



OPINION 6 CULTURAL IDENTITY SHAPES BEHAVIOUR

WORLD 9 ANTI-RACISM PROTESTERS MARCH COUNTERS VIOLENCE IN UK

MONEY 10 RBI KEEPS INTEREST RATE UNCHANGED

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY AUGUST 9, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

Established 1864

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

WRESTLER AMAN ENTERS SEMIFINALS 12 SPORTS



NEERAJ SETTLES FOR SILVER

AGENCIES ■ PARIS

India's champion Neeraj Chopra had to settle for a silver medal in javelin at the Paris Olympics on Thursday night. Pakistan's javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem broke the Olympic record with a throw of 92.97m at the Stade de France on Thursday to bag the gold. The Nadeem gold was the first-ever individual gold medal for Pakistan in the Olympics. Two Pakistanis have won bronze medals in individual events in Olympic history. The previous record was in the name of Andreas Thirkildsen of Norway with a throw of 90.57 metres during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Arshad so far had a personal best of 90.18m, which he notched at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Neeraj had trouble getting his grooves right, faulting frequently in his attempts. His second throw of 89.45 m put him in the second spot and was his season best. He faltered on the first, third, fourth and fifth attempts in pursuit of the gold. His last throw was well short of his best.



India's goalkeeper Parattu Reveendran Sreejesh, in yellow jersey, reacts as India's players celebrate after winning the men's bronze medal field hockey match against Spain at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium during the 2024 Olympics, on Thursday. PTI



Indian hockey's historic moment at Paris

PTI ■ PARIS

The Indian men's hockey team clinched a second successive bronze medal at the Olympic Games for the first time in 52 years with a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Spain, giving veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh a fitting farewell here on Thursday. It was tense last few minutes for the Indians as they faced two short corners within the last minute but the defence stood tall and soaked in the pressure. India, who claimed the

bronze in Tokyo Games after a hiatus of 41 years, lived up to the expectations despite not having a perfect build-up to the Games. The last time India won back-to-back Olympic medals was in 1968 (bronze) and 1972 editions (bronze). The bronze medal was also a desperate wait for the Indian contingent in Paris, which has endured six fourth-place finishes so far, apart from a heart-breaking disqualification of wrestler Vinesh Phogat. Spain went ahead with skipper Marc Miralles (18th)

converting a penalty stroke while India captain Harmanpreet Singh (30th, 33rd) stole the limelight with a brace. Shrugging off their heart-wrenching 2-3 defeat against Germany in the semifinal, India came out all guns blazing to dominate the possession in the first quarter. It was an offensive start from India as they penetrated Spain's defence regularly in the first 15 minutes and created the first scoring chance of the match in the sixth minute.

Vice-captain Hardik Singh created a fine move from the right and passed the ball into the D to Sukhjeet Singh, whose shot went just wide of the left side Spanish goal as the Europeans survived. The Spanish came with more purpose and intensity in the second quarter and pressed hard on the Indian goal. They took the lead in the 18th minute through a penalty stroke conversion by Miralles after Manpreet Singh conceded an unnecessary foul inside the D. Continued on Page 8



Vinesh retires after Olympics heartbreak

PTI ■ PARIS

Her long-cherished Olympic dream shattered by a cruel twist of fate, a crestfallen Vinesh Phogat bid adieu to her international wrestling career on Thursday, saying she doesn't have the strength to continue anymore. The 29-year-old, who was disqualified for being 100gm overweight ahead of her 50kg category gold medal bout in

the Olympics on Wednesday, announced her decision on social media, seeking forgiveness from everyone who supported her. Addressing her mother Premalata, Vinesh, a three-time Olympian, wrote, "Ma, wrestling has won, I have lost. Please forgive me, your dreams and my courage, everything is broken." "I don't have any more strength now. Goodbye

wrestling 2001-2024. I shall be indebted to you all. Forgive (me)," added the two-time world championships bronze-medallist. Her stunning decision comes a day after Vinesh appealed against her disqualification from the Olympic finals in the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), demanding that she be awarded a joint silver medal. Continued on Page 8

Waqf Bill to face JPC scrutiny after Opp outcry



Union Minister Kiren Rijiju speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Thursday. PTI

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid dissent by the Congress-led Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) which opposed the proposed law in its present form, terming the Bill 'divisive', 'anti-Muslim', and 'unconstitutional', the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for further scrutiny.

After introducing the Bill in the Lok Sabha, Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday said the government is ready for further scrutiny of the legislation. Defending the Bill, Rijiju said the Central Government's intention is clear and it has nothing to do with the Waqf (Amendment) Bill does not intend to interfere with the freedom of any religious body and that no provision of the Constitution has been

violated. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said he will talk with leaders of all parties for constituting the JPC. Earlier, moving the Bill, the Minister clarified that this Bill is not intended to interfere with the functioning of religious bodies and is to provide justice to the disadvantaged and poor sections of the Muslim community. Soon after Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju sought leave to introduce the Bill in the Lok Sabha, many

Opposition MPs, who had given notices to oppose the Bill, alleged that the proposed legislation was an "attack on the Constitution and federalism". Calling it an attack on the Constitution and aimed at targeting Muslims, several INDIA Bloc MPs urged the Government to withdraw the Bill. Parties such as Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Samajwadi Party (SP), and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) have criticised the proposed amendments including for inclusion of non-Muslims in waqf governance saying they will encroach on the religious rights. The Bill proposes significant changes to the 1995 law, such as the inclusion of Muslim women on Waqf boards and ensuring verification of land before a board announces it as a Waqf property. The Government also introduced The Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill, 2024. Responding to the concerns flagged by Opposition members, Rijiju said Waqf Act 1995 did not serve its purpose, hence the amendment was planned. "I want to tell Congress these amendments are being brought to achieve what you (Congress) couldn't," he said. Continued on Page 8

Ex-West Bengal CM Buddhadeb passes away

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The last Marxist Chief Minister of Bengal and arguably the 'last surviving icon of pride' for the State's decaying Left force Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee passed away on Thursday morning after a prolonged illness. He was 80 and is survived by his wife Meera



Bhattacharjee and son Suchetan. He was the State's Chief Minister from 2000 to 2011. Bhattacharjee had been in poor health for several years, and was confined to his small two-room apartment on Palm Avenue for the past 8 years mostly reading and writing books. Continued on Page 8



Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus returns to Bangladesh from Paris to take charge of interim Government. PTI

Hasina ouster Bangladesh's second independence: Yunus

PTI ■ DHAKA

Muhammad Yunus on Thursday promised to deliver a Government which assures safety to its citizens and urged them to assist him in rebuilding the protest-torn Bangladesh, as the Nobel laureate described the ouster of Sheikh Hasina as the country's "second independence". Yunus, 84, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his pioneering work on micro-lending, was appointed by President Mohammed Shahabuddin as the head of the interim Government after Prime Minister Hasina resigned and fled to India following widespread protests against her regime over a controversial quota system in jobs. Yunus, who was in Paris for

the Olympic Games, returned to the country via Dubai on Thursday on an Emirates flight. Army chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman, senior officials, student leaders and civil society members welcomed him at the airport. At an emotional press conference at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after his arrival, Yunus said, "Today is a day of our pride. We have got independence for the second time. We have to protect this independence." He expressed gratitude to the youth who made the protest movement against Hasina successful and said he would like to stress first is to "save the country from violence so that we can move forward on the path that the students have shown us."

Registration of temples, mutts, trusts mandatory in Bihar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

The Bihar Government has directed all District Magistrates (DM) to ensure that unregistered temples, mutts, and trusts in their respective areas are registered and details of their immovable assets are submitted to the Bihar State Board of Religious Trusts (BSBRT) for uploading on its website. The BSBRT operates under the State's law department.



State Law Minister Nitin Nabin said, "All DMs have been directed to ensure that unregistered temples, mutts, and trusts are registered on a priority basis." He also instructed the DMs to ensure that details of immovable assets of all registered temples and mutts are promptly provided to the BSBRT for uploading on its website. "I recently sent a letter to all DMs in this regard. So far, only 18 districts have submitted data to the BSBRT," he added. The Minister said, "According to the Bihar Hindu Religious Trusts Act of 1950, all public temples, mutts, trusts, and dharamshalas must be registered with the BSBRT. The State Government will take stringent action against those involved in illegal property transactions of registered temples, mutts, or trusts, as well as against Continued on Page 8

India to monitor winged guests in real-time

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Migration routes and behaviours of the Bar-headed geese, one of the world's highest-flying birds having grey bodies, and a few other waterbirds wintering at the famous high-altitude Wular Lake in Jammu and Kashmir are all set to be monitored in real-time through sophisticated solar-powered radio collars to be tagged on their neck. The project, first of its kind in the region will be soon launched by the Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India

(WII), an autonomous body under the Union Environment Ministry. Wular Lake, one of India's 75 Ramsar-designated wetlands, is internationally recognised for its ecological significance. Despite facing numerous environmental challenges, it continues to support a diverse array of flora and fauna, attracting wildlife enthusiasts, tourists, and locals alike. The advanced GPS satellite tracking technology integrated into these solar-powered collars will offer real-time insights into the birds'



movements and behaviour, particularly during their initial return migration. The lightweight collars, which weigh between 50 and 70 grams, are designed specifically for large geese and features high solar efficiency, thus doing away with the limitations of the radio-collars based on conventional batteries, said a scientist from the WII on the condition of anonymity. He said the agency is in the process of procuring the solar-powered radio collars. These gadgets will use the Global Positioning System

(GPS) to record location, travel patterns, speed, temperature, and magnetic field strength. They transmit this data to researchers via GSM cellular networks whenever the birds are within range of network towers. GSM, or Global System for Mobile communications, is the standard international cellular protocol used for this purpose, he informed. By combining movement and habitat use data with diet studies conducted by other partners, conservationists and habitat managers will be better equipped to develop strategies

that accommodate growing populations of these migratory birds. "The decision to select the type of birds to be radio collared will be finalised only after we receive the gadgets," said the scientist. The WII scientists will initiate collaring the geese for over a year-long study to determine the proportion of migratory geese that winter at Wular Lake. The GPS-GSM transmitters will be mounted on the birds' necks, providing valuable data on their travel and resting sites. Continued on Page 8

Focusing on developing job opportunities: Yogi CM inaugurates Health City Vistaar



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said his government is focusing on identifying and developing opportunities in both the public and private sectors to connect the state's vast population with development and employment. Adityanath said this during the inauguration of Health City Vistaar (a 300-bed super specialty hospital and trauma centre) in Gomti Nagar Extension here, calling the Rs 200-crore private healthcare facility an outcome of the UP Global Investors Summit. "We are focusing on identifying and developing opportunities in both the government and private sectors to connect this vast population with development and employment," the chief minister said while emphasising that UP is home to 25 crore people.

He noted that since the BJP government took office in 2017, significant efforts have been made to boost employment in both sectors, resulting in job opportunities for over 6.5 lakh youth. "The Investors Summit in 2018 also opened the doors to increased investments in the state," he added. On the occasion prior to the inauguration, Yogi said: "Before our administration, the state faced severe challenges as investors were looking to leave, and crime was rampant, making both daughters and businesses unsafe. We implemented a zero-tolerance policy, which has since become a national model for rule of law. These crucial steps paved the way for a resurgence of investments in the state." Discussing the transformation in investment in UP, the chief minister said when the BJP government first assumed

power, he proposed holding an investor summit, and UP was initially projected to attract an investment of Rs 20,000 crore, which would have been inadequate for the state's development. "We then embarked on significant efforts that are now yielding positive results," he noted. Yogi said that what began with an investment of Rs 4 lakh crore in the first investors summit has since escalated to Rs 40 lakh crore, exemplifying their ambition to make the state a USD 1-trillion economy. He further said there were doubts about the authenticity of these investment figures, so the list was made public to address them and this approach has proven successful. "Investment, whether large or small, paves the way for development and offers new opportunities to youth by connecting them with employment," he added.

Govt to enhance health services

Lucknow (PNS): A five-year blueprint has been established to enhance Uttar Pradesh's health services. On Thursday, the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the state government and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) was

extended, with the agreement signed by Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak and BMGF officials in the Annexe auditorium. The extension, from June 11, 2024, to June 10, 2029, aims to bolster health services across the state.

Pathak emphasised the commitment to delivering high-quality health services and highlighted achievements, including the establishment of 207 encephalitis treatment centres (ETCs). He noted improvements in Caesarean deliveries, emergency newborn care, and the implementation of teleconsultation via the e-Sanjeevani app, which has served over two crore patients. Additionally, 85% of children have been fully vaccinated this year. Pathak also outlined the progress in health infrastructure.

the pioneer
CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Rahul Kumar To Rahul Katiyar for all future purpose, Rahul Katiyar S/O Digvijay Singh Katiyar R/O Nanamau, Dadhika Bilhaur, Kanpur

NOTICE

I, Sachin Kumar, s/o Madan Gopal, Dadua Bazaar, Bargaon, Gonda, I father of ansh modanwal my son is studying in 9th in Fatima school. My and my wife's name in school's record is wrong & the correct name is Sachin Kumar and Jyoti respectively.

NOTICE

There is a mistake in my service record, my wife's name is Smt. Saraswati Devi Rai and date of birth is mentioned as 02.02.1950 which is wrong, the correct name is Saraswati Devi and date of birth is 07.04.1950, which is justified to be included in my service record, J.C. Army Number 195178 N Former Subedar Maksudan Rai Village Tilwa Post Revatipur Zamania District Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

NOTICE

I, Prateek Tiwari, S/o Late Chandra Prakash Tewari, resident of 11, Awadhपुरi, Sarvodaya Nagar, Lucknow, notify that my surname spelling is now 'Tiwari' instead of 'Tewari'. Thereby my name will be as Prateek Tiwari for all purposes.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from NOOR ALAM to MOHD NOOR ALAM. In future I shall be known as MOHD NOOR ALAM. Mohd Noor Alam S/o Mahobooob Ali, 27/37, Aligen Road, Civil Line, Prayagraj UP

NOTICE

It is notified that my name in my daughter's Ishita Mishra school documents is recorded as Ashish Kumar Mishra, whereas my correct name is Ashish Kumar s/o Ashwani Kumar, Resident at Madhavpuram, Bargaon, Gonda (U.P.)

NOTICE

NOTICE
General Public is hereby informed that Original Sale Deed dated 11.02.1988, executed by Dev Tripathi, in favour of Akhilesh Nath Agnihotri and Shailish Nath Agnihotri, registered at Book No. 1, Jild 3354, Pages 392-394 at Serial No. 4235 dated 24.01.1989, with Sub Registrar, Lucknow regarding House No. 553/72-E area measuring 4048 Sq. Ft. situated at Mohalla Patel Nagar Colony, IS Alambagh Lucknow, now owned by Yogendra Kumar and Krishna Kumari Mehndi Ratta, has been lost at Alam Bagh Market, by Yogendra Kumar on 06.07.2024 around 6 to 6:29 PM, while going to shop for getting its photocopy. Now, above mentioned property is getting mortgage with Kotak Mahindra Limited, Kanpur and Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, Bank against loan. If anyone finds it please return it under sign of any person or financial institution has any interest or objection contact to Advocate mentioned below with objection with relevant document, within 10 days from the date of publication of this notice.
LAW VERITAS NORTH (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. D-272, Second Floor, Prakash Tower, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Pin-226010, Mobile No. 0522-3510136.

NOTICE

Original deed of Jagdish S/O Vishram Plot No. 25C Kharsa No. 934 dated 25.5.2012 and testator Jagdish of Plot No. 25 C Kharsa No. 934 dated 16.02.2017. The original copies of both have gone missing. Ramu Mishra, S/O late Jagdish, resident of Saraiya Tola Madiyanv Jankipuram Garden, Lucknow. Ph. 8707573687.

