squadron to the Middle East and maintain an aircraft carrier

in the region, the Pentagon said as President Joe Biden made good on his promise to beef up the American military presence to help defend Israel from possible attacks by Iran and its proxies and safeguard US troops. In a statement, the department said Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin also ordered additional ballistic missile defence-capable cruisers and destroyers to the European and Middle East regions and is taking steps to send more land-based ballistic missile defence weapons there. The shifts come as US leaders worry about escalating violence in the Middle East in response to recent attacks by Israel on Hamas and Hezbollah leaders, which triggered threats of retaliation.

# Narco-terror links cost...

**From Page 1**  
He had contacts with the Pakistan based terrorists, who have been involved in smuggling of narcotics, weapons and money across the LoC. The spokesman said, another dismissed cop Khalid Hussain Shah, Selection Grade Constable in J&K Police S/o Mehboob Shah R/o Chanipora Payeen Tangdar, District Kupwara, alongwith two other employees namely Farooq Ahmad Sheikh and Rahmat Shah (both working as Constables in J&K Police) received huge consignment of narcotics across the LoC from Pakistan occupied J&K. Being a resident of Tangdar Karnah, Kupwara, he used his expertise

of local terrain and topography to establish contacts with narcotic drug smugglers across the border in PoJK and was at the forefront of running a drug cartel in Kupwara-Karnah region. Rahmat Shah, Constable in J&K Police S/o Manzoor Hussain Shah R/o Panjowa Pingla Haridal, Karnah, District Kupwara had received huge consignment of narcotics from across the LoC for peddling it to other parts of the country, including local market for profit motive and for a larger game plan of adversary agency to destabilize J&K. Being a resident of Haridal village in Karnah, Kupwara, leveraged his knowledge of the local terrain and topography to establish connections with the narcotic smugglers across the border in PoJK. The government spokesman said, Farooq Ahmad Sheikh,

Khalid Hussain Shah and Rahmat Shah, had established contacts with the Pakistan-based terrorists involved in the smuggling of narcotics, weapons and money across the LoC to India. They used to smuggle drugs from Pakistan and money generated through the illegal trade of these drugs was being used for fuelling unrest as well as financing the terrorist activities in the Kashmir Valley and other parts of the Country. They were in contact with a large number of drug peddlers and Over Ground Workers of proscribed terrorist organizations and were a part of the modus operandi for arranging funding for terrorism in Kashmir valley and other parts of the Country. Similarly, Irshad Ahmad Chalkoo, Selection grade Constable in J&K Police S/o Saif-u-Din Chalkoo R/o Silitkote Uri, District Baramulla

had developed a close relationship with the terrorist associates of the area and started working as an Over Ground Worker with the proscribed terrorist organization, Lashkar-e-Taiba, the government spokesman said. "He was in close contact with various Kashmiri-origin terrorists based in PoJK, through encrypted messaging applications and had received Arms/ammunition for further delivery to the terrorists. Being the resident of Uri, District Baramulla, he utilized his knowledge of the local terrain to establish contacts with terrorists based in PoJK. He used to assist terrorist groups, during infiltration, by providing logistics and transportation of their illegal arms and ammunition in the interior areas of Kashmir Valley" the spokesman added.

# Kejriwal Govt took most...

**From Page 1**  
In 2023, the Cabinet decisions taken through circulation of files include ex post facto sanction of additional amount ₹78,66,528/ for the expenditure made for extending Group (Term) Insurance with LIC of India under Chief Minister Advocates Welfare Scheme, extension of contract with service provider i.e., Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for

6 months for distribution of food grains, modification in the policy of shifting of HT (11KV, 33KV & 66KV)/LT (400V) Electricity Transmission Lines posing threat to human lives, Utilization of non-operating contract period of ePoS devices with service provider, address by Lieutenant Governor to the Fourth Assembly Session (Budget Session), Availing OTP based e-signature service from CDAC for processing of bill of Govt. empanelled counsels on online single window system, ex-post-facto

approval for engagement of 6380 ac low floor pure electric buses (2080 - 9 meter & 4300 12 meter) by transport department, redevelopment of existing Anand Vihar and Sarai Kale Khan Interstate Bus Terminus (ISBTs) by Delhi Metro, policy/scheme Guidelines for creation of a separate Budget Head for State Top-Up and provision of Top-Up Funds to Samagra Shiksha Delhi, Scheme for grant of Ex-gratia to War Widow, War Disabled, Prisoners of War / Missing person in War / Operations etc. of Defense Personnel,

Incurring additional cost from state funds for free of cost distribution of sugar from January, 2023 to December, 2023 to AAY beneficiaries, ex-post facto approval of Council of Ministers for payment to the agencies/vendors for spray of Pusa Bio-Decomposer Solution and transportation charges for management of paddy crop residue/stubble during 2020-21, 2021-22 & 2022-23. Sources in the Delhi government said that the governance has taken a serious hit in important

decisions, policy matters and public grievances. "Decisions of huge financial implications are just taken without deliberation and by dictation through circulation. Views are dictated from the top and the Ministers are made to sign blindly through circulation. The state of governance in Delhi is abysmal as reflected in every facet of administration. A perusal of the list of important decisions dictated from the top and decided through circulation will be testimonial as to how the Government is functioning.

The plethora of scams and mis governance are order of the day and dictated from top. There is no semblance of governance in Delhi," he said. Critics argue that this reliance on circulation undermines governance, with significant decisions—particularly those with financial implications—being made without thorough discussions. This approach has been described as akin to "postal coaching or correspondence courses," raising alarms about the overall efficacy and transparency of Delhi's administration.

# Fresh tension grips...

**From Page 1**  
"The meeting resolved that both sides will make full efforts to bring normalcy and prevent incidents of arson and firing. Both sides shall give full cooperation to all the security forces operating in the Jiribam district. Both sides agreed to facilitate controlled and coordinated movement," a joint statement issued and signed by representatives of all the participating communities said. The next meeting will be

held on August 15. More than 200 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year. Ethnically-diverse Jiribam, which was largely untouched by ethnic clashes in Imphal Valley and adjoining hills, erupted in violence after a mutilated body of a farmer was found in the fields in June this year.

# MASKED ASSAILANTS RANSACK VENEZUELA OPPOSITION'S HEADQUARTERS

AP ■ CARACAS

Half a dozen masked assailants ransacked the headquarters of Venezuela's opposition Friday in an escalation of violence against President Nicolás Maduro's opponents after several countries called for proof of his claim he had won the disputed presidential election. Assailants broke down doors and hauled away valuable documents and equipment in the raid around 3 am, opposition leader María Corina Machado's party said. Images published by Machado's party on social media show several walls covered in black spray paint. The raid follows threats by top officials, including Maduro, to arrest Machado, who has gone into hiding while still urging Venezuelans and the international community to challenge Sunday's election results. The Biden administration has thrown its support firmly behind the opposition, recognising candidate Edmundo González as the victor and discrediting the National Electoral Council's official results. González was

tapped in April as a last-minute stand-in for Machado, who has been barred from running for political office for 15 years. The US announcement late Thursday followed calls from multiple governments, including Maduro's close regional allies, for Venezuela's electoral authorities to release precinct-level vote counts, as it has done during previous elections. On Friday, Uruguay recognised González as the winner. The electoral body declared Maduro the winner Monday, but the main opposition coalition revealed hours later that it had collected copies of more than 80% of the country's 30,000 voting tallies - printouts from the electronic voting machines - and that they show González prevailed by a more than 2-to-1 margin. "Given the overwhelming evidence, it is clear to the United States and, most importantly, to the Venezuelan people that Edmundo González Urrutia won the most votes in Venezuela's July 28 presidential election," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. Maduro responded with a quick admonishment: "The United States needs to keep its

nose out of Venezuela!" González, whose location is also unknown, posted a message on X Friday thanking the US "for recognizing the will of the Venezuelan people reflected in our electoral victory and for supporting the process of restoring democratic norms in Venezuela". On Friday, Venezuelan electoral authorities gave an updated vote count, but not the precinct-level tallies demanded. National Electoral Council President Elvís Amoroso said that with 96.9% of tally sheets counted, Maduro's margin of victory was more than 8 percentage points over González: 52% to 43.2%. He attributed the delay in updating results to "massive attacks" on the "technological infrastructure". Blinken's announcement came amid a flurry of diplomatic efforts by Brazil, Colombia and Mexico to convince their fellow leftist to allow an impartial audit of the vote. On Thursday, the governments of the three countries issued a joint statement calling on Venezuela's electoral authorities "to move forward expeditiously and publicly release" detailed voting data.



But it's unclear what leverage the countries have over Maduro, who has shown little desire to rethink his entrenched position. On Friday, Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of the lower house of Russian parliament, emphasized that Russian election monitors have witnessed Maduro winning a legitimate victory. He accused the US of fomenting tensions in the country. "Washington is playing by its rules, which are aimed at maintaining its

hegemony and expanding its influence," Volodin said. "It doesn't accept any other outcome but the victory of the candidate it backs." Although no ally or anyone in the armed forces has yet to break with Maduro over the contested elections, he faces huge obstacles righting Venezuela's economy without the legitimacy that can only come from a credible election result. Venezuela sits atop the world's largest proven crude reserves

and once boasted Latin America's most advanced economy, but it entered into a free fall marked by 130,000% hyperinflation and widespread shortages after Maduro took the helm in 2013. More than 7.7 million Venezuelans have fled the country since 2014, the largest exodus in Latin America's recent history. US oil sanctions have only deepened the misery and the Biden administration - which had been easing those restrictions - is now likely to

ramp them up again unless Maduro agrees to some sort of transition. "He's counting on being able to wait this out and people will get tired of demonstrating," said Cynthia Arnsen, a distinguished fellow at the Wilson Center, a Washington think tank. "The problem is, the country is in a death spiral and there's no chance the economy will be able to recover without the legitimacy that comes from a fair election." Thousands of opposition supporters took to the streets Monday after the National Electoral Council declared Maduro the winner of the election. The government said it arrested hundreds of protesters and Venezuela-based human rights organisation Foro Penal said 11 people were killed. Machado and González addressed a huge rally of their supporters in the capital, Caracas, on Tuesday, but they have not been seen in public since. Later that day, the president of the National Assembly, Jorge Rodríguez, called for their arrest, describing them as criminals and fascists. On Wednesday, Maduro asked

Venezuela's highest court to conduct an audit of the election, but that request drew almost immediate criticism from foreign observers who said the court - which like most institutions is controlled by the government - lacks the independence to perform a credible review. On Thursday, Venezuela's Supreme Tribunal of Justice agreed to conduct the audit and ordered Maduro, González and the eight other candidates who participated in the presidential election to appear before the justices Friday. A spokesman for González said he did not know if the candidate planned to attend. In an op-ed published Thursday in the Wall Street Journal, Machado said she is "hiding, fearing for my life, my freedom, and that of my fellow countrymen". She asserted that the opposition has physical evidence that Maduro lost the election and urged the international community to intervene. "We have voted Mr Maduro out," she wrote. "Now it is up to the international community to decide whether to tolerate a demonstrably illegitimate government."