Advocate arrested for abetment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the arrest of 60-year-old Unnao native advocate Sunil Kumar, the Gautampalli police on Thursday claimed to have apprehended the accused who allegedly provoked a woman from Unnao to attempt self-immolation as a means to press her demands with higher authorities in the state government. DCP (Central) Ravina Tyagi stated that the police recovered a mobile phone from the victim and it contained several audio recordings. "These shocking recordings exposed the individual responsible for inciting the woman to take such a drastic step, resulting in her suffering severe burns. The accused, Sunil

SELF-IMMOLATION ATTEMPT BY UNNAO WOMAN

Kumar, has been sent to judicial custody following his arrest late Wednesday night," Tyagi said. Sunil Kumar was summoned to the Gautampalli police station for questioning and was subsequently arrested. Tyagi explained that the victim's mobile phone had critical audio recordings of her conversations with Sunil. "These recordings provided key insights into the events leading up to her immolation attempt. In the recordings, Sunil Kumar can be heard encouraging the victim to self-immolate, even providing specific guidance on how to carry out the act, from purchasing the inflammable material to

selecting the location," Tyagi added. The victim, Anjali Jatav, sustained 80% burns after setting herself on fire on Vikramaditya Marg on Tuesday morning. She is currently battling for her life at the KGMU Trauma Centre. Anjali, like Sunil, hails from Unnao. "Recordings revealed that Sunil advised Anjali to purchase the inflammable substance outside of Lucknow, as it was reportedly unavailable there, and to use a dark-colored container to transport it, indicating a premeditated plan," said the DCP. A crucial recording dated August 6, 2024, at 8:51 am, contained Sunil's final directive to Anjali—proceed with the self-

immolation. This evidence confirms that Sunil Kumar orchestrated a criminal conspiracy aimed at disrupting law and order, tarnishing the government's image, and inciting public outrage against the police and government. "We have registered an FIR against the accused at the Gautampalli police station under charges of abetment to suicide, giving false evidence, and criminal conspiracy," the officer stated. In addition to investigating the phone calls between the victim and Sunil, the police are also examining other evidence to fully understand the extent of Kumar's involvement. The police are working diligently to

piece together the complete picture and ensure that all those involved are held accountable. According to the police, Anjali had first met the accused lawyer in July. The call recordings between them span from August 2 to August 6, including conversations at odd hours and just before the incident on the day of her self-immolation attempt. Anjali (30) set herself ablaze, reportedly due to police inaction regarding her dowry harassment complaints against her husband and in-laws. She poured some inflammable substance on herself after leaving her one-year-old son by the roadside outside the chief minister's residence. Passersby and police rushed to her rescue and transported her to the hospital.

School van driver hangs self over pending wages

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A school bus driver ended his life on Thursday in Sushant Golf City, allegedly due to the highhandedness of the school owners. The deceased, identified as Lalta Prasad, was found hanging inside the GRS Memorial School, where he had been staying overnight to guard the property. Prasad's wife Meera, a resident of Sitapur, stated that he worked as a bus driver at GRS Memorial School in Saraswan, Arjunganj. She alleged that for the past year, Prasad had not received his wages from the school owners, Durgesh and Ravindra Kumar. According to Meera, whenever Prasad requested his payment, he was met with verbal abuse and harassment from the owners. The constant mistreatment and financial strain reportedly caused Prasad severe mental stress, making it difficult for him to support his family. According to reports, Prasad hanged himself from the railing on the first floor of the school's rear courtyard around 5 am on Thursday. The incident came to light when the local fire department was alerted to a fire involving school buses and vans on the premises. The fire was quickly extinguished by firefighters from Gomti Nagar, Hazratganj,

and other local units. As per an official communique from the fire department, they received a report of a fire at GRS Memorial Public School in Sarasawa, Sushant Golf City, at 5:20 am on Thursday. Fire Station Officer Mamachand and his team responded to the call, managing to put out the fire that had destroyed two vans and an e-rickshaw. During the firefighting efforts, Prasad's body was found hanging from a rope within the school premises. The cause of the fire is under investigation. The police sent Prasad's body for an autopsy and are conducting further investigations into the case. They plan to question those named in the complaint.

Waiter assaulted, subjected to caste abuse by youths

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Over half a dozen youths assaulted a cafe waiter and subjected him to caste-based abuse when asked to pay the bill in Gomti Nagar. The accused refused to pay, claiming they ate food touched by the waiter. The situation escalated when they first verbally abused, then physically attacked the waiter and his companion. They also assaulted the cashier. Following a complaint from the victims, the police registered a case and launched a manhunt for the accused. The incident occurred in Gomti Nagar, where the waiter, Nityanand Diwan, who resides in Jait Kheda, Mohanlalganj, is employed. The youths, who were regular customers of the cafe, visited on July 7. In his complaint, the waiter identified four of the 6-7 accused. "They ordered food, and after finishing, I presented them with the bill. They started asking for my name, and when I told them, they started hurling casteist slurs. They said they wouldn't pay because I had touched the food," Diwan stated in his complaint. A purported video of the incident, which went viral, shows the youths attacking the waiter. They threatened to shut down the cafe and initially verbally abused him before resorting to violence. They hit him with utensils such as forks, spoons, and knives that were within reach. "I told them I'm just a worker and suggested they speak with the cashier. But they

The accused refused to pay, claiming they ate food touched by the waiter. The situation escalated when they first verbally abused, then physically attacked the waiter and his companion

dragged me to him and started abusing him too, threatening to close the cafe if we asked for the bill," Diwan alleged. The accused also beat the cashier and injured him, as well as the manager. Diwan further stated that the attackers boasted about their influence, claiming the entire area feared them. "We already have several cases against us," they allegedly told the cafe staff. The cashier, Vikas, attempted to reason with them, saying, "We're just employees here. If you have something to say, talk to the owner or manager." However, this infuriated the youths, who then snatched his phone. One of the accused, Sajjan Mishra, allegedly claimed they had already spent Rs 50,000 at the cafe and demanded a monthly payment of as much amount as extortion. They threatened to kill the staff and the owner if they refused.

The waiter further alleged that the youths demanded the key to the cash box and assaulted the manager, Waqar, when he resisted their attempts to take the money. One of the attackers filmed the incident, threatening to make it viral to further intimidate the staff. Before leaving, they instructed the manager to deliver the extortion money to their hideout. The manager informed the staff that the youths had previously filmed smoking hookah in the cafe and were now using that footage to blackmail them. Meanwhile, a man was arrested in Ghazipur police station area on Thursday on the charges of sexually exploiting a woman under the pretext of marriage and subsequently coercing her into taking pills to abort the foetus. The accused, Anuj Verma (Lodhi) of Indiranagar, works for a private company and initially met the victim through mutual acquaintances. Anuj promised to marry the woman once he achieved financial stability, but he did not fulfil his commitment. As their relationship progressed, the woman became pregnant. Upon learning of the pregnancy, Anuj became enraged and blamed her for the situation. His behaviour changed, allegedly leading to physical abuse and threats. The woman claimed that Anuj pressurised her to take abortifacient pills, threatening her life if she did not comply. She reported the incident to the police on Wednesday, and Anuj was arrested the following day.

LLB student kidnapped by friends

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A female LLB student was allegedly kidnapped from her hostel here on August 2. However, she was eventually returned to her hostel after she managed to inform her father, who coincidentally called her at the time of the incident and spoke directly with the alleged kidnappers. The incident came to light late Wednesday night when the girl's father filed a complaint at the BBD police station. It is alleged that the student was kidnapped by her friends. One of the accused allegedly called the hostel warden, impersonating the girl's father, and claimed that her aunt was unwell, asking for permission to allow her to go home. When the student stepped out

of the hostel, her friends coerced her to sit inside a car under the pretense of taking her home, but forcibly drove her to Pratapgarh instead. During the ordeal, the three friends allegedly harassed her, and when she resisted, they assaulted her and threatened to make her photos and videos public. They allegedly blackmailed her and also extorted money from her. The victim, a native of Basti, is a law student at a private college in Lucknow. She somehow managed to inform her father about the kidnapping over the phone. After speaking with the kidnappers, her father pleaded with them, resulting in her release. The BBD police have registered an FIR and are searching for the accused. The girl's father stated that his

daughter was close to a classmate, and they often spoke on the phone. A few days earlier, this classmate introduced her to his friend, Abhinav Tripathi, a resident of Pratapgarh. Around 8 pm on August 2, Abhinav allegedly called the hostel warden, pretending to be the girl's father. As soon as she left the hostel, Abhinav, along with his friends Prashant and Vedansh, was waiting in a car at the gate. Despite her refusal, they forced her into the car and took her to Pratapgarh. The father recounted that when he called his daughter late at night on August 2 to check on her, she sounded nervous and informed him that she had been kidnapped. "Upon hearing this, I immediately left for Lucknow. By the time I arrived, the accused had

already left my daughter outside the hostel. She had a bleeding wound on her nose and bloodstains on her t-shirt," he said. The student also alleged that Abhinav continued to threaten her female roommate over the phone, demanding to speak with her, or else he would inform her father. BBD Inspector Ajay Narayan Singh stated that the student had been questioned by the police. She confirmed that she was kidnapped on Abhinav's instructions. "A case has been registered based on the complaint. The allegations are under investigation. The friends involved will also be taken into custody and questioned. If the allegations are substantiated, action will be taken against all those responsible," the police said.

PUBLIC NOTICE
The General Public is hereby informed that my clients Mr. Praveen Chandra Singh S/o Late Shri Rajendra Kumar Agarwal and his wife Smt. Archana Singh, both R/o E-7, Shalimar Imperial Apprts., 13 Gokhale Marg, Lucknow 226001 have severed all their relations with their son Mr. Anshul Agarwal, and daughter-in-law Mrs. Swati Gupta due to their misconduct. Both of my above-named clients have also disowned and debarred their said son along with his wife from all their movable and immovable properties and social relationships of the society. Any person dealing with them will do so at his/her own risk and costs and my clients shall not be responsible for the same under any circumstances.
Name of Advocate: Ved Vyas Tripathi
Enrolment No.: UP07984/2010

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
File No. CE/R&B/ACCTS-04/22/239
Date: 02/08/2024
Name of Work - Car Parking inside Administrative Building Premises.
Estimated Cost: Rs.2,10,65,960.18. Last date & time of submission of bid: 27.08.2024 upto 18.00 Hrs.
Refer our Website for details
<https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>
Sd/- Executive Engineer
Roads & Building Division
Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/27/2024-2025 dtd.07.08.2024

IMRT Law College, Lucknow
Affiliated to University of Lucknow
Applications are invited for the post of
Principal
Eligibility Criteria: Ph.D. degree with Bachelors & Masters level in the relevant branch.
Lecturer
Eligibility Criteria: Ph.D. or NET with L.L.B & L.L.M with 55% marks level in the relevant branch.
Non Teaching
Librarian, Office Assistant, Computer Operator
Apply with testimonials and two photographs within 7 days.
Address :
Management Park, Vipul Khand-6 Gomti Nagar, Lucknow - 226010
Contact No. 9889191505, 8417000701, 0522-3500547
sanjeev1957@gmail.com

LDA razes over 36 buildings

Lucknow (PNS): In a significant escalation of its anti-encroachment drive, the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) demolished over three dozen buildings—both completed and under construction—in the Gomti Nagar Extension and Gosainganj areas along Sultanpur Road on Thursday. Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar confirmed the operation. He noted that demolishing such a large number of structures in a single day was a substantial task, but assured that all would be razed by the end of the day. The anti-encroachment squad targeted illegal housing societies that had occupied land and begun unauthorized construction. The LDA had previously razed private developers and landowners in June that unauthorised constructions would be brought down, advising them to voluntarily surrender land they had illegally seized or face severe consequences.

To manage the operation, the LDA prepared a week in advance, taking measures to control potential violence from the affected parties. Two teams, equipped with bulldozers and accompanied by armed police, were deployed. The first team arrived in the Hasemau locality of Gomti Nagar Extension at 11:30 am, where an unauthorised housing society occupied three acres of land. Tensions rose as LDA officials requested documentation for land purchase and construction permits. A management representative claimed that documents were submitted for LDA approval, but this claim was rejected by LDA officials. The second team moved to the Gosainganj area on Sultanpur Road, where a private housing society occupied 12 acres. Additionally, the UP chapter of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has begun surveying unauthorised projects and urged homebuyers to file complaints against developers who made false promises.

Right-wing group protests over violence against Hindus in B'desh

Meerut (PTI): Workers and activists of right wing groups in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut on Thursday protested the violence against Hindus in Bangladesh and said those from the community persecuted in the crisis-hit nation should be immediately given Indian citizenship. The protestors, scores of whom gathered under the Kankarkheda bypass flyover here, also burnt an effigy of "fundamentalists in Bangladesh". "We demand from the prime minister that all the Sanatani Hindus living in Bangladesh should be given Indian citizenship with immediate effect. The Sanatani Hindus living in Bangladesh those who want to live in India should be brought here otherwise their safety should be ensured there itself," Sachin Sirohi, a protestor, said. Separately, the Hindu Mahasabha office-bearers here handed over a memorandum to the district administration. The memorandum was addressed to

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, appealing for the government's intervention in stopping the crisis in Bangladesh and for security of Hindus there. Earlier this week, Bangladesh descended into chaos as its PM Sheikh Hasina surreptitiously resigned and fled the country while the army stepped in to fill the power vacuum by announcing an interim government.

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website- www.psspc.in
Mobile No. 96461-22067
E-Tender Enq. No. 550/P-1/EMPW-12752 dated 07.08.24
By: Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-1) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2024. POWER, 125092. 1 for the work of operation of D. M. Water Treatment plants and Chemical Dosing system of Stage-II and III of GGSSTP, Rupnagar, as per scope of work. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 07.08.24/11.00 AM onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
76155/12/3266/2023/36508 Dated CHD :- 8/8/2024 RTP-83/24

Akhilesh, Mayawati attack BJP over Waqf Amendment Bill

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Waqf Amendment Bill presented in Parliament invited sharp criticism from the opposition parties. Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav opposed the bill both inside and outside Parliament, saying it was just an excuse to sell land in the interest of Bharatiya Janata Party members. Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati also opposed the bill, saying it should be sent to the Standing Committee of Parliament. Akhilesh Yadav said on Thursday that the saffron party was working like a real estate company. He also suggested that the BJP should rename itself as "Bharatiya Zameen Party". In a post on X, Yadav alleged that the target of the bill that seeks to amend provisions of the Waqf Act, 1995, was to sell defence, railway, Nazul land. "Waqf Board lands are just another link in the chain of schemes for the benefit of BJP members after defence land, railway land, Nazul land," he said in Hindi. Yadav added, "A guarantee should be provided in writing that Waqf Board lands will not be sold." He accused the BJP of trying to snatch the rights of Muslims from the bill. "The BJP's only work is to divide Hindus and Muslims,



snatch the rights of Muslim brothers and work on how to snatch the rights given to them in the Constitution," he said. Akhilesh asked in Parliament what was the justification of making a non-Muslim a member in the Waqf Board. He also raised questions on giving all the power to the district magistrate, saying everyone knows what a district magistrate did at one place, the consequences of which the coming generation would have to face. He said that the truth was that BJP was desperate and disappointed and in that same frustration and disappointment, it was trying to bring this bill. Mayawati targeted the BJP as well as Congress, saying many types of messages and apprehensions have come up regarding the Waqf Amendment Bill and in such a situation, the bill should be sent to the Standing Committee of Parliament.