## Hunter Biden set to be sentenced on gun charges in November

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Hunter Biden is set to be sentenced on felony firearms charges in November under an order signed by a judge on Friday. The president's son could face up to 25 years in prison at sentencing set for November 13 in Wilmington, Delaware, but as a first-time offender he is likely to get far less time or avoid prison entirely. Hunter Biden is also facing another trial on tax charges in California set to begin in September. He's charged in that case with failing to pay USD 1.4 million in taxes. President Joe Biden, who dropped his reelection bid last month, has said he will not use his presidential powers to pardon his son or lessen his sentence. Hunter Biden was convicted of three felonies after lying on a federal form to purchase the gun by saying he wasn't a drug user in 2018, a period when he has acknowledged struggling with addiction. US District Judge Maryellen Noreika, who was nominated to the bench by former

Republican President Donald Trump, will decide how much time, if any, Hunter Biden serves behind bars at the sentencing scheduled to fall shortly after Election Day. He was supposed to plead guilty to misdemeanour tax offenses and avoid prosecution in the gun case if he stayed out of trouble for two years in a deal with prosecutors last year. However, the agreement fell apart after Noreika questioned unusual aspects of the proposed agreement, and the lawyers could not resolve the matter. Hunter Biden is also pushing for dismissal of both the tax and gun cases against him, citing a ruling in Florida that threw out a separate prosecution of Trump after his attorneys argued the Justice Department special counsel in the case was improperly appointed. Hunter Biden is also being prosecuted by a special counsel appointed by Attorney General Merrick Garland. A representative for his legal team did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment on the sentencing.

AP ■ ZEITA (WEST BANK)

Two Israeli airstrikes in the northern West Bank killed nine Palestinian militants on Saturday, Israel's army said, as violence flared again in the Israeli-occupied territory with tensions high over the war in Gaza. The Israeli army said its forces first struck a vehicle in a rural area northwest of the city of Tulkerem in early morning, killing the five occupants. The army said they were on their way to carry out an attack. The Palestinian Health Ministry said the men's bodies were taken to a nearby hospital. Hamas later identified all five as militants with the group, including a local commander. According to an Associated Press journalist and witnesses, the blast took place along a road connecting the Palestinian villages of Zeita and Qaffin. "We came to the site and found a young man martyred here on the street and half of his face was missing," said Taiser Abdullah, a Zeita resident who said he had been going to work when he heard the strike nearby. The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said four of the bodies were "burned and charred beyond recognition".

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine has taken delivery of a second Turkish-built navy corvette, officials said, although they did not say specifically how the warships might be used in the war against Russia. Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, attended the launching ceremony of the Ada-class corvette during a visit to Turkey, the Ukrainian presidency announced on its website. The corvette Ukraine already had was currently undergoing sea trials. Turkish Ada-class ships are typically able to strike planes, other ships and submarines. Ukraine, which has coastlines on the Black Sea and the smaller Sea of Azov, had a small navy at the time of Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion. But it has developed deadly

## Israel's army says airstrikes in northern West Bank kill 9 Palestinian militants

Later Saturday, Israel's military said it killed four other Palestinian militants in the Tulkerem area shortly after they opened fire on Israeli troops operating in the area. No further information was immediately available. Over 590 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank since the Israel-Hamas war began in Gaza in October, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. Most have been killed during Israeli raids and violent protests, but the dead also include bystanders and Palestinians killed in attacks by Jewish settlers. The northern West Bank has seen some of the territory's worst violence over the past 10 months. Tulkerem, with its two refugee camps, has become one of the main flashpoints and is regularly raided by Israeli forces. Palestinian militant groups, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, are active in the city. The strike came days after the assassinations of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran early Wednesday and top Hezbollah commander



Fouad Shukur in Beirut the evening before. The escalation threatens to plunge the region into a full-fledged regional war. Iran and its proxies, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, vowed to retaliate against Israel, which said it killed Shukur but has not confirmed or denied its role in the killing of

Haniyeh. Iran's Revolutionary Guard said a short-range projectile was behind Haniyeh's death and accused the United States of supporting the attack. The Pentagon said late Friday the US military will move a fighter jet squadron to the Middle East and maintain an aircraft carrier in the

region. The previous day, President Joe Biden said he had urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to seize the chance for a cease-fire with Hamas, adding that Haniyeh's killing had "not helped" efforts to negotiate an end to the war. Netanyahu has vowed to destroy Hamas' military and governing capabilities. At least 39,550 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza in the nearly 10 months since Hamas' brutal Oct 7 attack on Israel triggered their latest war. That's according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants in its count. Israel has accused Hamas of embedding in the civilian population and putting it at risk. Most of Gaza's population of about 2.3 million is displaced, many people multiple times, as Israel's military returns to areas where it says Hamas militants have regrouped. Health services and sanitation have largely collapsed across the territory as hunger grows.

## Ukraine adds another Turkish corvette to its navy for war with Russia

uncrewed sea drones that have severely limited Moscow's Black Sea naval capability. The Ukrainian presidency said the corvettes would help protect the country's interests in the Black and Azov seas "but also, in particular, in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean." "So now the second corvette has been launched," Ukrainian Navy spokesman Dmytro Pletenchuk told The Associated Press. "The next step is to equip it with the appropriate weapons systems and train the second crew." He said a new crew of 100 men would be trained to



work on the ship. International law forbids the passage of warships through Turkey's busy Bosphorus Strait, which links the Mediterranean and Black seas, during times of war. However, the presidency's statement didn't say where exactly the Turkish shipyard was located, meaning it could be on the northern side of the strait, with a direct route to Ukraine. Ukraine ordered the two Turkish corvettes under an agreement signed in 2020, the presidency said. Ukrainian authorities last month adopted a Maritime Security Strategy that aims to rebuild its naval capability. It is also getting help with that from Western partners. The maritime capability coalition, headed by the United Kingdom and Norway, was established last December.

## Mourners bury Hamas chief Haniyeh in Qatar as more escalation looms over Middle East

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Thousands of mourners converged around the flag-draped coffin of Hamas' slain political chief, Ismail Haniyeh, in the emirate of Qatar on Friday as the fallout surged from his death in an alleged Israeli attack. The funeral ceremony in Doha, Qatar's capital, attended by members of Gaza's militant Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups, as well as Qatari and Iranian officials, was subdued. But across the Muslim world - from Jordan and Morocco to Yemen and Somalia - angry crowds waving Palestinian flags rushed out of mosques after midday Friday prayers, chanting for revenge. "Let Friday be a day of rage to denounce the assassination," said Izzat al-Risheq, a senior Hamas official. Haniyeh had lived in Qatar, along with other senior members of Hamas's political leadership. Following the back-to-back assassinations of Haniyeh in Tehran early on Wednesday and top

Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur in Beirut the evening before, international diplomats have scrambled to head off a full-fledged regional war. Iran and its regional proxies vowed to retaliate. Major airlines canceled flights to Tel Aviv, Israel and Beirut, Lebanon. France on Friday beefed up security for Jewish communities nationwide. Poland warned its citizens against travelling to the Mideast. Pakistan and Turkey lowered their flags to half-staff, prompting Israel to summon Turkey's deputy ambassador for a "stern reprimand". Turkey's foreign ministry spokesperson Oncu Koceli shot back that Israel "cannot achieve peace by killing the negotiators" - a reference to Haniyeh's role in the cease-fire talks - as hundreds of Turks gathered at the historic Hagia Sophia to pay tribute to the slain Hamas leader as his funeral service got underway in Doha. "We are sure that his blood will bring out victory, dignity and liberation," senior Hamas official



Khalil al-Hayya, seen as a possible successor to Haniyeh, said from the Doha mosque where Haniyeh's coffin was displayed beside that of his bodyguard who was also killed in the attack in Tehran. Israel has not confirmed or denied its role in the targeted killing of Haniyeh. On Thursday, Israel announced that it killed the shadowy leader of Hamas' military

wing, Mohammed Deif, in a July airstrike. Hamas had previously claimed Deif survived last month's targeted airstrike in the besieged Gaza Strip, where the deadly pattern of Israeli airstrikes and skirmishes continued this week, with 15 Palestinians killed when a Gaza City school was hit on Thursday. At least 39,480 Palestinians have

been killed in Gaza in the nearly 10 months since Hamas' brutal Oct 7 attack on Israel triggered the latest Israel-Hamas war. Palestinian health authorities providing the casualty tolls do not differentiate between civilians and combatants. Tensions were also running high on Israel's northern border days after Israel claimed responsibility for killing Shukur, the Hezbollah commander. On Friday, Hezbollah claimed a series of rocket and artillery attacks on Israel, causing a fire but no casualties in an evacuated Israeli town. Israel claimed its warplanes struck two Hezbollah militants in southern Lebanon who it said had fired the volley of rockets. The exchange was more of the same tit-for-tat that have flared along the Lebanese-Israeli border throughout the Israel-Hamas war. But Israelis and Lebanese were bracing for more after Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah on Thursday declared that the Shukur's assassination in the southern suburbs of Beirut had pushed the war into a "new phase".

From contested Jerusalem, Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, the imam of the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque, mentioned "the martyr Ismail Haniyeh" in his weekly sermon to the thousands of Palestinian worshippers who had come to Friday prayers. "We ask God Almighty to have mercy on him and to grant him a place in His spacious gardens," the imam said, adding that the Palestinians in Jerusalem were mourning the late Hamas leader. Sheikh Sabri was promptly arrested. The Israeli police said they were interrogating him on charges of incitement to violence. "My policy towards instigators is clear - zero tolerance," far-right Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir posted on X. Across the region, vows by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, that Israel would pay the price for killing Haniyeh on Iranian soil quickly led to calls for intense diplomacy to prevent further escalation. Late on Thursday, President Joe Biden urged Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu to seize the chance for a cease-fire and "move on it now." Netanyahu has sought to portray the recent striking of Hamas leaders as bringing Israel closer to a deal that would free the remaining Israeli hostages held in Gaza. Their distraught families rallied Thursday in Tel Aviv to mark the bitter milestone of 300 days of their captivity. Tor Wennesland, the UN special coordinator for the Mideast peace process, said he was racing to work with Lebanon, Qatar, Egypt and other powers to "prevent a spillover of the conflict." UK Defence Secretary John Healey and Foreign Secretary David Lammy visited Israel on Friday "to push for an immediate cease-fire and drive de-escalation in the Middle East" while Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said he spoke with his American counterpart, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin. "The unprecedented security cooperation between Israel and the United States against Iran and its proxies is critical," Gallant said.



# DEEPIKA FAILS TO DECODE OLYMPIC PUZZLE

## INDIA'S ARCHERY CAMPAIGN ENDS

PTI ■ PARIS

Deepika Kumari placed herself in an advantageous position against Korea's Suhyeon Nam by winning two of the first three sets but shot a horrible 7 with the second arrow of the fourth set to throw away a great opportunity as India's archery campaign folded at the Paris Olympics here Saturday. Deepika had begun the day well with a 6-4 win over Germany's Michelle Kroppen but lost by the same margin to Nam, who had won the women's team gold on Friday. Teenager Bhajan Kaur was eliminated earlier in the day after losing her pre-quarterfinal match to Indonesia's Diananda Choirunisa in a shoot-off. Competing in her fourth Olympics, Deepika yet again

left the big stage empty-handed. However, there was no hype around her this time, following disappointments in London, Rio and Tokyo editions. The fourth place finish by Ankita Bhakat and Dhiraj Bommadevara in the mixed team event was India's best performance in archery in Paris. Leading 4-2, Deepika aced a 10 to start the fourth set but fell into the red zone with a seven after the Korean shot a 10 and a nine. Nam did not make any mistake on her final shot, making a 10 to force a decider. In the fifth set, the Korean began with a 10 and Deepika followed with a nine. Nam managed a 9 and 10 on the following shots but Deepika got only two 9s to lose the quarterfinal 4-6.

Even in the second set, which she lost, Deepika had fluffed the second shot, managing a poor 6. "It is disappointing. I don't know how and why I keep losing at the Olympic Games. Maybe the atmosphere gets to me. It's the weight of own expectations," Deepika said after her defeat, admitting it was her best chance to do well. "Those were bad two shots and I feel like I have gifted her the match." Coach Purmina Mahato explained that after taking the anchor position, the archers need to release early to stand a better chance of scoring well. "Ideally, you should have your shot within 5-7 seconds of taking anchor position. If you hold, all kinds of thoughts start coming to your mind. She held that shot long (6 in second set) and the second time (7 in

fourth set) she released it early due to pressure," said Mahato. The coach said India needs a consistent supply of archers but does not think that it's time for Deepika to quit. "She must continue. People do well, win medals in this sport, even when they age." Meanwhile, the 18-year-old Indonesian rival to a shoot-off but fluffed the first shot by managing an eight when she needed a 10 to secure her passage into the last eight. "Certainly I was lacking in something, that's why I lost. I will work on that when I go back home," Bhajan said after her 1/8 elimination round match. Asked if she felt the nerves going into the shoot-off, she said, "Wo toh poore match mein hi rehta hai (nervousness remains throughout)," she said

with a chuckle. "I was not thinking of shooting a 10, I was just focussed on following the process," she said. "I have learnt a lot from this campaign," she added but could not explain what, and again let out a smile. After disappointing results in other team events, the mixed team of Ankita Bhakat and Dhiraj Bommadevara was on Friday in line to win a bronze but finished fourth. Coach Mahato said she had told the archers not to think about the results and just stay focussed on shooting. "We told them, do not think about win or loss, just shoot. It's 90 percent mind game. You have to be mentally strong. "Bhajan fought well but missed that last shot. We were actually assured that she will do well."

# Heartbreak for shooter Manu

PTI ■ CHATEAUROUX (FRANCE)

The sensational Manu Bhaker's dream of a grand treble went up in smoke after she lost the tie-shoot for bronze medal to Hungarian Veronika Major by the narrowest of margins in the women's 25m sports pistol event at the Olympic Games here on Saturday.

In a high-quality final, Bhaker gave it her all and was placed No.1 among eight shooters for a brief period, but she could not maintain her consistency and eventually finished fourth. Nonetheless, the 22-year-old will return home with her twin bronze-medal feat in women's 10m air pistol and mixed team 10m air pistol partnering Sarabjot Singh.

The affable Indian shot 28 in the first series to be tied at third place along with Veronika after the eighth series of five shots. She missed two of the five shots to aggregate three points, while Veronika drilled in four bullets into the target to clinch the third spot, leaving Bhaker to pack up the kit and leave her firing station.

Expectations were really high from Bhaker to bring home a hat-trick of medals given her awe-inspiring form. She stood up to the challenge even after slipping to sixth position early in the final. Bhaker conceded at the end of the contest that she was nervous, and no matter how hard she tried to remain calm, she couldn't.

"I got like really nervous about it, but again, I was trying my best to keep calm and to just try to do my best. But that was not enough," Bhaker said after the event. The first series was a disaster in



which Bhaker missed three out of five targets, but gradually she cut down on the errors and bounced back in the second and third series, shooting two consecutive 'fours' to take her points tally to 10 going into the elimination round.

The elimination round was topsy-turvy to say the least. Bhaker's chances waxed and waned until she took the top spot for a brief period in the seventh series (fourth elimination round). However, South Korea's Jin Yang wrested back the top spot immediately even as Bhaker slipped to tied third with a rank bad three misses in the eighth round, which saw her slump from second spot to joint third with Veronika on 28 points.

The shoot-off was nerve-jangling for both the markswomen and Bhaker had three clear shots out of five on target, while Veronika had

four. The ace shooter said that she will take a lot of positives from the fourth-place finish and come back stronger in the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

"It (Olympics) turned out to be very good for me, but well, there's always a next time so I'm already looking forward to the next one (in LA)," she said. "I'm glad that I got two medals, but right now, I'm not very... Well, fourth place is not a very good place," said Bhaker with tears in her eyes.

Her finish just outside the medal bracket once again brought back memories of fourth-place finishes of Indian shooters in the quadrennial showpiece. She joined the likes of Joydeep Karmakar (men's 50m rifle prone, 2012 London), Abhinav Bindra (men's 10m air rifle, 2016 Rio) and Arjun Babuta (10m air rifle, 2024 Paris Olympics), among others.



# Lakshya aims to dial up 'Sen-mode' against Super Dane Axelsen in semis

PTI ■ PARIS

India's Lakshya Sen will need to play out of his skin to keep his maiden gold medal hopes alive when he takes on the reigning Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles semifinals at the Paris Games here on Sunday. Making his Olympics debut, Sen created history on Friday after becoming the first Indian individual male shuttler to reach the last four of the showpiece with a 19-21 21-15 21-12 win over Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen in an intense quarterfinal match. The Indian will have yet another uphill task at hand when he takes on Axelsen, the baby-faced badminton giant, who has terrorised his opponents in the last few years. The 30-year-old from Odense, Denmark, has won the Tokyo gold and Rio bronze, two world championship titles in 2017 and 2022, a Thomas Cup triumph in 2016 and multiple BWF world tour and Superseries titles to experience a dominating run as world No. 1 from December 2021 to June 2024. Sen, a 2021 World championships

medallist, has lost seven times to the super Dane, who faced defeat just once against the Indian at the 2022 German Open. The 22-year-old, however, has shown little to no respect for the past records against his higher-ranked opponents so far as he plotted the downfall of world number 4 Jonatan Christie in the group stage and Chou, ranked 11, in the quarters. Axelsen has looked a tad subdued this season with just one title at the Malaysia Masters. The Dane also suffered an ankle injury in early June during the Singapore Open and was forced to withdraw from the Indonesia Open. Sen, on the other hand, hasn't looked fitter in his career. He has been rock solid in his defence as he covered the court well and played at a high pace. His ability to produce winners at will has held him in good stead. The 1.94m-tall Dane has an all-rounded game and is known to rain down brutal smashes from a great height. Axelsen, who received a bye in the pre-quarterfinals, had just

one real challenge in the quarterfinals but he got past former world champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore without much ado. In their eight meetings, only two matches have gone to three games, including the contest in Muelheim an der Ruhr. After seeing off the speedy and consistent Chou in a gruelling three-gamer on Friday, Sen will be now backing himself to prevail if it goes the distance against the Dane. Axelsen had robbed him of All England glory two years back when he beat him in the final. Then there were those twin losses in the 2021 BWF World Tour Finals and Sen will be itching to return the favour at the world's biggest stage. A semifinalist gets two chances to return with a medal. A win will keep Sen on course for Indian badminton's maiden Olympic gold, while a loss will give him a shot at the bronze medal in the play-offs. "There's lot more work to do. Now, the real test starts," Sen had said after his quarterfinals. For Sen, who wears "Sky is the limit" tattoo on his neck, only the gold can quench his hunger.

# Denied spot in Paris by Dutch Olympic committee, Weber leads Portland Classic

AP ■ PORTLAND

Denied a spot in Paris because the Dutch Olympic committee didn't think she was good enough to contend, Dewi Weber shot a 10-under 62 to take the second-round lead in the Portland Classic. Weber qualified for the Olympics under International Golf Federation standards, but was left out because of the country's separate standards for all sports to meet a realistic chance of a top-eight finish. "We're two rounds in, so we'll see how this all unfolds and if I can really make a statement," Weber said. "Of course it's in the back of my mind because it's the week before the Olympics. It was something that I was looking forward to... "It sucks, but all we can do is like try to prove why those standards were so silly, and I

really hope to do that on Sunday." Playing only her second LPGA Tour event of the year, Weber had nine birdies in an 11-hole stretch in her afternoon round at Columbia Edgewater, making seven birdies in a row on Nos. 5-11. She closed with a birdie on the par-4 18th for a two-shot lead over first-round leader Polly Mack and past champion Andrea Lee. "Very easy, very relaxing, not really putting my pressure on myself," Weber said. "Just like roll that ball as well as I can and see what happens." The 28-year-old former Miami player also had seven straight birdies Thursday in an opening 66. She the final eight holes Thursday and the first 13 Friday in 16 under - and was 16 under overall for 36 holes in pursuit of her first LPGA Tour title. "I did a really good job both



days of just going shot for shot, which I know is such a cliché but I've never been able to really do that," said Weber, who has four top-seven finishes in 11 starts this year on the Epson Tour. Mack followed her opening 63 with a 67 in the afternoon. The 25-year-old German also is winless on the LPGA Tour. She eagled the par-5 seventh, and

and dropped back with a bogey on the par-4 15th. "You obviously want to do well after that round, but it's still not the easiest golf course," Macks said. "It's still a golf course. It's still 18 holes to get through it. I think I did pretty well." Lee shot 63 in the morning, running off six straight birdies of her own in a back-nine burst. The 25-year-old

American won the 2022 event for her lone LPGA Tour title. "I love Portland, Columbia Edgewater," Lee said. "It's always great to come back here. I always find the course conditions to be perfect. It's a great golf course. Obviously, a lot of the low scores out here, but I feel really comfortable." Jenny Shin (65) and Grace Kim (65) were 13 under, with Alexa Pano (64) and Emma Talley (67) another stroke back. Lauren Coughlin, the CPKC Women's Open winner Sunday in Calgary, Alberta, for her first LPGA Tour title, was 9 under after a 69. With the Olympics next week, no one from the top 30 in the world ranking is in the field. The lone Olympian in the field is Aditi Ashok of India. She was 7 under after a 67. Defending champion Chanettee Wannasaen shot a 70 to get to 6 under.

# Siniakova and Machac win gold but keep relationship status top secret

AP ■ PARIS

Katerina Siniakova and Tomas Machac hugged and kissed each other when they won the 2024 Olympics mixed doubles tennis gold medal for the Czech Republic on Friday night, then laughed about keeping their relationship status "top secret." Siniakova and Machac defeated Wang Xinyu and Zhang Zhizhen 6-2, 5-7, 10-8 in a match tiebreaker in the final. Olympics doubles uses a first-to-10, win-by-two tiebreaker instead of a standard third set. Social media has been speculating about where things stand romantically between the new champions, who apparently have been a couple but might no longer be. Machac rolled his eyes when a reporter at the post-victory news conference brought up the topic by asking: "Are you still together?"

"That's our personal life, so you don't need to know that," Siniakova said with a chuckle. "We like when you are confused." Machac chimed in to add: "This is top secret." Siniakova now owns the only two Summer Games tennis titles for her country. She teamed with Barbora Krejickova to win the women's doubles gold at the Tokyo Games three years ago. Siniakova is a doubles specialist who has won a total of nine Grand Slam trophies. The first seven came alongside Krejickova. Since they stopped playing together, Siniakova teamed with Coco Gauff to win the French Open title this June - at Roland Garros, the same site being used for tennis during these Olympics - and with Taylor Townsend to win Wimbledon in July. "I showed myself that I can play well with anyone," Siniakova said, "and I should be more proud of myself."