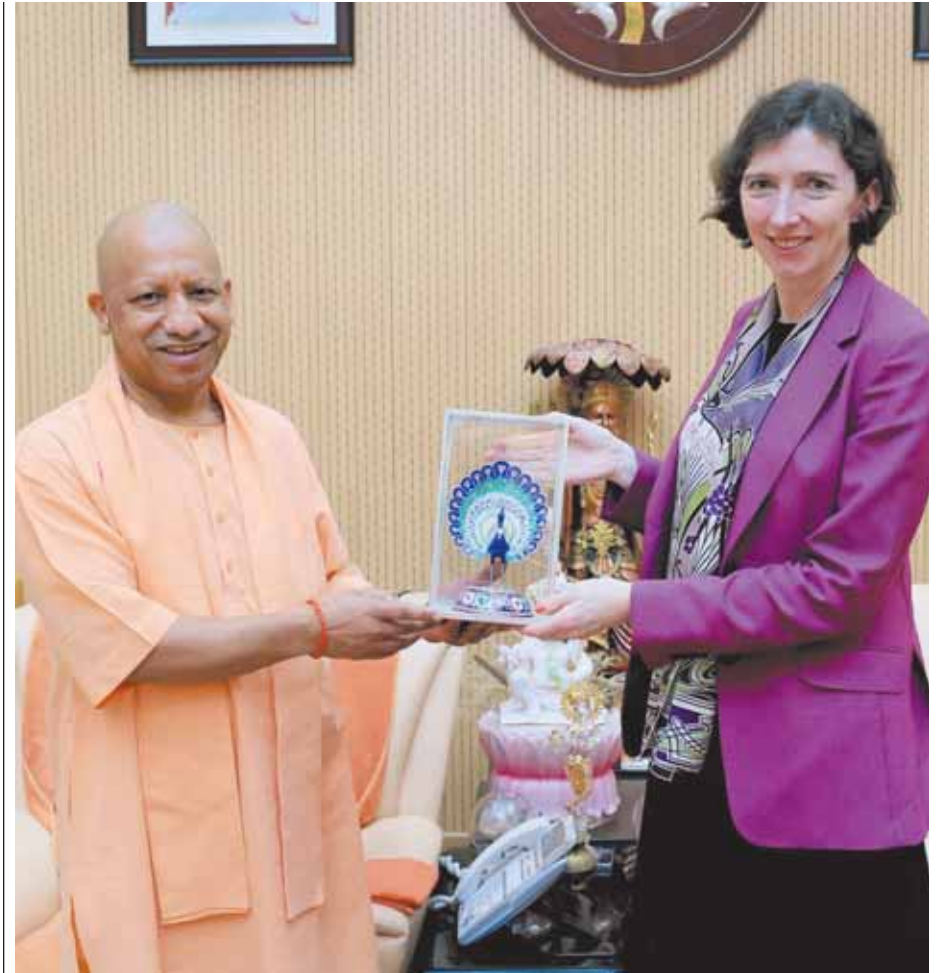
The government should not hurry on such a sensitive issue, she added. Mayawati wrote on the social media platform X that the forceful interference by the Central and UP governments in the matters of mosques, madrasas, waqfs etc. and taking excessive interest in religious matters like temples, madrasas and monasteries is against the Constitution and its principle of secularism. The government should fulfill its national duty, she added. Mayawati said the Congress and the BJP had done a lot of politics under the guise of temple-mosque, caste, religion and communal frenzy etc. and had also taken a lot of electoral advantage of it. Now is the time to prove true patriotism by focusing on poverty, unemployment, inflation, backwardness, she added. It may be mentioned that the

Waqf (Amendment) Bill seeks to omit Section 40 of the current law relating to the powers of the board to decide if a property is Waqf property. It provides for a broad-based composition of the Central Waqf Council and the state Waqf Boards and ensures the representation of Muslim women and non-Muslims in such bodies. The bill also proposes the establishment of a separate board of Auqaf for the Bohras and Aghakhans. The draft law provides for the representation of Shias, Sunnis, Bohras, Agakhans and other backward classes among Muslim communities. It also aims to clearly define 'Waqf' as 'Waqf by any person practising Islam for at least five years and having ownership of such property'. One of its objectives is streamlining the manner of registration of Waqfs through a central portal and database. A detailed procedure is established for mutation as per revenue laws with due notice to all concerned before recording any property as a Waqf property. The Waqf Act of 1995, was brought to regulate 'Auqaf (assets donated and notified as Waqf)' by a 'wakif (a person who dedicates a property for any purpose recognised by Muslim law as religious or charitable)'. The law was last amended in 2013.

Solar-powered drinking water kiosks to be set up in cities

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a new push for solar energy, the Yogi Adityanath government is set to introduce a groundbreaking initiative. Building on its ongoing efforts to promote solar energy across the state's solar cities, the government is now focusing on a novel solar-powered solution. In line with the chief minister's vision, plans are underway to establish state-of-the-art solar-powered drinking water kiosks in various regions of the state. As part of this initiative, the Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Agency (UPNEDA) has commenced the setting up of 20 solar-powered drinking water kiosks, with a total investment of Rs 3.99 crore. Solar drinking water kiosk is a smart water purification and distribution system designed to increase access and ease of use for water purification in remote areas. It is powered by solar energy and the device can run for hours once fully charged. The solar-powered water kiosks being established are notable for their advanced features. These kiosks will utilise reverse osmosis technology for water treatment, ensuring high-quality purification. Each kiosk is designed to dispense pure water at temperatures ranging from 10 to 30 degrees Celsius, tailored to seasonal needs.



British High Commissioner Lindy Cameron paid a courtesy call to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at his 5, Kalidas Marg official residence in Lucknow on Thursday

Govt to connect youth with self-employment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To connect educated and trained youth in Uttar Pradesh with self-employment opportunities, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has called for the launch of the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan. During a high-level meeting on Thursday, the chief minister stated, "In the original budget for the financial year 2024-25, the government has allocated funds for the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan. The time has now come to implement this initiative." Observing the presentation of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Department on the campaign, the chief minister said that this scheme would play a significant role in efforts to create self-employment. He emphasised that more youth should be made aware of the scheme to encourage them to earn their livelihood and become self-reliant. The principal secretary (MSME) informed the chief minister that the campaign will provide financial grants to 1,00,000 youth annually by facilitating loans from banks, enabling the establishment of 1,00,000 micro enter-

prises each year. "Thus, over the next 10 years, one million youth will have the opportunity to engage in self-employment," he noted. The chief minister instructed that under the campaign, provisions should be made to offer grants not only to the general category but also to Other Backward Classes, women, Divyangjans, and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe individuals for setting up enterprises. Additionally, subsidies should be provided on margin money, he added. The chief minister said that to ensure that interest-free loans were available to young entrepreneurs as far as possible, the facility of interest subsidy and CGTMS coverage should also be provided for the fixed period of a loan. To guarantee effective implementation and monitoring of the scheme, the chief minister directed that qualified youth be assigned to each district, similar to the CM Fellows deployed in aspirational development blocks. He also stated that before offering financing for setting up an enterprise, it is essential to provide proper training to the youth. New entrepreneurs should receive assistance in packaging, branding and marketing their products.

UP govt to launch WB-funded agri business, entrepreneurship project

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is set to launch a World Bank-funded Rs 4,000 crore agriculture business and entrepreneurship project to augment the rural income. The project will benefit farmers, farm groups, and agro micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in 28 districts in eastern UP and Bundelkhand region. The project is estimated to benefit a million farmers, including 30 per cent of the rural women associated with agri self-help groups (SHGs). Under the project, 1,00,000 fisherfolk will be given financial assistance. Additionally, 500 farmers will be taken on foreign

tours for training in advanced farming. The project is likely to boost the per capita income in districts and improve the credit deposit (CD) ratio. The government also plans to invest in high-yielding varieties of seeds and farm infrastructure in addition to developing a digital platform for the agricultural sector, and facilitate farmers to leverage the carbon credit market for income. The project also seeks to develop dedicated clusters of groundnut, chilli and peas crops to augment farm output, food processing, and exports. Recently, a World Bank delegation called upon Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to brief him on the proposed farm value chain project. Yogi said UP has near-

ly 1.88 billion hectares of agricultural land, which corresponds to 76 per cent of the state's total land mass. In the next 3-4 years, UP aims to increase the value of farm exports from Rs 20,000 crore to Rs 50,000 crore by boosting productivity, food processing and reinvigorating the agro value chain. The state is looking to constitute horticultural commodity boards on lines of the Spices Board of India to boost shipments. The Spices Board functions under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry to promote indigenous spices. In UP, horticultural crops spanning fruits, vegetables, flowers, medicinal plants and spices are grown over an estimated 2.1 million hectares.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government, in collaboration with the Indian Railways, is set to operate Kakori Shaurya Gatha Express to mark the 100th anniversary of the Kakori Train Action. The Kakori Shaurya Gatha Express, to be run as part of the Kakori Train Action Centenary Festival, will introduce the public to the historic Kakori incident. This special train will travel across the state for the next two months, educating people about the event. Initiated by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the festival aims to inspire current and future generations with the heroic story of Kakori and the valour of freedom fighters. The celebration will involve schoolchildren, teenagers and youth in various programmes. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath recently gave directives for the festival

during a high-level meeting, emphasising the importance of the Kakori train action in India's independence movement and major cities nationwide. The centenary celebrations of the Kakori Train Action will kick off on August 9, with a range of activities, including a special post marking the centenary, a motorcycle rally, a 6-day commemorative fair, paying of tributes to the families of heroes and martyrs, a record exhibition of the national freedom struggle, and the planting of 100 trees at martyr memorials, Amrit Sarovars and Amrit Vatikas. The inaugural event will feature public participation and enthusiasm across the state. Significant events are planned at district martyr memorials, where public representatives will be invited. Various competitions will take place at district and state levels, with cash prizes and certificates awarded to winners during the August 15 programme.

The Kakori Shaurya Gatha Express will visit cities linked to India's independence movement and major cities nationwide. The centenary celebrations of the Kakori Train Action will kick off on August 9, with a range of activities, including a special post marking the centenary, a motorcycle rally, a 6-day commemorative fair, paying of tributes to the families of heroes and martyrs, a record exhibition of the national freedom struggle, and the planting of 100 trees at martyr memorials, Amrit Sarovars and Amrit Vatikas. The inaugural event will feature public participation and enthusiasm across the state. Significant events are planned at district martyr memorials, where public representatives will be invited. Various competitions will take place at district and state levels, with cash prizes and certificates awarded to winners during the August 15 programme.

Uttar Pradesh boasts world-class medical facilities: Govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The health sector in Uttar Pradesh has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past seven years with the state now emerging as a hub of world-class medical facilities, offering high-quality treatment by specialist doctors. This advancement significantly benefits the state's residents, who no longer need to travel to Delhi, Mumbai or the metros of South India for treatments of serious medical problems. Access to top-notch care within the state saves patients and their families both time and resources. More importantly, timely and appropriate treatment significantly improves their health outcomes and instills a sense of optimism. These enhanced health facilities are benefiting not only the people of Uttar Pradesh but also those from neighbouring states, including a significant population from Nepal and Bihar. Making these claims here on Wednesday afternoon, an official spokesman of the government claimed that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has long been committed to improving the health sector. As the head of Gorakhpur, he focused on ensuring that people receive expert, high-quality treatment locally at reasonable costs. Now, as chief minister, he is expanding this mis-

1.72 lakh Arogya Melas to augment public health

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has drawn up a plan to organise over 1.72 lakh Arogya Melas to boost health across 75 districts of the state. The government targets holding 13,000 to 16,000 Arogya Melas every month. The aim of the government is to augment public health through various initiatives, including upgrading government hospitals and building super-specialty facilities. A significant aspect of this effort is the organisation of Arogya Mela (health fairs). Arogya Melas will be organised every Sunday from 10 am to 2 pm at 3,388 primary health centres. OPD treatment will be available for diseases including tuberculosis, dengue, malaria, brain fever, black fever, filariasis, leprosy and related health advice. The facility of specialist treatment will also be available in the mela. During the mela, Golden cards will be distributed to the beneficiaries of Jan Arogya Yojana and arrangements will be made for the treatment of mal-

nourished children after identifying them. The Arogya Melas will also provide information on the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and Chief Minister Jan Arogya Abhiyan, distribute golden cards to eligible beneficiaries, and offer pregnancy, delivery, and vaccination counseling. Additionally, they will address the prevention and treatment of diarrhoea and pneumonia in children and take action to treat malnourished children. The Health Department intends to scale up this initiative by holding over 1,72,000 Arogya Melas across all 75 districts of UP from August 2024 to July 2025. These health fairs will take place every Sunday at more than 3,000 primary health centres across the state. This includes 13,552 Arogya Mela in August 2024, 16,940 in September, 13,552 in October, 13,552 in November, and 16,940 in December. In 2025, the schedule continues with 13,552 events in January, 13,552 in February, 16,940 in March, 13,552 in April, 13,552 in May, 16,940 in June, and 13,552 in July.

worthy. From 1998 to 2017, he represented the Gorakhpur parliamentary seat. The Gorakhpur region, which extends to adjacent areas of Nepal and Bihar, is part of the Terai region, known for its high mosquito population and shallow, polluted water sources. This area, home to around 60 to 70 million people, is particularly vulnerable to mosquito and water-borne diseases such as encephalitis, kala-azar (black fever), dengue, chikungunya and filariasis. Each year, these diseases claim the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, especially children, with encephalitis and AES being particularly deadly. The number of those who die is surpassed by those who are left physically and mentally disabled, placing a lifelong burden on their families and society. This disability also negatively impacts the economy, as these individuals cannot contribute to the productivity of their families, communities and the country. Yogi Adityanath has witnessed these challenges firsthand. His relentless efforts, from grassroots activism to parliamentary advocacy, aimed to improve local health facilities, prevent untimely maternal deaths, and ensure fathers do not lose their support systems. Even after becoming chief minister in 2017, his dedica-

tion to the health sector remained unwavering. Despite Uttar Pradesh being the most populous state with limited resources and a history of neglect in medical services and education by previous governments, Yogi Adityanath took on the challenge with determination. His commitment led to a near-eradication of encephalitis and a significant reduction in mortality rates due to Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE) to zero by May 2024 -- a remarkable achievement. Other mosquito-borne diseases like kala-azar, chikungunya, and dengue were also brought under considerable control during this period. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has consistently strived to ensure that the common man receives affordable, high-quality and up-to-date medical care close to home. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated two world-class institutions: the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Gorakhpur, spanning 112 acres at a cost of Rs 1011 crore, and the Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) located on the Baba Raghav Das Medical College campus. Mahayogi Gorakhnath University, established by Gorakhpur, offers excel-

lent medical and paramedical education. This year, the Institute of Medical Science within the university was recognized for MBBS studies. These institutions will be pivotal in treating seasonal, infectious and severe diseases in the region, researching their causes and implementing control measures. Furthermore, Chief Minister Yogi's ambitious vision aims to open one medical college in each district. Under this initiative, a staggering 65 medical colleges have been built, with 22 more under construction. Prime Minister Modi recently inaugurated nine new government medical colleges in UP simultaneously. Starting in 2024, seven new medical colleges will commence studies in Bijnor, Bulandshahr, Kanpur Dehat, Kushinagar, Lalitpur, Pilibhit and Sultanpur. The AIIMS facilities in Gorakhpur and Rae Bareilly, serving as referral centres, are also notable contributions of the Yogi administration. The state will soon welcome several new medical institutions. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University in Lucknow and the first Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath Ayush University in Gorakhpur are nearing completion. A government ayurvedic college is under construction in Ayodhya, and

a government homeopathic college has been established in Varanasi. Nursing staff are crucial in healthcare, often providing 24-hour patient supervision. To address this, along with increasing the number of doctors through the One District, One Medical College initiative, the government is also focusing on expanding the nursing workforce. In this effort, 23 nursing colleges are being established, adding 7,000 nursing and 2,000 paramedical seats. With the establishment of medical colleges in every district, UP is set to become a significant hub for medical equipment manufacturing. Major investors in this sector are showing interest in various districts. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has been proactive in making UP a centre for medical equipment and drug production, improving medical services with substantial investments. His proposal for a medical device park in Noida has been approved by the Central government, and work is underway on this project. The government's decisions to boost pharmaceutical manufacturing, including the introduction of a new pharmaceutical policy, are expected to have a significant impact on the state's drug manufacturing. This initiative aims to attract companies

manufacturing active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) to UP, reducing dependence on China for raw materials and making the state self-sufficient in drug manufacturing. The first pharma park in the state will be established in Lalitpur. The state's efforts to enhance health services led to the establishment of over 550 oxygen plants within just eight months during the global COVID-19 pandemic. A comprehensive and far-reaching COVID-19 vaccination campaign was launched to protect people from infection, and the number of oxygen concentrators and beds was significantly increased. NITI Aayog praised Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's initiatives. The then CEO of NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, acknowledged that Uttar Pradesh has made substantial improvements in its health system, ranking it among the top large states in the country. The chief minister is committed to ensuring that no one is deprived of medical treatment due to financial constraints. To this end, 5.11 crore people have been covered with Ayushman cards. Additionally, individuals suffering from serious illnesses receive substantial support from the chief minister's discretionary fund, which has provided over ₹3,200 crore to date.