The mixed doubles bronze went to Gabriela Dabrowski and Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada, who beat Demi Schuurs and Wesley Koolhof of the Netherlands 6-3, 7-6 (2). Machac's two best results in men's doubles at Slam events came with Zhang as his partner this year. They are good pals and reached the Australian Open semi-

finals in January, then the quarterfinals at the French Open. "Friendship's totally broken," Zhang joked. "He destroyed my Olympic Games." He and Wang leave Paris with a silver medal. Another player from China, Zheng Qinwen, will play in the women's singles gold medal match on Saturday against Donna Vekic of Croatia. Chinese tennis "is getting better," Zhang said. As for what advice the more-experienced and more-successful Siniakova offered Machac ahead of Friday's final, he offered a kidding response, saying she told him: "Ace on the line and winner on the line." Siniakova made clear that her view actually is: "With a team, you are two, so it's really helpful when you communicate and you help each other." Sounds like perfect words of wisdom for a doubles pair.

# Canadian teen McIntosh bringing home impressive haul of medals

AP ■ NANTERRE

Summer McIntosh is really headed for a golden birthday. The Canadian swim star turns 18 on Aug. 18, and she has already learned so much about the world - including just how heavy an Olympic medal is. "The first night when I put the silver on my neck I was actually in shock how heavy it was," she said, "because no other medal has been that heavy before." McIntosh is getting a feel for those weighty medallions now

- and has already collected quite a haul for the suitcase going home. A silver in the 400-meter freestyle, and golds in the 400 individual medley and 200 butterfly. Oh, and you bet she's planning on adding another in the 200 IM on Saturday night. Even if she was second fastest out of the semifinals Friday night, finishing in 2 minutes, 8.30 seconds, behind American Alex Walsh's 2:07.45. It's those races when she's not in her tip-top form "I think I learn the most from," she said. McIntosh added she had only

competed in the 200 IM previously in international competition at a Commonwealth Games. McIntosh won the 200 butterfly Thursday night to add a second gold to her total after her 400 IM victory Monday. When McIntosh won the fly in an Olympic-record 2:03.03, her mother and 1984 swimming Olympian Jill Horstead jumped for joy and pumped her fist from the stands. This one meant so much to McIntosh because it used to be her mom's signature



race. "So sharing that moment with her was pretty cool," McIntosh said. "I know she's just so proud of me along with the rest of my family." Still, there's no time for much nostalgia. Not yet anyway. She insists her routine is pretty basic when it comes to taking care of herself between races. No word puzzles or reading to clear her mind. A little bit of music is more her style. "It's a lot more simple than probably people think behind the scenes," she said. "All I'm doing is eating and sleeping

other than when I'm not swimming, so just keep it simple and try to rest my brain as much as I do my body. That's kind of what works best for me to prepare for my following races." Canadian teammate Kylie Masse, who won a bronze in the 200 backstroke Friday, is in awe of not only McIntosh's remarkable poise on the world stage but also the ability to quickly switch gears from one event to the next. "It's incredible. For the number of events she swims, it's really impressive," Masse

said. "For me, I had a full day off in between of just training, but to be able to not come here, race, go through the whole process, but for her she's had quite a number of back-to-backs and a 200 at night and a 200 in the morning. It can be really taxing on your body and your mind. So it's really important to turn off, like she said." McIntosh might not have the screaming French fans willing her on for every pull and kick like beloved Léon Marchand, yet she still feels plenty of love from Maple Leaf-waving fans

throughout La Defense Arena. "Being able to represent Canada, it's such an honor," she said. McIntosh might leave Paris with a medal in every individual event she swims and the Maple Leaf draped around her. "It's pretty surreal, I'm not reflecting on it too much right now," she said. "Yeah, while it's been a pretty amazing Olympics for me, but yeah I'm not done yet. I'll have lots of time to celebrate after, but right now I'm just keeping it simple."

"This journey of education and breaking stigma around HIV is something that will have a legacy everlasting"  
— Gareth Thomas



# OVERCOMING HIV STIGMA

## YOUTH BREAKING BARRIERS

In the face of deep-seated stigma and discrimination, young people living with HIV in Goa, are finding hope and resilience through the Human Touch Foundation. **SHOBHA SHUKLA** explores their personal journeys and examines the collective efforts that are transforming their lives and challenging societal norms



**SHOBHA SHUKLA**

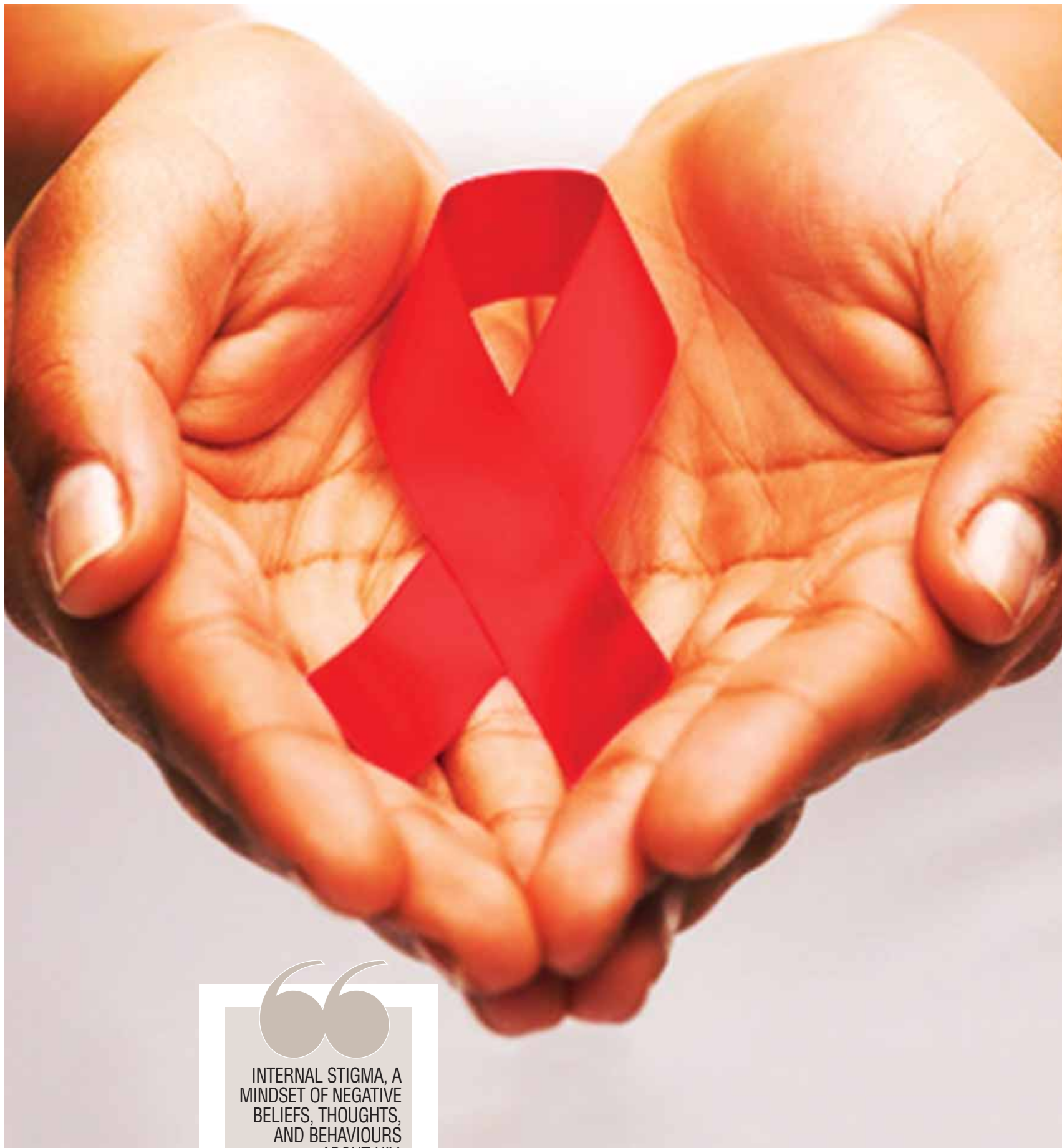
**L**iving with HIV often comes with a heavy burden of internal and external stigma. For many young people, this fear of discrimination can be paralyzing, affecting their ability to live normal lives. HIV-related misconceptions remain a significant barrier for those living with the virus, impacting their mental health, relationships, and opportunities in life. However, through the dedicated support of the Human Touch Foundation, these youths are not only overcoming their fears but also becoming advocates for change in their communities.

### THE WEIGHT OF STIGMA

A young person living with HIV shared, "As a young person living with HIV, I had self-stigmatised myself due to the fear of discrimination... fear of discrimination if I dare disclose my HIV positive status to others... this fear had stopped me from living life like a normal person." This sentiment, echoed by many, underscores the profound impact of internal stigma. Internal stigma, a mindset of negative beliefs, thoughts, and behaviours about HIV, manifests as shame, guilt, feelings of contamination, reduced self-efficacy, self-loathing, low self-esteem, and self-rejection. "Internal stigma happens when we internalise external stigma and judgements and believe that they are true. Internal stigma also happens in the absence of external stigma and discrimination," explained Nadine Ferris France, CEO of Beyond Stigma.

A youth shared his trauma, "I and my youth peers have confronted HIV-related stigma and discrimination in schools, workplaces, and societal levels. Sometimes, it is the teachers who were not cooperating or discriminating against them. The fear of disclosure – which means sharing our HIV positive status with family members, friends or others in society – the fear of being discriminated, is faced by many... the fear if we would be thrown out of the house or will our friends unfriend us..." The Human Touch Foundation, based in Goa, India, is dedicated to supporting young people living with HIV. The organization provides a comprehensive range of services including mental health counselling, nutritional support, educational and vocational training, and medical assistance. By fostering a supportive community and empowering youth-led initiatives, the foundation addresses stigma and discrimination at multiple levels. Their efforts ensure that those living with HIV can lead healthier, more fulfilling lives while advocating for broader societal change.

A young girl living with HIV



shared how the Human Touch Foundation helped her overcome her fears of stigma and discrimination: "From my childhood I have been touched by Human Touch Foundation which helped me overcome my fears of stigma and discrimination related to disclosure – and helped me in various ways." She added, "As I am living with HIV, I faced a lot of stigma and discrimination from my own family as well as from society. People in the society told the family to not let me come out otherwise I will spread the virus to their children. I even faced it in my relationship with one guy. I knew him for one year and had shared everything with him but still he blamed me that I got infected because I have been sleeping with others." Despite these challenges, she found a supportive community within the Human Touch Foundation, which provides a range of services including nutritional counselling, mental

“INTERNAL STIGMA, A MINDSET OF NEGATIVE BELIEFS, THOUGHTS, AND BEHAVIOURS ABOUT HIV, MANIFESTS AS SHAME, GUILT, FEELINGS OF CONTAMINATION, REDUCED SELF-EFFICACY, SELF-LOATHING, LOW SELF-ESTEEM, AND SELF-REJECTION. “INTERNAL STIGMA HAPPENS WHEN WE INTERNALISE EXTERNAL STIGMA AND JUDGEMENTS AND BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE TRUE. INTERNAL STIGMA ALSO HAPPENS IN THE ABSENCE OF EXTERNAL STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION.” EXPLAINED NADINE FERRIS FRANCE, CEO OF BEYOND STIGMA

health support, and job opportunities.

### PERSONAL TRIUMPHS AND COLLECTIVE SUPPORT

Another young person recounted their journey: "I got to know my HIV status at the age of 13. I was with my relatives because I had lost my parents. That is when I first felt being stigmatised and discriminated against by my own family. For example, I was told not to use the common family nail cutter because if any blood comes out while cutting my nails then it can put others at risk. Or sometimes there were separate utensils for eating food. It used to hurt me."

Finding support through the Human Touch Foundation, this individual connected with peers facing similar challenges and received guidance from Peter Borges, the foundation's CEO. "Peter Sir helped me a lot from the very beginning. He helped me with my documents too. We used to

have residential camps back then too, with adolescents living with HIV. I learnt a lot from these camps. Doctors were involved in these camps where we learnt a lot about HIV and how can we overcome problems we face."

### THE POWER OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP

The Human Touch Foundation emphasizes the importance of youth-led initiatives in the HIV response. "Youth are the best equipped to lead the response to HIV," said a young intern at the foundation. Sandhya Chavan, Lead for Adolescent Health and Wellbeing, highlighted the comprehensive support provided: "We at Human Touch Foundation provide a range of youth-led services, such as mental health counselling, psychosocial support, help them avail a range of social protection schemes, nutritional packages, medical help, or treatment adherence support, among others." Masooma Sheikh, a

counselling psychologist at the foundation, stressed the need for proper mental health services in HIV care centres and a holistic approach to support young people living with HIV.

### A BEACON OF HOPE AND RESILIENCE

As the Human Touch Foundation celebrates its 15th anniversary, its impact is evident in the lives it has touched. Peter Borges reflected on the journey: "Human Touch always had something different to offer when it came to support system or ecosystem which surrounded HIV care and support. For example, young people themselves speaking at different conferences including AIDS 2024 is so important. Lately, the realisation has grown over us about the importance of resilience: we must focus more on building the resilience of the young people. Issues like relationships or livelihoods cannot be missed while young counsellors themselves provide

mental health services." The foundation continues to address various needs, including relationships, sexual and reproductive health, substance abuse, TB and HIV co-infection, and child sexual abuse. Their commitment to non-institutional care and resilience-building for families and communities remains steadfast.

The Human Touch Foundation has also been instrumental in initiating viral load monitoring in Goa and ensuring the uninterrupted supply of antiretroviral therapy during the COVID-19 pandemic. They offer free vocational training for young people with HIV, helping them build skills and secure employment.

Dr. Kashyap Bhandodkar, a volunteer with the foundation, emphasized the importance of humane and holistic care: "Usually patients appear as a 'number or statistic' in a report. But experiences (like Human Touch) tell us the life story behind those numbers or statistics. This help us – doctors – provide better care because I believe that humane and holistic care is so key."

The Human Touch Foundation's journey and the stories of those it supports underscore the importance of tackling HIV-related stigma and discrimination through empathy, education, and comprehensive support. Their work serves as a beacon of hope and a model for other organizations worldwide. Despite significant advancements in the treatment of HIV, societal stigma continues to pose a major challenge for those living with the virus. The personal stories shared by young people in Goa highlight the persistent fear of discrimination that can prevent individuals from living their lives to the fullest. Internal stigma, which manifests as self-loathing and low self-esteem, often results from the external judgments and prejudices of society.

Organizations like the Human Touch Foundation are making remarkable strides in addressing these issues. By providing comprehensive support services, fostering youth-led initiatives, and promoting resilience, the foundation is helping to dismantle the barriers that stigma creates. Their work emphasizes the importance of empathy, understanding, and community in overcoming the challenges faced by people living with HIV.

However, the fight against stigma requires collective effort. It is crucial that society as a whole becomes more informed and compassionate towards those affected by HIV. We must reject discriminatory attitudes and instead offer support and acceptance. By doing so, we can create an environment where individuals living with HIV can thrive without fear of prejudice. Only through such a unified approach can we hope to eradicate the stigma associated with HIV and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy, fulfilling life.

(Shobha Shukla is Managing Editor and Executive Director of Citizen News Service (CNS) and a health and development justice advocate. She is Coordinator of Asia Pacific Regional Media Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT Media) and Global AMR Media Alliance; views are personal)



# LIVING IT UP IN JAIPUR

Jaipur, a bustling hub of commerce and culture in North India, is famed for its grand palaces, majestic forts, and exquisite crafts. Known globally for its intricate artwork and stunning jewellery, the Pink City exudes charm with its vibrant colours and rich artistic heritage. Alongside its historical grandeur, contemporary spaces reflecting local elegance have emerged as the city continues to evolve and thrive

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

**J**AIPUR, is a delightful place to visit with its colourful palaces, historic forts, lively markets showcasing local crafts, and diverse food options. It's a city that offers something for everyone. The pink city is also home to luxurious hotels and unique restaurants. Stroll along streets lined with palaces, temples, and the occasional cow. Indulge in royal culinary delights, explore exquisite jewellery shops, and discover a weekend of tranquillity amidst the bustling vibrancy.

## TRADITION MEETS CONTEMPORARY

Nestled near Amber fort off Delhi-Jaipur highway, The Leela Palace Jaipur sits with the backdrop of Aravalli hills amidst 8 acres of gardens. This hotel aims to impress guests with luxury while maintaining a cosy atmosphere. Royal opulence can be felt in the wood panels, windows, and artwork, yet there's a touch of modernity. The design reflects local artistry, from ancient Thikri mirror engraving to Shekhawati canvases on the walls. Traditional meets contemporary in a blend of comfort and grandeur at this splendid hotel. Stepping into the Leela Palace Jaipur feels like entering a world of extravagance and refinement

deeply rooted in history. This stunning hotel offers a range of accommodation options, including rooms, suites, and villas - all meticulously designed to provide a lavish experience. The Royal Plunge Pool villa is a highlight of my stay, radiating a sense of lightness and luxury. The spacious layout, complete with cosy armchairs, indulgent day beds, and a private pool, makes me feel like royalty. The attention to detail was exquisite, from the walk-in wardrobe to the marble-trimmed bathroom with a tub, not to mention the plush robes and organic toiletries provided. And for those seeking the epitome of luxury, the Maharaja suite exceeds all expectations with its grand living spaces, luxurious bathrooms, and stunning Palace views. One of the standout aspects of my experience at Leela Palace Jaipur is the warm and welcoming presence of Sharad Puri, the General Manager. His humble approach and dedication to ensuring guests feel at home set the tone for the genuinely gracious service throughout the hotel. The meticulous butler service, provided by a dedicated team of footmen in true Leela Palace style, adds an extra touch of luxury to my stay. In terms of relaxation amenities, the expansive spa and well-equipped



gym are truly remarkable. One can also enjoy exploring the local area with running maps provided by the hotel, along with the option to use bikes for leisurely rides or even embark on a customized cycling safari itinerary. Situated close to the capital, the hotel offers a perfect base to explore Jaipur in all its splendour, with historical sites, vibrant bazaars filled with textiles and handicrafts, and renowned silver and gemstone markets just a stone's throw away. My stay is a seamless blend of opulence, comfort, and exceptional service, making it a truly unforgettable experience.

## INDIA'S ONLY CANDLE LIT RESTAURANT AND MORE

From its impressive design and stylish interiors to the refined culinary offerings and carefully curated immersive experiences, Leela Palace Jaipur epitomizes authentic Indian luxury. As my eyes wander through the architectural marvels of the Sheesh Mahal, I find myself at Mohan Mahal, the Indian specialty restaurant glowing softly with candlelight. The ambience is crafted with 350,000 pieces of Thikri mirror, meticulously assembled by artisans over three years, creating an aura of refined elegance. Being India's only candle-



lit restaurant, it is truly a delight for the senses. The royal cuisine from Rajasthan and Awadh served at Mohan Mahal is a blend of simplicity and artistry, with standout dishes like the Seekh kebab dressed with barley. Breakfast is equally splendid, presented on beautiful tableware and featuring a selection of à la carte favourites. In the afternoons, I enjoy a delightful tea service at the Jharokha bar, where expertly crafted cocktails are served till late. I am particularly impressed by the Martini concocted by the talented mixologist, who



shares stories of mixing drinks for royalty. For a more intimate dining experience, Hawa Mahal offers a private rooftop setting where both the views and flavours are rich with captivating charm. Truly The hotel creates memorable moments that capture the essence of Indian indulgence, blending traditional rituals with modern hospitality seamlessly. **ALL VEGETARIAN** Burrowed discreetly within the vibrant Johri Bazaar, known for its jeweller's market, the intimate Johri Restaurant seamlessly blends into

the bustling surroundings. Tucked away on a tranquil lane just off the main colonnaded street, which played a pivotal role in securing the city's spot on the UNESCO World Heritage list, this hidden gem welcomes all guests. Attached to a charming five-suite boutique hotel, The Johri, the restaurant offers a unique dining experience that harmoniously intertwines with the heritage and allure of the historic marketplace. Savouring Jaipur's iconic zero-sized peas here is a revelation. Despite its fame that stretches as far as Dubai and Japan,

these peas had somehow escaped my taste buds back in Delhi. The petite yet incredibly sweet and flavourful green peas are beautifully served alongside corn and spinach on a generous plate. Chef Sonu Kumar has expertly crafted a menu that celebrates local and regional flavours with organic, seasonal, and vegetarian ingredients. Signature dishes like paan patta chaat and Dal Johri add a timeless charm to this culinary experience. Indulge in expertly crafted dishes that stay true to their origins, whether presented in a classic style or with a modern twist. The Jackfruit Nihari and truffle cheese kulcha stuffed with mushroom and local cheeses offer a burst of flavours in every bite. Accompanied by Missi roti and palak kofta in cashew gravy, the menu caters to diverse palates. Dietary preferences are accommodated, with gluten-free and Jain-friendly options like sangri ki shammii kebab and mirchi ka halwa.

*Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category.*



## Indulge in Pure Joy

Step into a world of craft brews and culinary delights at BeeYoung Brewgarden, the latest hotspot in South Delhi's vibrant social scene

**D**elhi's social scene has a new star. The BeeYoung Brewgarden, nestled in the bustling heart of South Delhi at The Panchshila Rendezvous. This lively venue is set to redefine your nights out, offering an unparalleled blend of craft beer, exquisite cuisine and endless entertainment. Whether you're a local or a visitor looking for a memorable night out, BeeYoung Brewgarden promises to deliver an experience that is both dynamic and delightful. As you step inside, you're transported to a European getaway, with chic barn-style ambience and lush, vibrant décor. The carnival-like atmosphere is inviting, with alfresco seating and stylish indoor spaces perfect for both intimate gatherings and spirited weekend celebrations. It's a setting where every detail contributes to a sense of revelry and relaxation. At the heart of BeeYoung Brewgarden is its commitment to craft brewing excellence. The menu takes you on a culinary journey, artfully pairing finely crafted brews with gourmet dishes designed to delight the senses. Each dish reflects an immersive culinary art approach, where flavour and presentation come together to create unforgettable dining experiences. With a global array of flavours, local and seasonal specialties cater to South Delhi's cosmopolitan crowd. The emphasis on quality ingredients and creative recipes ensures that every visit offers something new and exciting for

even the most discerning palates. Entertainment at the Brewgarden is as diverse as its menu. Enjoy a blend of games and nostalgia with options like Bocce Ball, Cornhole and vintage arcade machines, providing endless hours of competitive fun. The venue hosts live sports screenings, vibrant music performances and sets by an in-house DJ, ensuring a dynamic atmosphere that keeps you engaged throughout the evening. Whether you're in the mood for a lively party or a serene escape, BeeYoung Brewgarden caters to all your social needs. The soul of BeeYoung Brewgarden is its namesake beer, India's first crafted stout beer, known for its smooth, citrusy notes and crisp finish. BeeYoung Beer embodies the youthful spirit of India, with every sip reflecting Kimaya Himalayan Beverages' dedication to quality and innovation. For those looking to immerse themselves in a world of craft brewing, vibrant social scenes and exquisite dining, BeeYoung Brewgarden is the place to be. It's where the art of microbrewing meets community and celebration, promising unforgettable experiences with every visit. **Address:** The Panchshila Rendezvous, Panchshila Park, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi, 110017 **Timings:** 11 AM - 12 AM **Instagram:** @beeyoungbrewgarden **Price For Two:** INR 2500/- (Approx) **For Reservations:** +91 9354431386