Flood water enters low-lying areas in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The continuous rise in water level of Ganga river has increased the worries of thousands of residents living in dozens of colonies in low-lying areas on both sides of Varuna river in the northern part of the city apart from many localities close to Samne Ghat in the southern part as on Thursday, the Ganga crossed 69 metres mark and it is expected that anytime the Varuna will start reverse flowing, allowing huge amount of Ganga water to reach there. The Varuna merges into the Ganga near Sarai Mohana village which is very close to the newly-built Namu Ghat (Khirkhiya Ghat), one of the dream projects of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



Namu Ghat gets submerged following rains in Varanasi on Thursday.

PTI

The stairs of Namu Ghat have already been submerged in water near Raighat Bridge, though the visitors continued reaching the park area there to see the rising water of Ganga. During the last 24 hours the level of Ganga has increased sharply once again. It increased by one metres rising from 68.2

metres to 69.02 metres as recorded at 8 am on Thursday by the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC). In Varanasi, the warning level is at

70.262 metres. Due to sharp rise in Ganga level, the cruise movement has also been stopped and the boats are at a standstill for long time. As a large number of devotees,

including saffron-clad Kanwariyas, are arriving here daily in this auspicious month of Shravan, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and River Police per-

sonnel are keeping a close watch on the bathers at Dashashwamedh and adjoining ghats. In the city, Ganga water already entered the famous Sheetla Mata Mandir at Old Dasashwamedh Ghat forcing the devotees to reach the temple through the water. Most of the 'chowkis' of pandas have been submerged in the water. Dozens of low-lying temples located at internationally famous 84-odd ghats were either submerged in the water fully or partially. The bodies are being cremated on the upper stories at Manikarnika and Harishchandra ghats. The flood situation in downstream Uttar Pradesh-Bihar border district of Purvanchal (eastern UP) Ballia turned grim further as the rising Ganga water level is inching close to all-time high point at 60.39 metres recorded on August 25, 2016, as it was at 57.88 metres and it is expected to reach 59.35 metres by Friday morning as the river water level was increasing by three centimetres (30 mm) per hour. The Ganga was already flowing above the warning

level of 56.61 metres and even danger mark of 57.61 metres. In downstream Ghazipur where the river was rising at a speed of 30 mm per hour was at 61.92 metres against warning level of 62.10 metres. In upstream Mirzapur, the river was 74.96 metres against warning level of 76.724 metres. The rising trend from Yamuna side was checked as the river was steady at Prayagraj, but the threat has increased as Ganga started rising speedily at Phaphamau. It was increasing by 120 mm per hour. Right from Mirzapur to Ballia, including Varanasi and Ghazipur, the Ganga continued to rise. Due to the continuous rising trend in Ganga, the worries of the residents of several villages of Daab areas surrounded by Ganga and Gomti rivers have also increased, though they have heaved a sign of relief as the level of Gomti continued to remain constant. Meanwhile, rain hit the city again in the afternoon hours for the third consecutive day on Thursday. In the last one day, the city has received 10.4 mm rain.

Incessant rain throws life out of gear in Prayagraj



The flooded banks of Ganga river following rains in Prayagraj on Thursday PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Incessant rain threw life out of gear here on Thursday. The rain which started with a loud thunder continued throughout the day. The Meteorological department has predicted rain for the next three days. Former head of the Geography Department of Allahabad University and meteorologist AR Siddiqui has predicted similar weather conditions in the coming days. It will rain for two more days. The rain will continue intermittently, the sky will be cloudy and there is little chance of the sun coming out, Siddiqui added. Along with the city, there was a good rain in the rural areas as well. Farmers heaved a sigh of relief. However, many areas of the city were flooded with rain water and waterlogging occurred in Niranjan Dot Bridge, Nakhaskohna, Beniganj, in front of Prayagraj Junction etc. Due to heavy rain, the market also wore a deserted look. When the weather became pleasant after the rain, people got relief from heat.

A case of suicide of a man here. After the man's suicide, the police found in their investigation that the wife used to taunt her husband. The father of the man has filed a case against the daughter -in-law and her lover. The police is investigating the matter. Vijay Kumar alias Babbu, son of Bajinath Ravidas of Bhikhpur Madwar village under Airport police station area, committed suicide by hanging herself on July 29. A suicide note was found in the house in which he had accused his wife and her lover of a harassment and abetment to suicide. Bajinath gave a written complaint to the police and had alleged that his daughter-in-law Anamika alias Pooja and her lover Ranu used to beat his son and harass him. He committed suicide only after being upset with the wife's infidelity. After investigation, the police registered a case against the daughter -in-law and her lover on the father -in-law's written complaint. Police in charge Airport Rahul Yadav said the matter is being investigated by registering an FIR on the basis of written complaint given by the father of the deceased.

FIR AGAINST TWO: An FIR has been registered against two persons, including a woman, in

Take every possible step for safety of Hindus in B'desh, VHP urges govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Prant Mantri of Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Kanpur Prant, Raju Porwal, while addressing mediapersons here on Thursday, said Bangladesh is trapped in anarchy and violence. After elected prime minister's resignation and departure, the country has been trapped in riots, looting, plundering and killing and there has been a complete break down of law and order. The Hindu minority is a specific target and their houses, shops, business establishments and even places of worship have been attacked, rampaged and property looted. He said that there are reports that the radical jihadi elements have been playing havoc with Hindu minority in all districts of Bangladesh. Temples apart even the crematoriums at some places have also been vandalised. There is hardly any district left in Bangladesh which has not become a target of their violence and terror. It is a fact that as a consequence of such regular jihadi persecution the Hindus have slipped from



VHP leaders addressing mediapersons on Thursday.

turn a blind eye to this situation. India has traditionally helped oppressed communities across the world. The VHP urges the Government of India to take every possible step for the safety of Hindu minorities in Bangladesh. "It is possible that taking advantage of this situation, a big attempt may be made to orchestrate infiltration by the extremist jihadi groups into the Indian territory. We have to be extremely cautious about this. Therefore, it is necessary for our security forces to keep strict 24x7 vigil on the borders. We wish that democracy and secular government be re-established in Bangladesh as soon as possible. The Hindu minority there should get human rights and there should be no hindrance in the continuous economic progress of Bangladesh. The Hindu society and the Government of India will continue to support Bangladesh in this matter", he added.

the ABVP activists. In a public meeting organised on Thursday, they announced to boycott removing garbage and putting off the street lights. The sanitation arrangements in the city remained disrupted on Thursday also. Zonal offices were also lying closed. Union members also struck work in the Jalkal Vibhag though the water supply was not disrupted so far. In a bid to avoid any untoward incident, heavy police force was deployed at the Nagar Nigam office. Leaders asked the safai karmcharis to boycott the sanitation work and removing garbage from the street. Leaders asked them to assemble at the Nagar Nigam headquarters on Friday also and threatened to close all the Nagar Nigam schools if police failed to arrest the guilty ABVP activists on Thursday. Union leaders, Rama Kant Mishra, Hari Om Balmiki, Munna Hazaria led the massive demonstration staged at the Nagar Nigam headquarters on Thursday. They said all essential services will be stopped from Friday if police failed to arrest the accused on Thursday.

AGITATION INTENSIFIES
The leaders of Nagar Nigam employees unions on Thursday intensified their agitation demanding the early arrest of

Identify dilapidated buildings: DM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam directed the concerned departments to identify the dilapidated buildings and issue notices to their house owners soon so that action can be taken and avoid house collapse incidents. In a

meeting of the Secondary Education department at the same venue. The DM said that in those schools where construction work is in progress, the quality of the construction work should be checked with the District Inspector of Schools (DIOS), assistant district inspectors of schools and



DM S Rajalingam holding meeting with officers in Varanasi on Wednesday.

recent house collapse incident, one person was killed and many were injured in the city. While addressing a meeting of the officials at Rifle Club here on Wednesday, the DM said there should also be a provision of dharmsala etc to accommodate such people while their houses in bad shape are being repaired. Additional Commissioner of Police (ACP) S Chinnappa, Municipal Commissioner Akshat Verma, Additional District Magistrate (City) Alok Verma, ADM (Finance and Revenue) Vandita Srivastava and other officers were present in the meeting. In another meeting, while reviewing the construction work being done in the government secondary schools of the district under the 'Project Alankar', the district magistrate directed that the money of those schools where land is not available for building construction, such as Government Queen's Inter College and Government High School Dhaurahra, should be returned to the government. He was holding a meeting with the offi-

the engineers of the concerned developments and blocks and a report should be provided to him soon. Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal, Executive Engineer of Public Works Department and officers of UPRNSS and UPSIDC were also present. Earlier, the district magistrate inspected the Kanwariya route from Mohansarai to the city and the Kanwariya camps along with ACP regarding the Kanwariya Yatra. He directed the officers present on the spot to take special care of cleanliness around the Kanwariya route and their camps. During the inspection, he asked the Kanwariyas about road condition and if they faced any problem during the journey, the Kanwariyas said it is a very good road. The district magistrate directed the magistrates concerned and police officials that no vehicle should be allowed to run on the safe route for the Kanwariyas. He also directed for cleaning the pebbles scattered on the road, barricading of safe Kanwariya lane etc.

Demonstration against Phogat's disqualification

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Congressmen staged a demonstration on Thursday, protesting over wrestler Vinesh Phogat disqualification from the Paris Olympics before the final of the wrestling event. A large number of District Congress Committee office-bearers and workers gathered at the dharna site located in the Civil Lines All Saints' Cathedral. Slogans of "Vinesh Tum Champion Ho" were also raised. State General Secretary Mukund Tiwari alleged that Vinesh Phogat has

been a victim of conspiracy. The party's district city committee spokesman Haseeb Ahmed said that a high-level inquiry into the matter should be conducted by the BJP government. Rais Ahmed, Manoj Pasi, Lal Singh Patel, Sunil Yadav, Chhotalal Patel, Sheesh Ahmed, Santosh Singh, Rohit Kushwaha, Kunwar Sarvesh, Naveen, Alok Tiwari, Aitsham Ahmed, Akash Tripathi, Jitendra Patel, Munna Tiwari, Rakesh Kumar Patel, Santosh Pandey, Ankush Singh Patel, Sunil Patel, Nafees Ahmed, Munna Painter, Suresh Patel, Rajesh Patel, Surendra Patel etc were present.

Nomani enquires about condition of injured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Mufti-e-Banaras Maulana Abdul Batin Nomani visited the Shri Shiv Prasad Gupta (SSPG) Divisional Hospital at Kabirchaura here on Thursday to enquire about the condition of those injured in the recent collapse of two dilapidated buildings collapsed near the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor. Maulana, who is also head of Gyanvapi mosque, met all the injured admitted in the Emergency Ward of the hospital, one by one, to know about their well-being and distributed fruits to all the injured.

He said that the doctors taking care of the injured in this hour of crisis and serving the patients with a sense of dedication is doing the greatest service. He met the hospital officials and assured them of all possible help in this hour of grief. After meeting the injured, the Maulana Nomani said that Kashi is a city of Ganga-Jamuni culture, we are all saddened by this accident. "I pray to Allah for all the injured that all of them get well soon and reach their homes soon and there should be progress, public welfare, prosperity, peace in Kashi", he said.

Techniques to reduce methane emissions in rice production discussed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in collaboration with the World Bank organised a round table conference at IRRI South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) located in Varanasi here on Thursday to discuss techniques to reduce methane emissions in rice production. This event is part of the UP Agrees Project proposed in the state. In this event, talks were mainly held on promoting direct sowing technology (DSR) of rice so that efforts can be made to reduce the amount of methane emissions in rice production in the state and South Asia and promote sustainable agriculture. Representatives from various government and private sectors, carbon project developers and farmers came together in this conference. Experts from World Bank 2030 Water Resources Group, Core Carbon X, Indian Oil Corporation, Reddy's Foundation, Krishi Vigyan Kendras of the state etc discussed the multi-faceted benefits of DSR such as reduction in green-



house gas emissions, increased water conservation, reduced labour burden on women farmers and increased agricultural productivity. The event also deliberated on existing and potential opportunities for carbon resource management and India's vision for the future of carbon markets. IRRI Director General Dr Yvonne Pinto, thanked the World Bank and the participating stakeholders for choosing ISARC for this event. "DSR has been a flagship initiative of IRRI and is one of the cutting-edge solutions for rice based agri-food systems facing climate challenges. This roundtable is a significant moment and a committed effort by IRRI towards building a strategy to scale up the adoption of DSR in South Asia",

he said. IRRI has successfully worked with the World Bank on projects such as APT in Assam, Climate Pro Project in Odisha, One Million Hectare High Quality Rice Project in Vietnam, and new partnerships are proposed for KERA in Kerala and UP-Agrees in Uttar Pradesh. These projects help promote low-carbon technologies such as DSR, Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) and biochar, as well as optimise systems with short-duration varieties, timely planting, entrepreneurship development and carbon credit mechanisms for higher profitability. Dina Umali-Deininger of the World Bank lauded the collaborative nature of the initiative, saying, "The partnership between IRRI and the World Bank under the UP-Agrees

Project is a testament to our commitment to promote innovative solutions in agriculture. By integrating the expertise and resources of various stakeholders, we aim to create a strong ecosystem that supports the widespread adoption of climate-smart practices such as DSR." World Bank Global Director for Agriculture and Food Global Practice Dr Shobha Shetty said, "DSR promises faster planting, early maturing and working around aerobic systems, making it a good solution for lower methane emissions. To make this technology more viable for farmers, we need to design and plan low-cost operations. It is encouraging for me to see discussions happening in India about reducing methane emissions in rice-based systems. This knowledge-sharing initiative can help us identify our shortcomings and strategize potential solutions. Uttar Pradesh is a leading rice producer in India and globally, and such multi-pronged projects can make UP an example for other countries in South and Southeast Asia in agriculture." Experts shared their views on

methane emissions, carbon credits and crop residue management at the event. The roundtable also discussed the role of carbon credits in promoting sustainable practices and the potential of generating carbon credits through DSR, thereby providing new economic opportunities to farmers. Addressing the event, Joint Secretary, Natural Resource Management, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, Franklin Khobang said, "With agriculture contributing 14 per cent of methane emissions, there is a huge emerging opportunity for Voluntary Carbon Markets (VCM) in India. Though the topic of carbon resource management is a bit new to us, the Government of India has already laid out a visionary framework for potential opportunities in this area in its 100-day action plan. We are also coming up with a number of pilot projects to mobilise and enable the national agricultural research system around this topic." He also lauded the efforts of CGIAR centres like IRRI and organisations like

the World Bank, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Indian National Institutes of Agricultural Research and Education System in pushing forward development in rice systems. He emphasised the importance of these institutions in promoting VCM and developing short-term and cost-effective methodologies that generate accurate credit. Participants also had the opportunity to visit DSR plots and interact with local farmers, gaining first-hand knowledge of the practical applications and benefits of DSR. The event is an important milestone towards bringing together diverse stakeholders on a single platform to leverage public-private partnerships to scale up and deliver DSR with the complementary benefits of reducing agricultural emissions. The event also highlighted the opportunities presented by carbon credit markets towards encouraging the adoption of DSR and other low-emission rice cultivation practices such as improved crop residue management through biochar and bio-energy.