## Modern Twist on Classic Gastropubs

Embark on a culinary journey with Monkey Bar's latest gastropub sensation, blending contemporary design and inventive dishes for an unparalleled experience

**I**n a city that's no stranger to culinary innovation, the revamped Monkey Bar emerges as a beacon of excitement and fresh perspective. Nestled within the iconic pyramid glass building in Vasant Kunj, this beloved gastropub has returned with a vibrant new look and a promise to elevate the dining experience. Monkey Bar, which first captured attention in 2012, was instrumental in popularising the gastropub concept in India. Now, it's back with a renewed vision, blending its signature charm with contemporary flair. The space has been transformed into an 'Urban Tropical Dreamscape', reflecting a design ethos that is both inviting and dynamic. The lush greenery and bright, cheerful hues of yellow and sage green infuse the venue with a sense of energy and warmth that's perfect for any time of day. The menu at Monkey Bar is where the true magic happens. It's a celebration of flavours, seamlessly melding the familiar with the innovative. From classic favourites like their renowned burgers to new, exciting dishes such as Methi-spiced Prawns and Jackfruit Tacos, the culinary offerings are designed to surprise and delight. Each dish is crafted with a blend of regional Indian spices and global influences, providing a taste experience that is both unique and accessible. One of the standout features of the revamped Monkey Bar is its new coffee programme. The introduction of three distinct categories, 'The Usual Suspects', 'You Do Your Brews', and 'The Unusual Suspects' offers something for every coffee lover. Whether you're in the mood for a classic Espresso or something more adventurous like the Nitro



Cold Brew, there's a brew to suit every palate. This thoughtful addition enhances the café's appeal, making it a versatile destination for everything from morning pick-me-ups to evening relaxation. The bar menu, crafted by Lead Mixologist Harish Chhimwal, continues Monkey Bar's tradition of inventive cocktails. By incorporating local ingredients and innovative techniques, the drinks menu offers a refreshing take on both classic and contemporary cocktails. The new creations, such as the Manga Mule and Rasam ki Kasam, provide a unique twist on traditional flavours, demonstrating a commitment to both creativity and quality. The revamped Monkey Bar is more than just a place to eat and drink; it's a space designed for enjoyment and connection. With its lively atmosphere, interactive elements like a pool table and Instagram-worthy spots such as the quirky banana sofa, the venue encourages guests to relax,

socialise and make lasting memories. This thoughtful redesign makes it clear that Monkey Bar is committed to providing a comprehensive, engaging experience for its patrons. The new Monkey Bar offers a delightful fusion of tradition and innovation. Its updated menu, inventive drink options and vibrant atmosphere ensure it remains a top choice for those seeking a memorable dining experience. For anyone looking to explore new flavours, enjoy expertly crafted drinks or simply unwind in a dynamic setting, Monkey Bar's latest incarnation promises to be an exceptional destination. **Wallet Factor:** Meal for two with alcohol: INR 1800 plus taxes | Meal for two without alcohol: INR 3000 plus taxes **Open 7 days a Week: Sunday to Saturday - 1pm. to 1am. Address:** Monkey Bar, Local shopping complex, 11 Vasant Kunj, Next to mini cooper-110070 **Instagram:** monkeybarind **Facebook:** monkeybarind

## Redefining Coffee Culture

Discover a fresh take on coffee with First Coffee, blending innovation and indulgence to cater to the modern coffee lover's palate

**S**tep into a revolution in coffee culture with First Coffee, where each cup is more than just a beverage - it's a celebration of bold flavours and innovative experiences. This fresh, dynamic brand is transforming the coffee scene with a blend of artisanal quality and modern flair, setting a new standard for coffee lovers everywhere. Founded by Sohrab Sitaram, a distinguished name in Delhi's food and beverage world; Shiv Dhawan, a serial entrepreneur with a passion for innovation and Chandini D Purnesh, the visionary behind the Harley Estate, First Coffee brings together expertise and enthusiasm to craft the ultimate coffee experience. Their beans, sourced from the renowned Harley Estate in Chikmagalur, promise an exceptional taste journey, reflecting the lush landscapes and rich heritage of the estate. First Coffee's appeal extends beyond its premium blends. The cafés offer a stylish, minimalist setting that caters to both quick stops and relaxed hangouts. The design ethos emphasises clean lines and a vibrant atmosphere, creating a space that feels both contemporary and inviting. The menu showcases First Coffee's dedication to flavour and creativity. Dive into the 'Untamed Espresso' for a bold start or savour the 'Cold Blooded Brew', a daring concoction that combines cascara syrup with a robust coffee base. For a whimsical twist, try the 'Jelly Jolt Affogato', where coffee meets ice cream and jelly in a delightful fusion. Classic offerings like 'The OG Cold Coffee' are given a modern twist, ensuring there's something for every palate. Tea enthusiasts can also rejoice with the unique blends available. The 'Teaminator', a refreshing mix of hibiscus and watermelon syrup and 'Cascara Thunder' offer bold new takes on traditional favourites. The Boba Nova collection is particularly exciting, featuring the 'Mango Boba Bomb' and 'Lychee Loca Bomb' for those who love a playful and fruity twist. First Coffee stands out as a game-



changer in the coffee industry. The brand's focus on combining artisanal quality with innovative offerings makes it a notable player in the market. The variety of options, from bold espressos to playful boba teas, caters to a wide range of tastes and preferences. Moreover, First Coffee's commitment to sustainability adds a layer of ethical responsibility that enhances its appeal. This brand isn't just offering a cup of coffee; it's creating a vibrant, inclusive coffee culture that resonates with modern consumers. It's exciting to see a brand that balances exceptional quality with social consciousness, setting a high bar for others in the industry. In a world where coffee culture is evolving, First Coffee stands out as a beacon of quality and creativity. With its commitment to exceptional brews and a vibrant coffee experience, it's more than just a place for your daily caffeine fix, it's a destination for those who appreciate the art of coffee. Embrace the revolution and make First Coffee a part of your daily routine. Your taste buds and your coffee cravings will thank you. **Instagram:** @yourfirstcoffee **Price For Two:** INR 450/- (only beverages) **Locations:** DLF Cyber Park, Gurugram; Pacific Mall in Pitampura; Pacific Outlet Mall in Jasola.

## A RECIPE FOR DISASTER

# IGNORED WARNINGS AND THE PERILS OF UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



BK SINGH

Despite advice in 2020 to relocate 4000 families from landslide-prone areas, Kerala proceeded with a mega hydro-electric project nearby. Incessant rains led to devastating landslides, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable development and better disaster management

The flooding and landslides in Kerala since 1991 had reportedly claimed several human lives, till the state witnessed the worst disaster of its kind at Mundakkai, Wayanad in the wee hours of 30th July. In 2020 State Disaster Management Authority advised relocation of 4000 families from landslide-prone areas that included Mundakkai. State did not heed the warning and on the contrary, has proposed a mega hydro-electric project involving an underground tunnel barely two km from the site of the current horror.

Incessant rains of 572 mm in 48 hours have led to two major landslides, one at 2.00 am at Mundakkal followed by another at 4.00 am at Chooralmala towns trapping hundreds of families. The debris further covered Vellarmala GVH school. The landslide also washed away the bridge connecting Chooralmala town with Mundakkai & Attarmala. So far 126 people have been found killed, 196 injured and more than a hundred missing or marooned in swathes of slush, mud and misery triggered by continuous and heavy rainfalls for two days. Dead bodies have also been found at Pothukal village that were carried by flowing water for 20 km in the Chaliyar River. High Tension lines and transformers of the Mekkadi electrical section have also been damaged and resuming power in the area has been a challenge. Landslides washing away the bridge have posed further challenges for relief and rescue operations, though all state and central agencies are putting up their might to remove debris, find survivors, treat the injured and move the people to safer locations and camps. Rescuers are crossing the river in spite with the help of the ropeways but mist, bad weather and unstable terrain are making it more difficult. Army has rushed to set up Bailey Bridge to the site, which has been moved on the road from Chennai.



This deluge affected adjoining areas of Karnataka and left the Kapila River in the Mysuru district in spate, after 80,000 cuces of water were let out of the Kabini dam, severely affecting the traffic between Karnataka and Kerala. Kodagu roads were also flooded and many persons stuck were rescued. Landslides also occurred repeatedly on the Shiradi Ghats section of NH 75 connecting Bengaluru and Mangalore holding the traffic for several hours and eventually re-routing them via Kodagu and Sampaji Ghats. A few weeks earlier a landslide had occurred near Ankola, Uttar Kannada district along the newly widened National Highway burying moving vehicles underneath that claimed a dozen human lives, and many others went missing. Next to the Himalayas, the

Western Ghats have the most fragile ecosystem and despite the disasters striking frequently, we have not mended our ways and continued to engage in unsustainable activities in the name of development. The entire Ghats section from Gujarat to Kerala once had luxuriant tree/forest cover that provided the source and the catchment of several east-flowing and west-flowing rivers – a key lifeline for everyone in peninsular India. With the changes in land use patterns, the integrity of the catchment of the rivers is compromised, resulting in many of the streams and rivers becoming seasonal. People who have enjoyed the perennial flow of water in the streams in the past have now been suffering for their basic needs for drinking, agriculture and plantations.

Western Ghats comprise undulating terrain and diverting lands comprising tree growth for cultivation of tea, coconut, banana, coffee, spices etc is never sustainable. Kerala has lost its natural forests at a very fast pace and individuals, public and private agencies have grown plantations for quick cash. Some areas are also encroached. Proponents of such projects argue that destroying forests and growing bananas, tea, cashew coconut etc provide employment and help in GDP growth. This perception is highly misplaced. Such projects are not evaluated on a long-term basis. There are hardly any methods to work out an economic valuation of forests destroyed in the process. When a heavy downpour occurs for days, it causes landslides, landslips, destroys houses, roads bridges etc. To rebuild the

infrastructure we need to further spend money. The infrastructure destroyed in 2018 and 2019 in the Kerala flood disaster was rebuilt by spending more than 50,000 crores rupees. If the true environmental cost is considered, none of the plantation projects of growing tea etc would be viable. Labourers of tea gardens as well as banana and coconut gardens must be re-skilled and their services can be utilized for manufacturing etc. 2018 floods in Kodagu Karnataka, a district adjoining Wayanad, also played havoc with the life of the people. I have discussed the reasons for flooding and landslides in this region, in my book, "Changing Land Uses – Shrinking Streams and Carbon Sinks". Like Wayanad, Kodagu is again a hilly district covering an area of nearly 4200 sq km. However only 1750 sq km was reserved as forests and

Protected Areas, leaving another 1000 sq km occupied by habitation and agriculture; the remaining 1450 sq km had still quite a luxuriant tree cover until the 1980s. These were wooded areas under the control of the Revenue Department of the state, and the tree felling in such areas was regulated by the Karnataka (Preservation) of Trees Act, where forest officers were empowered to grant/deny permission for the removal of trees. There is evidence on record to suggest that some officers had connived with the timber merchants and granted permission to remove tens of thousands of trees every year. This has resulted in compromising the ecological security of the region leading to frequent disasters of the type we are experiencing. The only solution that comes to everyone's mind is to stop

destroying the natural forests and making any changes in land use. There is a proposal to tag the Western Ghats as Eco sensitive area, but both governments of Kerala and Karnataka have yet not come on board. Unless they mend their ways the disasters would keep on striking more frequently and would be more destructive. Finally, let the column also deal with the reasons why there are heavy downpours for days in this warming world. The world at present including India is faced with heat waves, wildfires and heavy downpours leading to flooding. The uncontrollable wildfires in Canada, California and other parts of Western world are the consequences of global warming. Leh in India, which is located 3 km above the mean Sea level has the airfield at the highest altitude in the country and has been registering 32 degree Celsius temperature for some days in the last week of July. Due to such unusual temperatures, the air at this altitude gets rarefied and engines cannot develop the thrust required for takeoff. For the first time, all flights to and from Leh have remained suspended for these days.