DRM conducts inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of North Eastern Railway (Varanasi Division) Vineet Kumar Srivastava under his day-long hectic inspection programme, conducted a window-trailing safety inspection of Salempur-Barhaj Bazar (Only One Train System) rail section in Deoria district on Wednesday. During his inspection, the DRM checked the level crossing gates falling on this route and instructed the concerned officers/personnel regarding safety. He directed the officials concerned to get the thick bushes along the railway track cleared as soon as possible for clear visibility of signals for smooth operation of trains in this block section. At Barhaj Bazar station, Srivastava conducted a thor-



ough inspection and checked the maintenance of the station building, cleanliness, drainage and average passenger facilities available at Barhaj Bazar station. He also met the local public representatives, including Sweta Jaishwal of Gaura Bazar Nagar Palika Parishad Barhaj who assured the DRM to get the damaged road constructed from the railway station to the east railway crossing apart from drain construction work on the road tracks and installation of street lights. During their discussion, the DRM assured full cooperation of the railway administration.

NDA backs Waqf Bill

Opp slammed for rumour-mongering

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) allies JD(U), TDP, Shiv Sena and the LJP backed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill that was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday, saying it was aimed at bringing transparency in the functioning of the Waqf Board and was not an attempt to interfere with the running of mosques.

The TDP and the LJP also supported the Bill being sent to a parliamentary committee for further examination. Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju introduced the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and proposed sending it to a joint parliamentary committee after the Opposition parties objected to its provisions. Speaking in Lok Sabha as the Government moved for introducing the Bill, Janata Dal (United) leader and Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan' asserted that the Bill was not anti-Muslim. Defending the Bill, he said, "Several members are making it sound as if the amendment in the Waqf Board law is anti-Muslim. How is it anti-Muslim? Here example of Ayodhya is being given... Can you not differentiate between a temple and an institution? This is not an attempt to interfere with mosques. This law is for the institution, to



make it transparent... How was the Waqf Board formed?" he said, and himself replied that it was through a law. The minister said if any institution established through law becomes autocratic, the Government has the right to bring a law to ensure transparency, he said. Slamming the Opposition parties, he said, "There is no communal divide. They are spreading rumours." Taking a jibe at the Congress over the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, he asked, "Who killed thousands of Sikhs?" "The Bill should come and transparency should be brought," he said. Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP G M Harish Balayogi said his party will not mind if the Bill is sent to a parliamentary panel. "I appreciate the concern with which Government has brought this Bill. The

purpose of the donors need to be protected. When the purpose and power get misused, it is the responsibility of the Government to bring reforms and introduce transparency in the system," he said. The TDP MP said there is a requirement for the Government to regulate and streamline the purpose. "The Bill has been brought and we support it... We believe that the registration is going to help poor Muslims and women of the country, and bring transparency," the TDP MP said, adding his party will not mind if the Bill is sent to a panel of Parliament for further consideration. "If wider consultations are required to remove misconceptions and to educate the purpose of the Bill, we have no problem

sending it to the select committee," he said. Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Eknath Shinde also supported the Bill. "Some people are only politicising this Bill. There is only one intention behind this Bill -- to bring transparency and accountability," he said. He accused the opposition of spreading misinformation on the Bill. "When their Government was in power, they put administrators in temples like Shirdi. They did not remember federalism at that time. They have pushed Muslim women back," he said in Lok Sabha. Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas (LJP-RV) MP Shambhavi Choudhary spoke on similar lines and supported the Bill. "The founder of our party Ram Vilas Paswan ji always supported Muslims. In 2004, he wanted a Muslim to become the prime Minister. We support this Bill, but if some people want wider consultations, we have no objection if it goes to a committee," Choudhary told reporters outside Parliament. "This is not an anti-Muslim Bill. It is bringing equality in the representation of the minorities by including groups like Bohra Muslims, Ahmadiyya and women who will also get representation," the LJP MP said.

Bill aimed at targeting Muslims, Draconian law: INDIA Bloc MPs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Thursday strongly protested against the introduction of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha, with several INDIA Bloc MPs calling it an attack on the Constitution and aimed at targeting Muslims. They also urged the Government to withdraw the Bill. Soon after Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju sought leave to introduce the Bill, Congress MP KC Venugopal — who had submitted notice to oppose its introduction — accused the Government of violating freedom of religion and attacking the federal system through it. "This is a draconian law and a fundamental attack on the Constitution," Venugopal said. Opposing the Waqf Bill in Lok Sabha, Venugopal said, "We are Hindus but at the same time, we respect the faith of other religions. This Bill is specialized for the Maharashtra, Haryana elections. You do not understand that last time the people of India clearly taught you a lesson. This is an attack on the federal system." "Through this Bill, they are putting a provision that non-Muslims also be members of the Waqf governing council. It is a direct attack on freedom of religion... Next you will go for Christians, then Jains... People of India will not



buy this kind of divisive politics now," Venugopal asserted. Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav said the Bill was being introduced to appease the BJP's hardcore supporters. "What is the point of including non-Muslims in Waqf boards when this is not done in other religious bodies?" Yadav asked. "The truth is that the BJP has brought this Bill to appease its hardcore supporters," the Kannauj MP said. Samajwadi Party MP Mohibullah Nadvi said the Bill was against freedom of religion. He said appointing non-Muslims in the Central Waqf Council and other such bodies was violative of the rights of Muslims. Opposing its introduction, Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Sudip Bandhopadhyay said the Bill was divisive, anti-constitutional and anti-federalism. "This is against the Constitution, a religious minority and federalism. It shuns justice in every possible way," DMK MP Kanimozhi said. "It is a direct violation of

Article 30, which deals with minorities to administer their institutions. This Bill targets a particular religious group..." she said. Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) - Sharadchandra Pawar MP Supriya Sule said her party opposed the Bill as it was against a particular minority community. "Look at what is happening in Bangladesh, there is so much pain... It is the moral duty of a country to protect minorities," Sule said. "The Government should clarify the intent and the timing of the Bill. We object, withdraw this Bill... Let's discuss it and then bring a Bill that is fair and just," she added. The Indian Union Muslim League's (IUML) ET Mohammed Basheer said the Bill was violative of articles 14, 15, 25, 26 and 30 of the Constitution. He alleged it was part of the Government's "dirty agenda" and called the Bill divisive. If this Bill is passed, the Waqf system will collapse, he said. He also claimed that the bill would encourage encroachment on Waqf land. "Your intention is to communalise, put Hindus and Muslims in compartments... We will not let this happen," Basheer said. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen Chairperson Asaduddin Owaisi claimed that the House did not have the competence to make the amendments.



Opp MPs protest, demand MSP for farmers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders on Thursday held a protest on the Parliament premises, demanding that farmers' crops be bought at MSP and justice ensured for them. MPs from parties such as the Trinamool Congress (TMC), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) - Sharadchandra Pawar, and the Shiv Sena (UBT), among others, protested on the steps leading to the Makar Dwar of Parliament. The MPs wore a garland of vegetables and raised slogans such as "Kisan ko phasal pe MSP do" and "Kisan pe anyay bandh karo". The manner in which the BJP has given minimum support price to TDP (Telugu Desam Party) and JD(U), it should also ensure MSP (minimum support price) for farmers and that is why we are protesting," Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said. The export ban on onion farmers of Maharashtra should be lifted. Innumerable requests have been made to the Centre but to no avail, she said.



India, UK discuss Bangladesh crisis amid Hasina's asylum plans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday discussed the unfolding situation in Bangladesh with his British counterpart David Lammy during a phone conversation. The call was initiated by Lammy. In a social media post later, Jaishankar said he and Lammy also deliberated on the developments in West Asia. "Received a call from UK Foreign Secretary @DavidLammy today. Discussed the situation in Bangladesh and West Asia," Jaishankar said. The discussion between Jaishankar and the British Foreign Secretary on the situation in Bangladesh comes against the backdrop of former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's initial plan to seek asylum in London. However, the plan has hit a roadblock following the UK's hesitation to provide her refuge. Meanwhile, as an interim Government takes charge in Dhaka, India on Thursday said the interests of the people of Bangladesh are foremost in its mind. India also hoped for early restoration of law and order in Bangladesh. As far as India is concerned, interests of people of Bangladesh are foremost in our mind, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing. The situation in Bangladesh is still evolving, he said. Asked when former prime minister Sheikh Hasina will leave India, Jaiswal said: "We do not have any update on her plan." To another question on reports of attacks on minority communities in Bangladesh, the MEA spokesperson said New Delhi is monitoring the situation. He said India is in touch with authorities in Bangladesh to ensure safety and security of Indian missions, the personnel working there and Indians residing in that country. Hasina resigned as the prime minister on Monday following weeks of massive protests that initially began as an agitation against a job quota scheme but weeks later morphed into a mass movement demanding her ouster from power.

Dhankhar leaves House in a huff

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday left the House for a short time after heated exchanges with some Opposition members who wanted to raise the issue of Vinesh Phogat's disqualification and described the scene as "unprecedented and 'indigestible'." Dhankhar expressed his anguish on the conduct of Opposition members and left the House for a while. "For sometime I am not finding myself in a position to sit here..." Dhankhar said, adding he was leaving the House "with a heavy heart". Deputy Chairman Harivansh chaired the Zero Hour proceedings. Trouble started in the morning session when Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sought to raise the Phogat disqualification issue but Dhankhar did not allow it. This followed an angry exchange between the Chair and TMC leader Derek O'Brien. "It is an important issue. It is not an issue of a particular individual," Kharge said soon after the listed papers were tabled in the House. He wanted to know "who is behind" the disqualification. However, Dhankhar did not allow Kharge to raise the issue and went ahead with the scheduled Zero Hour listings. In the meantime, Derek O'Brien stood up to raise his point, but could not be heard because of uproar in the House. To this Dhankhar cautioned the TMC member, saying



"You are shouting at the Chair. Your conduct is ugliest in the House. I condemn your actions. Next time I will show you the door". As uproar continued, Opposition parties staged a walkout. "They (Opposition) think they are all wise. They think they are the only ones whose hearts are bleeding. The entire nation is in pain because of our girl. Entire nation is feeling the pain from the President to the Prime Minister to myself and many more. Everyone is sharing that situation, but to... Politicize it is the greatest disrespect to that girl. That girl has a long way to go," Dhankhar said. Leader of the House and BJP President J P Nadda also condemned the behaviour of Opposition members towards the Chair and also accused the Congress party of politicising the Phogat disqualification issue. "Opposition does not have a solid issue to discuss," he said. Nadda emphasised the whole country is behind Phogat and even the Prime Minister has described the wrestler as 'champion of champions'. After Nadda spoke, Dhankhar

expressed his anguish on the conduct of Opposition members and left the House saying he was not in a position to remain in the House for the time being. Before leaving the Rajya Sabha, Dhankhar said the behaviour of the Opposition members has crossed all limits by creating anarchy in the House and disrespecting the prestige of the Chair. "They are not challenging me. They are challenging the post of the Chairman. And they are challenging the Chair, as they think that the person who is sitting on this Chair is not capable," he said. Dhankhar rued that he did not get the desired support from the House despite making all efforts. "I am not running away from the oath. But what I have seen today, the way a member has behaved, the way the Opposition bench has conducted, I am not finding myself in a position to sit here for sometime," Dhankhar said, adding he was leaving the House "with a heavy heart". After Dhankhar left the House, Deputy Chairman Harivansh chaired the Zero Hour proceedings. Dhankhar later chaired the Question Hour. After returning to the Chair, he said when a scene is created in the House and it becomes the epicentre of disruption for the entire nation, then it is a bounden duty to sometimes take a tough decision. "I left my seat to introspect. Having witnessed (the scene)... Which I found was unprecedented, and indigestible," Dhankhar said.

SC to hear plea to delay NEET-PG exam

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court agreed to hear on Friday a plea seeking postponement of the NEET-PG examination, scheduled for August 11, which claimed that candidates have been allocated cities that are highly inconvenient for them to reach. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Thursday took note of the

submissions of lawyer Anas Tanwir on the issue. The bench said the matter will be listed on Friday. The plea said many candidates have been allocated cities which are highly inconvenient for them to reach. It said the test cities were allotted on July 31 and the specific centres will be declared on August 8. While the allocation of the centres was done to curb malpractices, the plea said



due to the paucity of time, it is difficult for the candidates to make arrangements for travel to specific cities. "Issue a writ in the nature of Mandamus... The

Respondents (National Testing Agency) to reschedule the NEET-PG 2024 examination," stated the plea filed by Vishal Soren. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-Postgraduate exam was initially supposed to be held on June 23. It was postponed by the Union Health Ministry as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of alleged irregularities in certain competitive exams.

Govt servants stand to lose job over faked documents, RS told

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Existing instructions permit the termination of a Government servant for furnishing false information or producing a false certificate to secure an appointment, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday. The response assumes significance as the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) recently cancelled the provisional candidature of probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar and debarred her from all future examinations for fraudulently availing attempts in the civil services examination beyond eligibility. She has also been accused of misusing disability and Other Backward Class or OBC (non-creamy layer) quotas, among others. In a written reply, Union Minister of State for Personnel



Jitendra Singh said complaints are received from time to time regarding employment in Government Ministries and departments on the basis of fake caste certificates, which are normally forwarded to the concerned Ministries/departments for appropriate action. "The extant instructions provide that if it is found that a Government servant had furnished false information or produced a false certificate in order to secure an appointment, he should not be retained in service," he said. Thus, when an appointing authority comes to know that an employee has submitted a fake caste certificate, it has to initiate action to remove or dismiss such an employee

from service according to the provisions of the relevant service rules, Singh said. The Minister said the responsibility for issuing and verifying the caste/community certificates lies with the concerned state governments. The Supreme Court, vide its judgement dated September 2, 1994, in the matter of 'Kumari Madhuri Patil vs Addl Commissioner', has laid down detailed criteria/guidelines to be followed by the state governments for the issuance of social status certificates, their scrutiny and their approval, he said. States and Union Territories have been requested on several occasions to ensure that the caste certificate referred to the district authorities is verified and reported to the appointing authority within one month of receipt of a request from such authority, the minister said.



CDS wants India to ramp up defence production

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Thursday said here the global disruptions have presented an opportunity for the Indian Defence Eco-system to ramp up their defence manufacturing capabilities so that the country transcends from being an importer to being an exporter of munitions, as well as, ammunition. Making this assertion at the Ammo India 2024 Conference organised by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), he said the global geopolitical environment is in a state of flux. "We are passing through an era of big global disruptions. Amidst the vagaries of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) of the World, the global arms industry is grappling with a seemingly insurmountable problem of widening demand and supply gap," he stressed. The CDS highlighted the importance of Aatmanirbharta and self-reliance in defence and emphasised how it is central to attaining strategic autonomy for the nation. He mentioned various policy changes, reforms and the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces to promote Make in India and Make for the World drive especially with respect to ammunition manufacturing.

Rajnath showers praises on ace shooter Bhaker

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday showered praise on star pistol shooter Manu Bhaker as he met the double Olympic bronze medalist after her triumphant return from the Paris Games. He said every Indian is elated by her "incredible performances". Rajnath also shared a photograph of their meeting in a social media post. "Delighted to meet India's ace shooter, Manu Bhaker, who scripted history at the Paris Olympics by winning two Bronze medals for the country. Every Indian is elated by her incredible performances. Best wishes for her future endeavours," he wrote on the social media platform. Bhaker arrived home on Wednesday after her historic feat at the ongoing Paris



Games where she became the first Indian in the post-Independence era to win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics. The ace shooter later posted on social media that the defence minister inspired her with his words of motivation. "I am honoured

to have the opportunity to meet with the Hon'ble Defence Minister of India, Shri Rajnath Singh at his office in New Delhi. I am grateful he took time out from his busy schedule to offer his support and inspired me with his words of motivation. #JeetKiAur #Cheer4Bharat #Paris2024 #Olympics @rajnathsingh @DefenceMinIndia @WeAreTeamIndia," she posted on the social media platform and also shared a photograph of the meeting. Bhaker will return to Paris on Saturday where she will be one of the flag-bearers of the Indian contingent at the Paris Olympics Closing Ceremony on Sunday. The 22-year-old Bhaker won a bronze each in the women's 10m air pistol and 10m air pistol mixed team event where she had paired with Sarabjot Singh to script Olympic history for the country. Before her, British-Indian athlete Norman Pritchard had won two silver medals in 200m sprint and 200m hurdles at the 1900 Olympics but that achievement had come in the pre-Independence era.

Govt nurturing 1,050 athletes for international participation: Mandaviya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is currently nurturing 1,050 athletes selected under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), bearing all expenses from training to gears and for international participation, Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Mansukh Lal Mandaviya said in Rajya Sabha on Thursday. The Government has three initiatives to identify talents at the grassroots level and nurture them and provide opportunities to them to play at the national and international levels, said Mandaviya while responding to a supplementary. Under Khelo India, the



Government has created a centre in each district. It is also organising competitions for school and college students over 14 years on state and national levels. There is a KIRTI programme (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification), which identifies talents from the schools and colleges. "Currently a talent identification process is going on in the country, in which one lakh talented sportsperson will be identified," said Mandaviya.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Daunting task ahead

The interim Govt led by Yunus must restore law and order in Bangladesh as there is chaos and fear all around

As Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus takes charge of the interim government of Bangladesh, he may have the challenging task of restoring peace and law and order in the country. Bangladesh, relatively a young nation, is once again in the throes of instability. The latest chapter in its ongoing saga of unrest, unfolded after the ouster of Sheik Hasina and subsequent takeover by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. As Yunus steps into power, the country is gripped by fear and uncertainty, prompting hundreds of citizens to seek refuge in India. Recent months saw political violence, protests, and crackdowns on dissent, creating a volatile environment that led to the ouster of Sheik Hasina and chaos on the roads of Dhaka. The announcement of Muhammad Yunus, a globally renowned figure for his work in microfinance and founder of Grameen Bank, taking over the reins of power comes as a dramatic twist. Yunus, who has faced his share of political and legal challenges in recent years, has long been a critic of the Hasina Government's policies.



The political upheaval has triggered a wave of fear among the populace especially the minorities. Reports indicate that hundreds of Bangladeshis are attempting to cross the border into India, driven by concerns for their safety. The future course of Bangladesh's political landscape under Yunus' leadership is fraught with uncertainty. Yunus has been an advocate for political reform and transparency. His leadership could usher in a new era of governance, focusing on anti-corruption measures and democratic practices. However, implementing these changes in a deeply entrenched political system will be a formidable challenge. Besides, Bangladesh's economy has been under strain due to mismanagement and corruption. Yunus' expertise in economic development and microfinance could play a pivotal role in revitalising the economy, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating jobs. While some may view him as a saviour, others may see him as an outsider with no political experience. Building trust and garnering widespread support will be essential for his administration's success. However, the biggest challenge would be restoring peace and maintaining the law and order. Ensuring law and order during this transition period is paramount. Yunus will need the cooperation of the military and law enforcement agencies to maintain stability and prevent further violence. As Bangladesh stands on the brink of a new political era with Muhammad Yunus at the helm, the road ahead is uncertain. The immediate priority will be to address the fears of the populace and restore a sense of security, especially amongst minorities. All said and done, right now the army will call the shots and till elections are announced nothing can be said about the future of interim government itself. The coming days will be crucial in determining whether Yunus' leadership can guide the country towards stability and prosperity or if Bangladesh will descend into further chaotic unrest.

Bangladesh's economy has been under strain due to mismanagement and corruption. Yunus' expertise in economic development and microfinance could play a pivotal role in revitalising the economy, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating jobs. While some may view him as a saviour, others may see him as an outsider with no political experience. Building trust and garnering widespread support will be essential for his administration's success. However, the biggest challenge would be restoring peace and maintaining the law and order. Ensuring law and order during this transition period is paramount. Yunus will need the cooperation of the military and law enforcement agencies to maintain stability and prevent further violence. As Bangladesh stands on the brink of a new political era with Muhammad Yunus at the helm, the road ahead is uncertain. The immediate priority will be to address the fears of the populace and restore a sense of security, especially amongst minorities. All said and done, right now the army will call the shots and till elections are announced nothing can be said about the future of interim government itself. The coming days will be crucial in determining whether Yunus' leadership can guide the country towards stability and prosperity or if Bangladesh will descend into further chaotic unrest.

PICTALK



A priest performs 'aarti' at Bade Hanumanji temple which was flooded after heavy rains in Prayagraj

Rediscovering the true value of life

Amidst climate change and environmental crises, it's time to re-evaluate our priorities and appreciate the irreplaceable gifts that nature freely provides

The best things in life, they say, come free. It is a dubious statement that we may not readily agree to in a world where anything material has a price tag attached to it. The problem is not in the maxim that I opened this piece with; the problem is with our definition of "the best things". We have devised a curious way to assess our lives by putting a numerical value on everything we can possess and call our own. Even as we scamper all over the place trying to fetch luxuries and comfort items, we tend to forget several things which we do not personally possess but are indispensable to our existence. They are more valuable to us than all the material assets of the world put together. Air, sunlight, water, and soil for instance. Many things are too obvious for us to appreciate as I discovered recently when astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore got stranded in space. Reports say that her extended stay would affect her body adversely and as per NASA,



it could alter the structure of the eyes and brain, and their function "because low-gravity conditions shift the body's fluids toward the head". Gravity: The natural phenomenon that Newton discovered by chance in late 1666 when he saw an apple fall to the ground isn't something that we pay attention to in our daily lives. We take universal gravitation for granted, just as we take many other conventional things and natural forces as part of our privilege on this planet. The heat wave sweeping across the globe, the unprecedented floods and unseasonal snow are all testimonies of this casual attitude we have adopted towards the most valuable things in life that the universe has granted us. Climate change has been converted to a mere topic of discussion and not as a veritable threat for all species. Who will tell us that we have been presently allowed to live the best versions of ourselves aided by natural resources and no matter how hard we try, we cannot replicate these conditions in another part of the universe anytime soon? We may be vain to declare that space travel will soon become a regular thing thanks to man's daring explorations. We can claim that we are

Cultural identity shapes behaviour

This cultural phenomenon, observed in many parts of the world, highlights the profound impact of inherited values on personal and collective actions



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

In India, several clans have their pedigree narratives. It is a great instrument for creating venerable ideals of behaviour and conduct and, above all, pride in their antecedents. Like many other places in the world, their pedigree is often traced to some other planet or has an anecdote or theory associated with their distinctive pedigree. Some consider themselves descendants of the Sun (Suryavanshi), others consider themselves descendants of the Moon (Chandravanshi), and so the call goes on.

The veracity of these claims is another story altogether, but invariably there is an ideal connected to them, and that is important. For example, the Suryavanshis are supposed to be very committed to their 'word of mouth', and they are supposed to never backtrack from what they have said or promised.

These ideals are important in identity formation and establishing a bottom line of behaviour. They also create a narrative of keeping the clan on track, such as it may be. There are fallouts for rituals, marriages, festivities, and more. Loyalty is not territorial because the clan has, often, migrated from its place of origin but the bonding is clear. Their rituals of festivities and celebrations keep the clan together, even though technology may have played its role in the widespread celebration and observance of clan identities. The protocols are very often strictly adhered to. Often these serve as an unwritten code of behavior.

There is another anecdote linked with planets, especially the Sun. Japan is considered to be the land of the rising sun, and there are anecdotes about special places in many parts of the world related to the sun. Toledo is a good illustration of a place where the sun's rays are said to have met the Earth for the first time.

There are other rituals associated with the sun in many parts of the world as well. In



India, planet worship is considered particularly venerable by many components of the population, and the steps in sun worship are a widely shared phenomenon. This practice is often accompanied by pouring water facing the sun. Celebrating obeisance to the sun is popular and has many stories spun around it.

It may be useful to remind oneself that, in the belief of many, worship of even other planets is a virtuous thing to do. The point, however, is to recognise that behaviour is determined by one's belief, and this belief may not always be an act of choice but an act of an inherited value system and cognitive association with values that are considered virtuous. This component of tradition, which is common in many parts of the world, is now often referred to, not so complementarily, as the Third World Phenomena. The older the community, the greater their belief and the more grounded their behaviour.

In such communities' gender relationships have a strong overlay of traditional beliefs.



LIKE MANY OTHER PLACES IN THE WORLD, THEIR PEDIGREE IS OFTEN TRACED TO SOME OTHER PLANET OR HAS AN ANECDOTE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR DISTINCTIVE PEDIGREE. SOME CONSIDER THEMSELVES DESCENDANTS OF THE SUN, OTHERS CONSIDER THEMSELVES DESCENDANTS OF THE MOON

Indeed, icons that grow up at times geography-wise and even climate-wise are significant factors in belief systems.

The broad takeaway from this narrative should be a realisation, that what goes into the composition of the human mind and belief system is often not only acquired from formal learning in the classroom but also by inherited and handed down beliefs.

This is an important aspect of learning which deserves far more attention even in formal learning systems. There is an obvious need to understand, all that goes into the making of one's identity and personality make-up.

One of the important dimensions should also be to assess and evaluate the complete personality of a person when recruiting him. The identity that that person carries may have many layers that are important for his work performance.

Unfortunately, not enough literature is available to convert all this into assessment instruments. This understanding would help to

explain why there are so many times a situation of grief when a person is recruited on just what could be called his 'professional knowledge'.

It will be worth remembering that professional knowledge is indeed important in the work dimension but that is not a full personality at work. To create a work identity, it is important to selectively integrate the cultural identities of individuals with a focus on the organisational identity of the enterprise concerned.

This is an important dimension of work management that both employers and employees need to pay much more attention to, more than what they have enabled so far. This will help to manage, better, group identities at work and create a culture of resonance for greater productivity and fulfilment all around. The idea of focusing on the 'complete personality', to the extent possible, is worth considering.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BANGLADESH CRISIS

Madam — Amid the backdrop of controversial job reservations and widespread violent protests, Bangladesh has seen its former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed flee the country and seek temporary exile in India, a sanctuary supposedly facilitated by the United Kingdom. The nation now stands on the brink of establishing a new interim regime, led by Muhammad Yunus and supported by student unions and the military. It is deeply disappointing that the international community, with whom Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had maintained good relations—particularly China, the US, and the United Kingdom—turned a blind eye to her government during this crisis. The violent student protests, demonstrations, and clashes, followed by anti-government forces, went largely ignored by these global allies. China, despite being a close economic partner of Bangladesh, remained a passive observer throughout the turmoil.

India's support for Bangladesh during this tumultuous period is commendable and highlights Prime Minister Modi's political commitment to its neighbor, strengthening bilateral relations rooted in cultural and historical ties. However, it is regrettable that Hindu citizens and temples have borne the brunt of the lawlessness and vandalism, acts seemingly orchestrated to provoke Indian sentiments. While the caretaker government led by the army appears to be a viable solution at the moment, it remains uncertain whether it can overcome the significant economic losses and extensive damage to national properties caused by the protests. There is hope that peace will prevail in Dhaka and that New Delhi's active involvement will help pave the way for the formation of an interim government, free from being hijacked by the military or anti-India radical elements. Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagarkote

We are proud of you!



Had the gravitational force acted on Vinesh Phogat been little bit kinder she would have not only lost the silver medal which was in her grab but would have also bagged a gold considering her performance in the tournament so far. Vinesh lost the gold by weighing 100 Grams more than the permit-

ted weight of 50 kgs in the category and also suffered a disqualification from the tournament. It is one of the most unfortunate thing that could have happened to her as a sports person, shattering her dreams. Regardless of this she is the golden girl and would be remembered for her superb performance.

While Phogat has been successful in bagging Gold and silver medals in Commonwealth and Asian games, courtesy misfortune Olympics has been eluding her as she suffered an injury in Rio olympics in 2016 while in 2020 Tokyo olympics and in the Paris olympics yesterday she suffered a cruel disqualification! Phogat, you might have lost Gold medal in Olympics, for sure you have won a place in the hearts of all the sports lovers in the world! We are proud of you!!

Gopalswamy J | Chennai

THE PLIGHT OF SEWER WORKERS

Madam— Kudos to Mr N Sadhasiva Reddy for his letter titled "Death of sanitation workers" (August 7). Our eardrums are constantly bombarded with the triumphant declarations of "conquering" the other side of the Moon, yet all that is provided for a sewer worker risking his life for society's "dirty work" is an ordinary rope. Billions of state funds are invested in mass yoga performances on the streets to showcase the country's "might" to the world, yet the same ordinary rope is the only safety measure for the poorest souls in this "mighty" India. Gigantic statues and bullet train projects are undertaken to "mesmerize" the world, but the faceless manual scavengers who work tirelessly to keep our environment clean receive no more than that ordinary rope.

Those who ignore the plight and suffering of these unsung heroes, without whose essential service our "civilized modern" society would come to a standstill, are nothing short of barbarians. Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

PREAMBLE MISSING IN NCERT BOOKS

Madam — The absence of the "Indian Constitution" preamble in some NCERT textbooks for certain classes should not lead to blame. Instead, consider this as an opportunity to highlight its sacred importance and encourage students to learn it with increased focus.

This can greatly contribute to shaping a clean thought process centered on equality and the socialist republic structure. It would be beneficial if NCERT issued a circular or sent an online message to all schools following the NCERT syllabus, advising them to download the preamble from Google or refer to other NCERT textbooks. Emphasising its sacred points with enhanced focus during teaching can greatly benefit the students. It is very important that today's children know about our freedom struggle and how our Constitution was written.

PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

HASINA'S OUSTER:
A BLOW TO INDIA

Ouster of Sheikh Hasina shakes India's strategic balance in the neighbourhood



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A full-fledged crisis has been lobbed in India's court, with the ouster of PM Sheikh Hasina earlier this week. India's already troubled neighbourhood has now three countries under the firm grip of the armed forces. Pakistan, Myanmar and now Bangladesh, are now the army-ruled trioka, on a slippery slope of getting too close to China. Out of the two, it was Bangladesh which has been the crown jewel of India's neighbourhood first policy, having had a visibly pro-India government for the past decade and half. Pakistan has been China's proxy state acting against Indian interests, while Myanmar due to the army rule, has also slipped closer to China. Meanwhile, a pro-China (read anti-India) leader in the Maldives, a not-too-Delhi-friendly regime in Nepal, presents Indian diplomacy as one of its biggest challenges in recent history.