High downpours are functions of higher rate of evaporation from sea surfaces. As the Sea surfaces warm, evaporation increases leading to excessive moisture-laden clouds in the atmosphere. Once the conditions are favourable, it leads to heavy downpours. It can have very dangerous consequences in urban centres, as we have recently seen the drowning of three students in the basement of Rau coaching centre, Rajendranagar Delhi. The Civic Agencies must re-model the stormwater drains to take the load of 100 mm of rain per hour. These drains were originally designed for 25 mm of rain per hour. Building bylaws should also change; Basements should have only huge sumps and Parking space for vehicles and nothing else.

(The writer is Retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Karnataka; views are personal)

## Unveiling the misogyny in fairytales: A feminist critique

In the enchanting world of fairytales, age-old stories have woven themselves into the fabric of our culture, shaping our perceptions and understanding of the world around us. Yet, beneath the guise of magic and fantasy lies a troubling reality: the portrayal of women through archaic tropes that perpetuate harmful stereotypes writes **SULAGNA MOHANTY**

In the enchanting world of fairytales, age-old stories have woven themselves into the fabric of our culture shaping our perceptions and understanding of the world around us. Yet, hidden beneath the guise of magic and fantasy lies a troubling reality; the portrayal of women through archaic tropes that perpetuate harmful stereotypes. If seen from a feminist lens, tropes like the witch, the evil stepmother and the damsel in distress reflect and reinforce harmful stereotypes about women and limit and distort our understanding of women's experiences.



SULAGNA MOHANTY

**It is essential to challenge and dismantle these harmful stereotypes to create a more inclusive and empowering society for women. By portraying women in positions of authority as capable, compassionate and supportive, we can inspire future generations of women to aspire to leadership roles and contribute positively to society**

witchcraft and executed in brutal witch hunts. These women were often healers, midwives or other powerful figures in their communities targeted for their knowledge and independence. The fear of witches and the persecution of women accused of witchcraft spread to colonial nations like India where women were often accused of witchcraft and subjected to violence and even death. Even today, women in some parts of India are killed in the name of witch hunts accentuating the lasting impact of this harmful stereotype. This concept of the witch reflects society's discomfort with powerful women and is a reminder of the importance of challenging stereotypes and celebrating women's autonomy and strength.

Further, the portrayal of the evil stepmother in fairytales not only vilifies women in positions of authority but also perpetuates a harmful narrative of competition and division among women. By pitting a woman against another woman, society creates a "divide and rule" policy where women are encouraged to fight among themselves rather than unite for their common rights and goals. This stereotype undermines the credibility of women in leadership roles by painting them as inherently



dangerous and untrustworthy. It diminishes the achievements of women by suggesting that their success comes at the expense of others developing a culture of suspicion and mistrust among women. Moreover, the depiction of the evil stepmother discourages young girls from aspiring to leadership roles as it reinforces the idea that women in power are to be feared and avoided. Instead of inspiring girls to pursue their ambitions and dreams, this stereotype instills fear and self-doubt, limiting their

potential and opportunities for growth. It is essential to challenge and dismantle these harmful stereotypes to create a more inclusive and empowering society for women. By portraying women in positions of authority as capable, compassionate and supportive, we can inspire future generations of women to aspire to leadership roles and contribute positively to society. The damsel in distress trope exemplified by characters like Cinderella, Rapunzel and Sleeping Beauty portrays women as

helpless victims in need of rescue by a male saviour. This narrative diminishes women's agency by suggesting that they are incapable of taking care of themselves and solving their problems. It also underpins the idea that a woman's ultimate goal in life is to find a man to rescue and protect her. In Cinderella, the titular character is rescued from her life of servitude by Prince Charming who saves her from her oppressive stepfamily and offers her a life of luxury and love. Similarly, Rapunzel is locked

away in a tower by a wicked witch until she is rescued by a prince who climbs up her hair. Sleeping Beauty is cursed to sleep for a hundred years until she is awakened by true love's kiss. These stories send a harmful message to audiences particularly young girls by implying that women are incomplete without a man to rescue them. They fail to acknowledge women's strength and ability to overcome challenges on their own. By perpetuating this trope, these stories emphasize outdated gender

roles and limit the potential of women to be seen as capable and independent individuals.

Hence, it is time to challenge these harmful tropes and create new narratives that empower young girls and women and celebrate their diversity and strength. Instead of portraying women as either wicked witches, evil stepmothers or helpless damsels, fairytales must depict women as complex, multifaceted individuals with agency and autonomy. By telling stories that reflect the diverse experiences and identities of women, we can create a more inclusive and empowering narrative for future generations. One must realise that the witch, evil stepmother and damsel in distress tropes in old fairy tales are not harmless storytelling devices; they are powerful tools that shape our perceptions of women and their place in society. By examining these tropes through a feminist lens, we can begin to challenge and dismantle the stereotypes they perpetuate paving the way for a more inclusive and empowering narrative for women everywhere. It is time to tell new stories to our kids; stories that empower and inspire women to embrace their true selves and rewrite their destinies.



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

The upcoming week promises a flurry of activities that will challenge your resilience and determination. Your engagements will deepen your understanding of your ambitions and desired pathways. You will enjoy familial contentment, and travel will feature prominently in your schedule. The early part of the week may involve demanding, work-related journeys. Adjustments in your professional life, such as relocations or new positions, will bring satisfaction towards the week's close. Midweek, a wave of sentimentality might encourage you to reconnect with loved ones, reminiscing about past experiences. A trip to your place of origin could arise, fulfilling a deep-seated need. Anticipate positive developments—a significant gain or inheritance may be forthcoming, enhancing your financial landscape.

Lucky number 10 | Lucky colour Orange  
Lucky day Wednesday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week may bring unexpected challenges that disrupt your usual ease. You might find yourself embroiled in disagreements, whether at work or within your home, which could push you towards seeking an escape. However, retreat isn't your only option. Embrace your inherent strength and resilience. Facing these issues head-on with clarity and determination can reveal straightforward resolutions. Your inner wisdom will be a guiding force, enabling you to navigate and overcome these hurdles effectively. Moreover, this period is significant for personal relationships. Embrace your intuitive and emotional insights—they will greatly benefit your romantic pursuits. Expect meaningful connections, heartfelt communications, and possibly romantic gestures or outings. Stay focused on managing your life and pursuing your aspirations confidently.

Lucky number 11 | Lucky colour Burgundy  
Lucky day Friday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

An enchanting opportunity is on the horizon, bringing unexpected shifts that might initially seem out of your grasp. The influences of these changes are tangible in your life, hinting that while fate often appears unannounced, its signs are perceptible for those attuned to observe subtle cues, making the enigmatic less so. Prompt yet considered decisions are necessary—act decisively but thoughtfully. A new acquaintance could spark a quick-flourishing romance, and an upcoming journey with a significant other may be forthcoming. Harness your communicative prowess and imaginative capabilities to captivate your partner and swiftly tackle a persistent issue. Your adeptness at expressing affection shines brightly. A challenging decision might arise, necessitating a choice between your partner and a new love interest. In such moments, seek guidance from your inner moral compass to lead the way.

Lucky number 9 | Lucky colour Sky Blue  
Lucky day Sunday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week brings a vibrant connection with loved ones, enhancing your overall joy and visible contentment. The warmth from your home life will radiate in your actions and expressions. Those not currently in a relationship will find themselves surrounded by romantic gestures and potential lifelong partnerships, sparking delight. Midweek promises gatherings that celebrate these bonds, infusing your interactions with renewed vigor and creative inspiration. Additionally, you may find yourself drawn towards more spiritual or introspective pursuits, perhaps discovering new passions. Financially, it's a favorable period for making contributions to causes you value or managing existing financial commitments effectively. You might also find opportunities to support your close ones financially, fostering a sense of community and shared well-being.

Lucky number 7 | Lucky colour Ocean Blue  
Lucky day Sunday



**VRIGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week, you find yourself energized and driven, eager to pursue your ambitions with determination. You possess the strength to turn your aspirations into accomplishments, reaching for your highest potential. Relationships, whether friendships or collaborations, are favored during this period. Midweek might bring a longing for comfort and familiarity, stirring deep reflections and enhancing your understanding of others' motives and actions. Your nurturing nature shines, offering support and comfort to those in need. Creatively, you are drawn to expressive outlets that stir the soul, such as music and the arts, where your imagination can flourish. However, take care to balance your enthusiasm with practicality; overly idealistic dreams could lead to challenges if not tempered with a grounded perspective.

Lucky number 6 | Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Sunday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This period marks a pivotal phase of renewal, urging you to clear the canvas of your life for a fresh beginning. Acknowledge that errors are merely stepping stones in the journey of knowledge. Leave your previous challenges behind and embrace the prospects that lie ahead with a clear determination to move forward. At times, you'll encounter scenarios that resist resolution through peaceful means or insightful strategies, and you might feel compelled to adopt a more assertive approach. The resolution or escalation of disputes or disagreements is on the horizon. Embrace your inner resolve and clarity, which will empower you to navigate through these conflicts successfully. As the week concludes, expect an array of unexpected and intriguing experiences. Exercise caution with enticing opportunities, understanding their full implications before committing.

Lucky number 8 | Lucky colour Fuschia  
Lucky day Saturday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week, your ability to navigate complex decisions will be enhanced, covering a range of personal and professional matters. Have faith and trust in your own inner strength and self-assurance, this will help you facing challenges. Midweek, you might encounter an individual whose characteristics starkly differ from yours, potentially leading to temporary discomfort. This person could be a newcomer in your workplace and might pose challenges to your professional path. However, with your grounded nature and honest approach, you will manage to maintain control of the situation. Your persistence, strategic thinking, and intelligence will help you navigate through these obstacles effectively. You possess a unique ability to maintain equilibrium in various aspects of life, which consistently leaves a positive impression on those around you.

Lucky number 4 | Lucky colour Musterd  
Lucky day Thursday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week, you might find yourself captivated by flights of fancy. Recently, you've been deeply immersed in worldly pursuits, possibly to the detriment of your inner balance. Now may be a good time to dismantle any self-created barriers built from such indulgences. Embrace a more grounded approach, especially if you've been resistant to change. This shift aligns with a deeper spiritual beckoning. It's crucial to monitor your aspirations to ensure they remain achievable, as fleeting satisfactions are outweighed by enduring impacts. As the week concludes, anticipate significant shifts or transitions. These changes, whether they involve moving locations or pivotal figures entering or exiting your life, will happen quickly and are essential, albeit not always by choice.

Lucky number 1 | Lucky colour Magenta  
Lucky day Tuesday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week may test your resilience and patience as various challenges emerge across different aspects of your life. From health issues to complications at work or home, unexpected events could stir mental tension. It's crucial how you handle these situations. You might face skepticism from those around you or encounter unpredictable behavior in public spaces. In such scenarios, adopting a strategy of compromise could be beneficial. Hold your ground and stay calm, even under the most challenging conditions. As the week closes, you might find yourself overwhelmed with regret and anxiety, potentially leading to restless nights. Instead of dwelling on past events, focus on addressing the real issues at hand to prevent further distress.

Lucky number 12 | Lucky colour Grey  
Lucky day Monday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week holds great promise for you as favorable influences surround you. You exhibit creativity, initiative, and a spirit of adventure, allowing you to effectively tackle and complete any task or project at hand. Your approach includes building a solid base and addressing core issues, ensuring durable outcomes and success in your endeavors. Emotional challenges might arise mid-week, but with the support of a partner or through a beneficial partnership, these can be navigated successfully. This period also brings opportunities for forming new connections, whether in your personal or professional life. Those not in a relationship might receive encouraging signs of affection, while those committed can experience deeper intimacy and connection. However, stay alert to the deceptive tactics of untrustworthy individuals. Assertiveness and tact will be key in countering any negative influences.

Lucky number 2 | Lucky colour Pink  
Lucky day Monday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week opens with a sense of joy and gathering, marking significant personal and communal celebrations. Embrace the richness surrounding you, and express gratitude for those who enhance your life. As you encounter new opportunities, whether in your career or personal projects, a proactive and courageous approach is essential. Now is the moment to harness your capabilities and embark on ventures with confidence, fully equipped to see them through. An influx of energy and determination arrives, urging immediate action to capitalize on emerging prospects. Utilize this surge to advance your ambitions. As the week closes, expect interactions with influential individuals, particularly a discerning leader. Honesty will serve you well in these exchanges, even as challenging conversations prompt personal growth and deeper understanding.

Lucky number 3 | Lucky colour Teal  
Lucky day Wednesday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week is all about embracing change and pursuing personal growth. If monotony has crept into your routine, it's time to inject some excitement and joy. However, beware of neglecting your responsibilities amidst minor distractions. A lack of discipline, especially in financial matters, could lead to disorder. Balancing your commitments to both family and career is crucial to maintain stability. Consider tightening your budget as this discipline may be beneficial for your well-being too. Adopting a new wellness routine, including a nutritious diet and regular physical activity, is essential. Despite challenges, remember that every ending paves the way for new beginnings. As the week closes, take time to restore yourself, nurturing both your physical and mental health for overall harmony.

Lucky number 15 | Lucky colour Brown  
Lucky day Thursday

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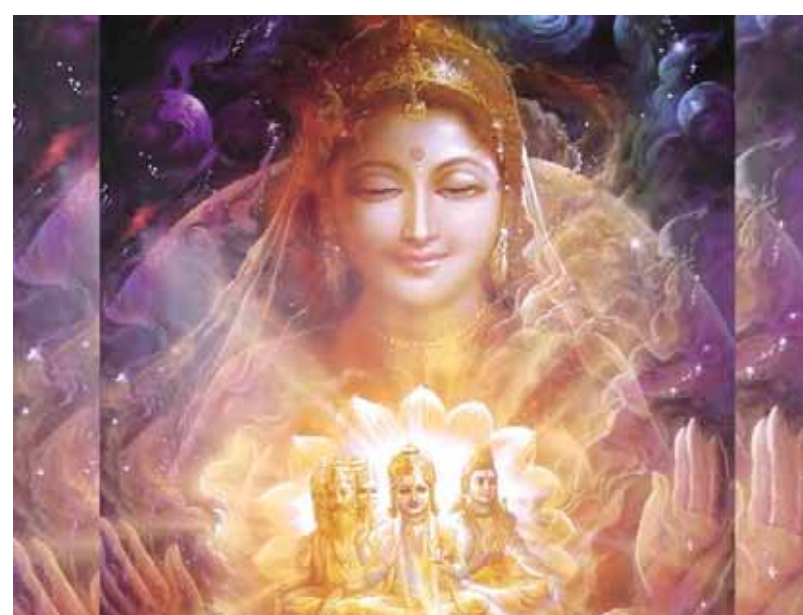


**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Revealing and Veiling dimensions of Shakti trinity

Picking up threads from the previous issue, it's time to look at a few other dimensions of the Shakti -trinity. Inherent in Sata is the 'revealing principle'. We have already discussed that when Tamasa engages with the seeds of creation stirred up by Rajas element, it leads to creation. The creation, however gains stability and thereby form existence with name when aided by Sata element. Once the form existence is in place, the eternal element of Consciousness finds a platform to manifest. The radiance inherent in Consciousness Element brings into light (in cognitive domain), the form-existence designated with a name and form. Tamasa, its counterpart, is marked with 'veiling nature', as it does all the processing in hiding. It is something like a plant bearing seed, which has to necessarily go into hiding in the dark realms of mother earth's womb for a specified period, for it to draw succour from the earth mass. Following which, the seed first sprouts, and then grows into a fruit bearing tree. Evidently, the tree-form remains veiled in the seed; but once manifest, the particular seed

creating it would not be in sight. Similarly, at the primal-source, which is supposedly self-revealed, the fine print of manifest world remains veiled in seed-form. But once the world becomes manifest, the root on which life cycle is premised gets veiled, as it goes out of reckoning in human being's perceptible domain. It is for this very reason that in Indian context, darkness is not perceived as negative. For, it remains just one phase of nature's creation process. So, veiling and unveiling aspects are just two faces of nature's creation cycle. But then a look at the way seed-tree-seed cycle runs, an intriguing question arises in mind, especially in view of the fact that seed goes out of sight once it transforms into a plant. Would it mean that the primal source would also lose its presence once the manifest world comes to light? Looking at the seed-tree cycle analogy, it may appear so. But then, it needs to be appreciated that the manifest ephemeral world has to be rooted somewhere in some inexhaustible eternal reality. Otherwise, it will not be able to draw succour necessary to



continue recycling again and again. But for which, the manifest world would not have sustained so long. Here, it also needs to be appreciated that the Primal-Source is infinite,

inexhaustible and an outflowing eternal reality, beyond the bounds of time, space, and causality. It is only a finite thing that may lose its presence, once transformed into another form.

A look at the emergence and disappearance of tidal waves in the sea may throw further light. When the sea is in fury, tidal waves envelope the sea. The sea goes out of our sight. Once the tidal waves settle down after doing their round for a while, it comes out that only the surface water had temporarily gone into fury. The main sea body was there in its place. Even in tidal wave state, it remains a part of the main sea body itself. So, whereas existence of the tidal wave can be measured in time frame, the main sea body remains beyond its limit. Similarly, the disorder just at the surface level of the primal source is enough to manifest the world we live in. But the primal source would remain very much in place, and therefore, is beyond the limitation of time. Again, when the manifest world finally disintegrates, it gets back to its primal source, the way main sea body takes back the tidal waves into its womb. So, the primal source happens to be an eternal reality beyond the binds of time. The revealing, veiling, and activating aspects of Sata, Tamasa, and Rajasa

have psychological imperatives on human minds as well, in so far as their individual character is concerned. As already discussed above, with body-mind organism getting revealed, the root of life gets veiled. That clouds human perceptible and comprehensible abilities in five different ways. Since these limitations arise as a sequel to the design parameters underlying the making of a being, they are there by birth. We may call them as elemental limitations. Kashmir Shaivism calls this as being under the spell of Maya (delusion). The human limitations are viewed in the backdrop of the primal source believed to be enjoying singular ownership of the whole manifest world and thereby carrying a sense of fullness; being omniscient; being beyond limitation of time and space as wells as laws of causation.

The issue continues.....

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India look to find a way past Lankan spinners, slow pitch in second ODI

Measures to battle a sluggish pitch and an assortment of Sri Lankan slow bowlers will feature high on India's strategy list for the second ODI to be played here on Sunday.

Wellalage, the left-arm spinner, and leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga as the 29 balls that the Indian batter faced out of a total of 32 were by the spinners.



including Shubman Gill, leaked 126 in 30 overs for four wickets, while their Lankan counterparts' figures stood at -167 in 37.5 overs for nine wickets.

which has not been their trait for a while now. From Sri Lanka's perspective, they will enter the second match of the three-match series with a better frame of mind after shackling a much superior and vastly experienced opponent.

Indian top-order batters will be given ample opportunities to bowl: Bowling coach Bahutule

Bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule indicated that India will continue to give bowling opportunities to their top-order batters as it can work as a "surprise element" to the opposition.

Shubman Gill was given a chance to roll his arm against Sri Lanka in the first ODI, which ended in a tie here on Friday, and Bahutule said it will be the way forward even though the opener gave away 14 runs in his lone over.

opportunities for batters to bowl," he explained. Bahutule said the visitors could have tried to forge better partnerships after starting from the blocks in a blazing fashion.

My coaching days end here: Boe bows out after Chirag-Satwik fail to win Olympic medal

Mathias Boe, the coach of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, on Saturday announced his retirement from coaching following the ace Indian badminton pair's exit from the ongoing Paris Olympics.

"For me, my coaching days ends here, I'm not going to continue in India or anywhere else, for now at least. I have spent too much time in a badminton hall and it's also pretty stressful to be a coach, I'm a tired old man," the 44-year-old from Denmark wrote on his Instagram account.

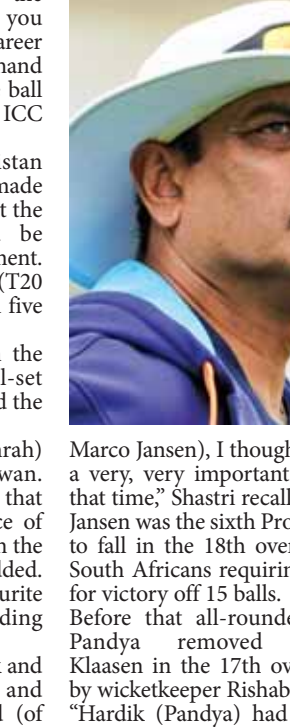


then things doesn't go as you would have hoped for. "I know you guys are gutted. I know how much you wanted to bring a medal back to India, but this time it wasn't meant to be," Boe said.

Bumrah can make ball obey his command: Ravi Shastri

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri stopped just short of calling pacer Jasprit Bumrah a magician with the ball and said his standout moments in the T20 World Cup in the Americas were India managing to thwart Pakistan's charge in the group stage and Rohit Sharma's side pulling the rabbit out of the hat in the final against South Africa.

"He (Bumrah) just showed the world what it takes...And you know, it's not often in your career when you have a ball in your hand and you say, 'do this and the ball does that,'" Shastri said in the ICC Review.



Marco Jansen), I thought that was a very, very important wicket at that time," Shastri recalled. Jansen was the sixth Protea wicket to fall in the 18th over with the South Africans requiring 21 runs for victory off 15 balls.

"Very few have done it (change the flow of the game). I thought Wasim (Akram) and Waqar (Younis) had it in their prime when they played white-ball cricket. Shane Warne had it where he could literally tell the ball, go there, pitch there, hit leg stump," Shastri said.

"People who are on top of the game have that ability. I think Bumrah had that in this World Cup," he added. He was all praise for Suryakumar Yadav's stunning catch on the boundary to send back David Miller and reduced the Proteas to 161/7 with just five deliveries remaining in the final.

"He hardly missed anything, albeit he must have felt the pressure as the tournament got on because it's not easy to come back and do all the stuff he did," Shastri added.

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