Former PM Sheikh Hasina, despite her dictatorial governance style, enjoyed bipartisan support in India. She used her relations with Narendra Modi and the opposition leaders in India, to come out heavily on extremist forces operating on Bangladeshi soil against India's interests. It is no coincidence that former PM Hasina has travelled to New Delhi thrice in a year. PM Modi, lauded her efforts in upgrading the bilateral relations when she came for a state visit, a first under the new government in the centre. Indo-Bangladesh bilateral grew from strength to strength during Sheikh Hasina's decade and a half-regime, with important long-term infrastructure projects being operationalised by India and increasing new transit and trade corridors between the two



neighbours. India shares, nearly 4000 km of land border with Bangladesh, bringing its 5 states in unique proximity to the neighbour. This land border, the fifth largest land border in the world, acts as a porous conduit for the movement of goods and people during times of bonhomie, as governments maintain strict vigil keeping in mind each other's interests. This was visible during Sheikh Hasina's tenure when cross-border smuggling and terrorism had nearly vanished. This has built a very comfortable position for Indian diplomats, as they have trusted a friendly regime to keep Indian interests in mind. However, with Sheikh Hasina, gone and chances of her never being back in the political arena of Bangladesh looking extremely certain, things are about to change. India has not built bipartisan support for itself in the local Bangladeshi politics.

It has chosen to be cosy with Sheikh Hasina's government and dealt with overtures from the principal opposition party in Bangladesh with nonchalance. The fear was, that showing any affinity to Bangladesh's opposition party may not be taken kindly by Sheikh Hasina. Therefore a public diplomacy narrative emerged, that Sheikh Hasina was 'too close to be comfortable', with India and acting against her nation's interests. A caged opposition in Bangladesh managed to get external support from China, and Pakistan's intelligence agency, both of whom have a huge interest in keeping India under constant stress in the geopolitical affairs of the region. The on-ground situation in Bangladesh currently is against India. The current interim regime has allies who may be infiltrated with extremist elements, with whom India has had bitter experiences in the past. The nature of the protests and subsequent ouster of Sheikh Hasina ensured that any of her policies, including being pro-India would not be taken too kindly by the Bangladeshi citizens. An anti-Sheikh Hasina mood could easily be swayed to anti anti-India mood, which would be detrimental to the long-drawn deep bilateral relationship. It would be a challenge for India to work new bunch of leaders in Bangladesh and remain a crucial strategic allies for the eastern neighbour.

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

Bangladesh at
political crossroads

The interim government faces a formidable task in restoring law and order, organising free and fair elections, combating corruption and gaining public trust



K S TOMAR

According to British parapsychologist Celia Elizabeth Green, "In an autocracy, one person has his way; in an aristocracy, a few people have their way; in a democracy, no one has his way." This sentiment resonates deeply with the ousted former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, who refused to acknowledge the clear signs of her impending downfall. Conspiracy theory is gaining momentum which led to ouster of EX PM, Sheikh Hasina which allegedly included the intelligence agencies of America (CIA), Pakistan (ISI) and China which yearned for an alternate government led by EX PM, Khalida Zia who might be on her way of ascendancy to power in future. Another version points out the preference of China and Pakistan to have Anti-Indian government in Dhaka which might alter the regional balance in South Asia.

CONSPIRACY THEORY. There have been numerous speculations and allegations regarding the United States' involvement in attempts to oust Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Some argue that the U.S. might be seeking a more favourable government in Dhaka due to concerns over human rights, democratic practices, and regional security dynamics. Critics suggest that American interests, particularly in countering China's growing influence in South Asia, might drive such alleged conspiracies.

However, concrete evidence of U.S. involvement in any conspiracy against Sheikh Hasina is lacking. Officially, the U.S. government has maintained a stance of promoting democratic values and fair elections in Bangladesh. Publicly, U.S. officials have expressed concerns about political repression and the fairness of the electoral process under Hasina's administration but stopped short of endorsing any regime change.

Sheikh Hasina's administration has leveraged these allegations to bolster nationalist sentiment and consolidate power, portraying itself as a bulwark against foreign interference. This narrative resonates with many Bangladeshis, fostering a perception of external threats to national sovereignty. Ultimately, while suspicions persist, the claims of direct American involvement in a conspiracy to oust Sheikh Hasina remain speculative and unproven. The situation underscores the complex interplay of domestic politics and international relations in Bangladesh.

Hasina's dramatic fall from grace has not surprised many, except perhaps herself. She ignored the rising tide of public discontent and the conspiracies hatched by vested interests aiming to assert dominance in South Asia and undermine India. Winning 288 out of 300 seats in the January 2024 elections, alongside the arrests of opposition leaders and suppression of dissent, highlighted a significant loss of credibility for Hasina, culminating in widespread revolt and her eventual ouster.

Hasina, a pro-democracy leader who witnessed the sacrifices made by her late father and family, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Bangladesh, has now left the nation poised for a potential regime dominated by hardliners, anti-India, and pro-China forces, possibly sandwiching this troubled nation between two powers in the future. The interim government faces several challenges:

Restoring Political Stability: establishing neutral ground and engaging in dialogue with all political factions to ensure a peaceful and democratic transition.



Organizing Free and Fair Elections: Ensuring upcoming elections are free, fair, and credible to restore public trust in the democratic process.

Combating Corruption: Initiating anti-corruption drives to target high-profile politicians and business leaders while ensuring fairness.

Maintaining Law and Order: Managing protests and civil unrest carefully, and ensuring security forces act with restraint to avoid human rights abuses.

Ensuring Human Rights: Balancing order with respecting human rights and avoiding authoritarianism. Gaining Public Trust; Building public confidence through transparency, effective communication, and inclusive policies.

International Relations: Engaging with international organizations, donor countries, and regional allies to ensure continued support and investment. The political upheaval in Bangladesh over the past 13 months has been deeply polarizing and emotionally charged citizens. Experts attribute the whirlwind of violent emotions to an unresolved conflict over the nation's identity—a conflict that must be successfully addressed for the country's survival. There is no denying that Hasina was a secular and reformist figure in Bangladesh.



THERE IS NO DENYING THAT HASINA WAS A SECULAR AND REFORMIST FIGURE IN BANGLADESH. HER GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ENSURING SAFETY AND FOSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH, MAKING BANGLADESH ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING DEVELOPING NATION

Her government had been instrumental in ensuring safety and fostering economic growth, making Bangladesh one of the fastest-growing developing nations. Yet, her leadership was marred by accusations of election rigging, suppression of opposition, and human rights violations, which stoked public discontent.

The crisis reached its peak with unprecedented violence and street protests, allegedly orchestrated by Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, and active involvement from Khalida Zia's BNP and Chinese intelligence networks.

Amidst this turmoil, Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus was chosen to lead an interim government after consultations with military leaders and key stakeholders. Experts and ex-diplomats agree that the current turmoil is a by-product of the public uprising against Hasina, who fled the country with India's assistance. She is now seeking asylum in Europe, with the UK being a potential destination, though nothing is certain.

Comparative Analysis of Hasina and Rajapaksa's Ousters: There are several similarities between Sheikh Hasina's downfall in Bangladesh in 2024 and the ouster of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2022. Both events stem from political, economic, and social factors.

Economic Mismanagement and Authoritarian Governance: Sheikh Hasina faced criticism for stifling dissent and undermining democratic processes. Similarly, Gotabaya Rajapaksa's administration was criticized for authoritarianism and nepotism. Both countries struggled with economic difficulties, rising living costs, and unemployment, leading to public frustration and mass protests.

Debt and Foreign Exchange Issues: Bangladesh experienced increasing national debt and challenges in managing foreign exchange reserves, while Sri Lanka faced a severe economic crisis characterized by foreign exchange shortages and high inflation, leading to widespread hardship.

Public Unrest and International Factors: Both countries saw mass protests against economic hardships and political repression. The international relations of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were strained due to economic mismanagement and human rights abuses, affecting foreign aid and investment.

Challenges for IndiaThe ouster of Sheikh Hasina presents several

challenges for India: **Political Instability in Bangladesh:** The removal of a stable, pro-India government may lead to political instability, creating a power vacuum that could be filled by elements less friendly toward India.

This could foster anti-India sentiments and alter bilateral relations. **Border Security and Migration:** Political changes might affect cooperation on border management, potentially increasing challenges related to illegal migration, human trafficking, and terrorism.

Economic Relations and Trade: Changes in the political landscape could impact ongoing and future trade agreements, affecting bilateral trade beneficial to both countries. **Geopolitical Dynamics:** A new leadership might tilt towards China, enhancing its influence in Bangladesh and affecting India's strategic interests in the region.

Counterterrorism Efforts: A change in leadership might alter the level of collaboration on counterterrorism, impacting efforts to combat terrorism and insurgency.

Water-Sharing Disputes: The Teesta River water-sharing agreement, already a contentious issue, might face new challenges with a change in leadership.

India's Strategic Response: Experts suggest India should engage diplomatically with the new leadership, enhance border security, reassess trade agreements, and strengthen regional alliances to counter external influences like China's growing presence in Bangladesh.

Navigating these challenges requires a careful balance between immediate stabilization measures and laying the foundation for long-term democratic governance. The success of the interim government in managing these issues is crucial for providing stability to Bangladesh.

(The writer is a strategic affairs columnist and political analyst based in Shimla; views are personal)

Khalistan movement is bereft of any vision, survives merely on hatred

Khalistan movement harps upon divisive tactics and has struggled to present a viable vision for a sovereign state nearly fifty years since its inception

Gurupatwant Singh Pannun, of Sikhs for Justice, recently released a video over his X-handle that Chandra Arya, a Hindu Member of Parliament in Canada's House of Commons should go back to India. Arya had earlier criticized the Khalistani extremists for vandalism at BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Edmonton in Alberta state. The temple was recently found sprayed with anti-India graffiti of recognizably Khalistani variety.

Why do Khalistani always need to assert their existence through hatred of the Hindus? If they are indeed fighting for a sovereign Khalistan, even though no sensible or patriotic Indian would approve of it, they must establish the tenabil-



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

ity of the idea. Strangely, a movement approaching 50 years has not been able to throw up a credible map of Khalistan. On June 9, 2022, Pannun released a map of Khalistan at an event held at Lahore Press Club which showed Shimla, Himachal Pradesh as the capital of Khalistan. Could things get more ridiculous? The Sikhs comprise less than two per cent of Himachal Pradesh's

population. Their percentage same in Shimla city, which is not contiguous to Punjab where most Sikhs live. The map in addition to Punjab encompassed almost the whole of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, five districts of Rajasthan, several districts of Uttarakhand and several districts from Uttar Pradesh.

The net effect of such a map would be to reduce the Sikhs into a minority in Khalistan! In the early 19th century, Maharaja Ranjit Singh could rule over trans-Sutlej Punjab, by the dint of sword, despite the Sikhs comprising no more than 10 per cent of the population (based on Census figures, 1881). This was because the form of government was autocratic in an era of autocracy.

Still, the Maharaja had to pursue an inclusive and tolerant policy given the fractured religious demography of Punjab.

In the 21st century, when democracy has triumphed in the sub-continent, do Khalistanis propose to turn the clock back on political evolution? The fact that "Khalistan" should be carved out from the Indian side of Punjab alone makes the motive of its sponsors suspect.

Few Sikhs indeed remain on the Pakistan side of Punjab, from where the bulk of them were ethnically cleansed after the partition. However, the very same fact should prohibit the Sikhs from pursuing any secessionist agenda from the Indian side. The Sikhs concentrated in the fertile terrains of



central Punjab, which fell to the Pakistan side, and took refuge on the Indian side after the partition. There was a forcible exchange of population between the two halves of Punjab on religious lines. This bolstered their population from 13 per cent in colonial Punjab (Census, 1941) to 33 per cent in East Punjab (Census, 1961). After the reorganization of Punjab (1966), whereby Hindu-dominated Haryana

and Himachal Pradesh were separated, their population share increased to 60.2 per cent in rump Punjab (Census, 1971).

There is no grouse against Sikhs becoming a majority in Indian Punjab, as never before in the history of Punjab. However, there would certainly be a grouse if this majority, of less than two-thirds, wants to secede from the territory of the state. Questions will be asked why they have not demanded a single square inch of territory from the Pakistan side and all liability is on India which had graciously accommodated the Sikhs after the partition. The Khalistanis could grumble that not conceding a sovereign nation to the Sikhs during the partition itself was an injustice.

This is a bogus argument. None of the districts in colonial Punjab had a Sikh majority, which made the demand for "Khalistan" completely untenable.

As early as December 2, 1942, Master Tara Singh had asked for the bifurcation of colonial Punjab — one dominated by the Muslims and another by Hindu-Sikhs. History aside, "Khalistan" would put the future of Sikhs in jeopardy. Around 30 per cent of wheat procured by authorities and 21 per cent of rice procured during FY. 2021-22 came from Punjab alone. The loss of this assured procurement by the Food Corporation of India will put Punjab under mountains of rice and wheat. The "Khalistan", a landlocked nation sandwiched between

India and Pakistan, will be dependent on trade with both. Even today it can redirect its procurement mechanism profitably towards other states rather than favouring Punjab. However, Punjab, whose 75 population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood would be sorely hit. The loss of a huge pan-Indian market for Punjab will be disastrous in every sector e.g. transportation, hosiery, machine tools etc. The Sikh population in other states of India would be adversely affected. No wonder, the Khalistanis prefer to stroke passions, by ducking these critical questions.

(The writer is an author and an independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

After Wayanad tragedy, State MPs, MLAs demand ecologically sensitive rail line

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN
■ KOCHI

Closely on the heels of the disaster that struck Wayanad that claimed more than 400 lives and made hundreds of families without roof over their heads, Kerala is on its way to perpetuate another major mishap under the pretext of development. Even as the Union Minister of forest Bhubender Yadav declared that the landslide and deluge that devastated Wayanad was a man made disaster because of scant regard for ecology and environment, a team of MPs and MLAs from the State called on Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav and submitted a memorandum seeking the speeding up of the construction of Angamali to Sabari Railway Line which they claim would help pilgrims to the holy shrine of Sabarimala atop the Western Ghats. Devotees of Lord Ayyappa, the presiding deity of Sabarimala are aghast over the enthusiasm shown by the elected representatives of the people pushing for a separate railway line to the holy shrine. "None of these representatives belong to the Sanatana Dharma and most



of them consider idol worship as a cardinal sin. There is something more than the ordinary eyes could see behind this demand for the railway line to Sabarimala," said PNS Nambodiri, a former Government official based in Ettumanoor. He told *The Pioneer* that not a single MP or MLA came forward to condemn the Kerala Government action of allowing women in the age group of 10 to 50 worshipping at the shrine. "It is a centuries old custom that women in the 10 to 50 age group are not allowed in this particular shrine as Lord Ayyappa here is in the manifestation of eternal

bachelor," said Nambodiri. Scholars like Nambodiri and T K Subramanina Nambodiri are unanimous in their apprehension that there is a conspiracy against the temple dating back to many centuries. "They want to elevate the pilgrimage center to a shopping complex and business district," said Subramanian Nambodiri. "All super fast trains including Vande Bharat Expresses plying in Kerala travel slowly because of outdated signal and tracks and it would take years for the Railways to bring on par with the rest of the nation. The Kerala Government should give top priority to this process," said a top

official of the Railways based in Kerala. Alok Kumar Verma, former chief engineer of Indian Railways concurred with this observation and said focus should be on improving speed and efficiency. It may be remembered that B V Kumar, former chief of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence had warned the country about the mushrooming of cannabis plantations in the high ranges of Kerala. "The top grade cannabis cultivated in these areas have to be brought to the plains and what is the safest route than the railways," he had said while reacting to the demand of Kerala politicians for this rail route. Nambodiri pointed out that the Sabarimala Temple opens the sanctum sanctorum just for five months every year. "The trains will run almost empty for the next seven months. The argument that there should be train service to transport the hill produce to the plains does not hold water as only marginal crop is cultivated in the region," said PNS Nambodiripadua, a former revenue official who has put in years of service in the region.

Certain agencies exerting pressure for re-imposition of AFSPA: Manipur CM

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Thursday said certain central agencies were exerting pressure for the re-imposition of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in the valley districts of the State. Responding to a query from Naga People's Front (NPF) member Leishiyo Keishing in the Assembly, Singh said, "Due to the evolving situation in the valley districts since May 3 last year, some central agencies were pressing for the re-imposition of AFSPA." He added that even during discussions with him, these agencies argued that normal laws could not address the situation and thus AFSPA should be reinstated in the valley districts. Objecting to the suggestion, Singh said, "We were at a point of demanding the removal of AFSPA from hill districts, but I was questioned about whether the situation in the valley districts could be managed under normal laws." Singh explained that he assured the agencies that the unrest was a result of emotional responses to recent violence and that he would address the situation gradually. The CM admitted



that the evolving situation in the valley districts has made it challenging to provide satisfactory answers to the agencies during their visits. He acknowledged that the agencies were not fully satisfied with his previous responses and appealed to the people through the House, saying, "There is significant pressure for the imposition of AFSPA in the valley." Reflecting on the hardships caused by AFSPA, Singh said, "If the Act could restore law and order, it would have been achieved long ago. A humane approach is needed." He emphasised his own past

opposition to AFSPA, stating, "I have long stood against AFSPA, both as a journalist and as a public figure. It is an inhumane and draconian Act that humiliates people, instills fear, and destroys dignity." Singh noted that after the situation improved in the valley districts, AFSPA was removed from 19 police stations. He reiterated the desire to remove AFSPA from the hill areas as well, calling for central leaders to be convinced of this need. Singh expressed hope that new criminal laws will help manage the evolving situation in Manipur.

Rain claims 100 lives in Himachal since start of monsoon

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Rain has taken 100 lives since the onset of monsoon on June 27 and continues to thwart the traffic in the state with 97 roads closed at the moment, officials said on Thursday. The Met office on Thursday issued an 'orange' warning, foreboding heavy to very rainfall, marked by thunderstorm and lightning, at places in Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, and Sirmour districts for Saturday. "According to the state emergency operation centre, 30 people died after falling from a height, 23 in accidental drowning, 14 of snake bite, 13 due to electrocution, 11 in cloudburst, three in flash floods and one in landslide and five due to other reasons. The maximum deaths, 21, were reported from Mandi, followed by 18 in Kangra while Shimla and Sirmour districts for nine deaths each. The Met also warned of a low to moderate flash flood in parts of Sirmour, Chamba, Shimla, and Mandi districts in the next 24 hours. 'By Thursday evening, 40 roads were closed in Mandi, 26 in Kullu, 15 in Shimla, six in Kangra, four each in Sirmour and Lahaul and Spiti, and one each in Hamirpur and Kinnaur districts. 'The traffic was restricted to one side of the road on the Shimla-Kalka National Highway 5 due to debris on the road near Kandaghat in Solan district. Long queues of vehicles were seen on both sides of the road. 'Forty-five transformers and 25 water supply schemes are affected in the state, the state emergency centre said. 'Shillaroo recorded the highest rainfall at 86.4 mm since Wednesday evening, followed by Kufri (78 mm), Baggi (76.6 mm), Sundernagar (64.2 mm), Mandi (60.2 mm), Gohar (57.4 mm), Jogindernagar (53 mm), Pandoh (50 mm), Palampur (48.8 mm), Dharamshala (38.6 mm), Shimla (34 mm) Narkanda (28.5 mm), Bilaspur Jubbarhatti (25 mm each), Kangra (22.6 mm), Dhaulakuan (22 mm), and Manali (16 mm). 'The water supply to Shimla city can be disturbed for the next 2-3 days due to turbidity in the water sources, the Shimla Jal Prabandhak Nigam said. 'The state received 29 per cent deficit rainfall till August 8, beginning from Jun 1, the date monsoon hits the country. 'The state received 307.9 mm rainfall against an average of 435.5 mm during this period. 'In August so far, Himachal Pradesh has recorded 80.8 mm rainfall against a normal of 78.5 mm.

Centre to diplomatically deal with attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh: Himanta

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday expressed confidence that the Centre will address the alleged attacks on Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh through diplomatic efforts. He assured that while the Indian government is managing the situation with patience and caution, the focus remains on ensuring safety and maintaining strict vigilance along the Indo-Bangladesh border, which has been fully sealed. "The Indian government will deal with the situation politically and diplomatically with the new dispensation. We have been asked not to comment much on it but to be patient and tolerant", the Chief Minister said on the sidelines of a programme here. "The solution does not lie in allowing those trying to enter India following persecution in the neighbouring country but to ensure their safety and security there. There are various organisations like the UN and others to deal with the situation diplomatically", Sarma said. Sarma further noted his reluctance to comment on the alleged attacks to avoid potential repercussions on minorities in Bangladesh. "I am confident that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is



doing everything possible to ensure the safety and security of Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists in that country," he said. He assured that Assam is maintaining strict border security, allowing entry only to those with valid passports, visas, and bona fide Indian citizenship. Sarma had previously indicated concerns about the situation in Bangladesh from two perspectives - the potential influx of people through the border and the risk of the

neighbouring country becoming a refuge for insurgents from Northeast India. He had asserted that there is no doubt that with the cooperation of the previous government in Bangladesh, "we have been successful in curbing extremist activities in Northeast India". He hoped that the new government in Bangladesh will also maintain the same cooperation and not allow their country to become a safe haven for NE insurgents.

Education best tool for social transformation: Arunachal Governor

PTI ■ ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) K T Parnaik on Thursday called on all stakeholders to focus on developing students' physical, mental, and moral foundations to shape them into responsible citizens. Speaking at a three-day 'chintan shivir-cum-education conclave' here, Parnaik emphasised that a strong mental and moral foundation would result in educated, disciplined, and inspired individuals, contributing to the state's transformation from 'Shiksit Arunachal' to 'Viksit Arunachal'. Highlighting the critical role of education, the governor said it equips people with knowledge and skills necessary for personal and societal growth. "It awakens joy, curiosity and a deep desire to pursue leadership roles and positively impact those around them," the governor added. Parnaik stressed the importance of the 'Guru-Shishya Parampara,' advocating for impactful and innovative teacher training

programmes. He urged the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which promotes a holistic curriculum that encourages critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Parnaik recommended aligning the curriculum with NEP 2020 principles while incorporating the state's cultural heritage. The governor also addressed initiatives such as the Mission 'National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy' (NIPUN Bharat) and Prime Minister Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI Schools), emphasising the need for adopting best practices and innovative approaches to set new educational standards. Parnaik commended State Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sona, his advisor Mutchu Mithi, Education Commissioner Amjad Tak, and Education Secretary Duly Kamduk for organising the conclave and encouraged participants to engage in meaningful discussions to enhance the state's educational framework.

Assam: Over 1,000 rare Sanchi manuscripts to go digital

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The Dibrugarh University along with an NGO Nanda Talukdar Foundation (NTF) has decided to preserve over 1,000 rare manuscripts of Assam by digitising and making them accessible to the public. NTF in a statement on Thursday said that the initiative promises to open the doors to a vast collection of rare and unseen Sanchi Paat (leaves of the Sanchi tree) manuscripts for anyone, anywhere in the world. The Dibrugarh University recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Nanda Talukdar Foundation (NTF) to preserve Assam's rich literary heritage, it added. As part of the MoU, NTF will serve as the knowledge partner in the preservation and digitisation of over 1,000 rare and ancient manuscripts housed at the Assamese Department of the university. These manuscripts, written in Old Assamese, Sanskrit, Tai and Bengali, cover various subjects including Vaishnavism, Buddhism and ancient customs of Assam, reflecting the diverse cultural and religious heritage of the region," the release said. Under this partnership, the manuscripts will be digitised



and made available in the public domain, enabling scholars and researchers worldwide to access these invaluable resources, it added. This initiative is the first large-scale effort to make rare Assamese manuscripts publicly accessible and ensure their preservation for future generations. Commenting on the development, Mrinal Talukdar on behalf of NTF said: "The digitisation of these manuscripts is not only a matter of preservation but also opens the door to knowledge. We are honoured to be part of this groundbreaking project. Dibrugarh University Registrar Dr Parmanand Sonowal said the partnership is a significant step towards making the vast and diverse heritage of Assam accessible to the world. "We hope this initiative will inspire further efforts in preserving our cultural legacy," he added.

FROM PAGE 1

Waqf Bill to face JPC scrutiny...

"Because you couldn't do it, we had to bring these amendments...Some people have captured Waqf boards and this Bill has been brought to give justice to ordinary Muslims," he said. He claimed that many leaders in the opposition had privately told him that state Waqf boards had turned into a mafia. "I won't take their names and destroy their political careers," Rijju said. Defending the amendments, Rijju said a joint parliamentary committee had recommended that Waqf Act 1995 should be re-looked. He

said the opposition was opposing for the sake of politics. Rijju said "Opposition is trying to mislead people about intention of Waqf bill. No law can be above Constitution but 1995 Waqf law has such provisions". He said in the earlier law, there was no provision to challenge or review the order or judgement of the tribunal. Now, provision was being made for verdicts to be challenged at higher courts, the minister said. "In our country, no law can be a super law and that can't be above the Constitution.

Ex-West Bengal CM...

Suffering from coronary obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) his health deteriorated in recent times. Much like his predecessor and senior party comrade Jyoti Basu, the mortal remains of Bhattacharjee too would be donated to Kolkata's NRS Medical College for research work as per his last wishes, CPI(M) central committee member Rabin Deb said adding his eyes too were donated on Thursday. His body would be taken to State Assembly on Friday and from there to the CPI(M) headquarters for his

admirers to express their respect and after that his remains will be handed over to the hospital authorities, CPI(M) State secretary Md Salim said. Besides being a politician Bhattacharjee was also a creative personality. Apart from being a poet, writer and a dramatist Bhattacharjee remained committed to his political ideology. True to his political commitment he made headlines when he refused the Padma Bhushan award announced by the NDA government in 2022.

Vinesh retires after Olympics...

An ad-hoc division of CAS, which has been set up here for resolution of any disputes arising during the Olympic Games, will take up her appeal in the next few hours. She spent a good part of the day at a polyclinic inside the Games village owing to severe dehydration caused by her desperate measures to make the cut, which included going hungry, avoiding fluids and staying up all night to sweat it out. Cuban wrestler Yusneylis Guzman Lopez, who lost to Vinesh in the semifinals, replaced her in the final

against American Sarah Ann Hildebrandt. Hildebrandt won the bout to claim gold and Vinesh is now banking on CAS to be a joint silver-medallist with Lopez. However, the sport's international governing body, United World Wrestling (UWW) has made it clear on its part that the current weigh-in rule will not be changed as of now. On IOA's suggestion that a wrestler's results from the day on which the athlete met the weigh-in requirements should not be disqualified, the UWW President was sympathetic.

Registration of temples, mutts, trusts mandatory...

unregistered entities that fail to register with the BSBRT. A high-level meeting with officials from the Law and Revenue and Land Reforms departments will be convened to address these issues. Registration is mandatory to protect the property, including land, of both registered and unregistered temples from unauthorised claims, the Minister said. According to the latest data from BSBRT, there are approximately 2,512 unregistered temples and mutts in the state, owning 4,321.64 acres. The State has about 2,499 registered temples, which collectively own over 18,456 acres. According to data, the highest numbers of unregistered temples and mutts are in Vaishali (438), followed by Kaimur Bhabhua (307), West Champaran (273), Bhagalpur (191), Begusarai (185), Saran (154), and Gaya (152).

Rain revives Luni river in Barmer

PTI ■ JODHPUR

The rain, a flowing river and the desert. A rare trifecta celebrated by locals in the arid land of Barmer with song, dance and prayers to welcome the unusual sight of the Luni river flowing through their town. After three days of continuous rain, the river flowed through Samdari town in the western Rajasthan district on Wednesday. It was only for the second time in five years and the locals couldn't have been happier. Luni River, also known as 'Maruganga' or the Ganga of Rajasthan, originates from the Nag Pahadi in Aravali ranges in Ajmer and flows through nine districts of the state before merging into Gujarat's Rann of Kutch. However, the river hardly reaches Barmer even when it rains heavily in the region, an expert said. After encountering the rare sight on Wednesday, elated residents of the Samdari town gathered around the river as women sang folk songs while men danced on the beats of the drums.

Indian hockey's...

Spain kept up the tempo and secured back-to-back penalty corners in the 20th minute but the Indians defended stoutly. In the 28th minute, Spain secured another penalty corner after Borja Lacalle hit the post but it went in vain. Still trailing, India pressed hard on the Spain defence and secured their first penalty corner in the 29th minute but could not convert. Just 21 seconds from half-time, Manpreet compensated for his fault by earning India another penalty corner and this time Harmanpreet was bang on target.

India to monitor winged guests in...

The collars that have been planned to be procured need to be durable, and waterproof with GPS logging intervals ranging from 1 second to 48 hours and high-frequency sensors (up to 50 Hz) that can measure acceleration, magnetism, temperature, and light intensity. In such devices, data storage is maintained even in the absence

of a network connection, and the devices offer remote control for GPS and GSM schedules, night-time GPS hibernation, and geofence settings through an online control panel, the scientist explained about the features of such techs. "Currently, we do not know what exact routes these birds take ... With this study, we will be able to find their major

stopovers as well their behaviours," he said. Bar-headed geese, part of the Anser family, are recognized by their unique and striking plumage. They feature a distinctive combination of white and grey feathers, with prominent black stripes on their heads and necks, and bright orange-yellow bills and legs. Their

wingspan ranges from 140 to 160 cm. Although males and females look quite similar, males are slightly larger than females. The birds arriving at Wular Lake each year among others include mallards, greylag geese, pochards, common teal, shovellers, pintails, and gharwals, typically between October and April.

Plot to kill 'as many as possible' at Taylor Swift shows in Vienna foiled

AP ■ VIENNA

Austrian security officials said Thursday that the main suspect of the two arrested in a foiled plot to attack now-cancelled Taylor Swift shows in Vienna fully confessed to his plans to "kill as many people as possible outside the concert venue". Officials told reporters at a press conference in the Austrian capital that they found ties to the Islamic State group, and when the 19-year-old began working on his attack plans in July, he quit his regular job and "conspicuously changed his appearance and adapted to IS propaganda". The head of the Directorate of State Security and Intelligence, Omar Hajjawi-Pirchner, said the 19-year-old wanted to use knives or self-made explosives outside the Ernst Happel Stadium to kill as many people as possible. He was "clearly radicalised in the direction of the Islamic State and thinks it is right to kill infidels," Hajjawi-Pirchner said. Just a few weeks ago, the 19-year-old had also uploaded an oath of allegiance to the current leader of the Islamic State group militia to an internet account. During a raid of

his home in Ternitz, south of Vienna, investigators found chemical substances and technical devices that indicated "concrete preparatory acts," said Franz Ruf, Director General for Public Security at the Ministry of the Interior. Authorities also found Islamic State group and al-Qaida material at the home of the second suspect, a 17-year-old Austrian. He was employed a few days ago by a company providing services at the venue for the concerts, and was arrested by special police forces near the stadium. The suspects' names were not released in line with Austrian privacy rules. No other suspects are being sought, Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said. However, a 15-year-old, who had been in contact with both suspects, was also interrogated by police. "The situation was serious, the situation is serious. But we can also say: A tragedy was prevented," he said. The cancellations of three sold-out concerts this week devastated Swifties across the globe, many of whom had dropped thousands of euros (dollars) on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city for the sold-out Eras Tour shows on



Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Ernst Happel Stadium, which sat empty Thursday morning aside from media filming outside.

of the concerts, Barracuda Music, were in close contact about whether to cancel the three concerts, but in the end it was the organizer who made the call.

Barracuda Music said in an Instagram post late Wednesday that "we have no choice but to cancel the three scheduled shows for everyone's safety." It cited government officials'

confirmation of a planned attack at the stadium. Europe is enamored by the American superstar, with the German town of Gelsenkirchen renaming itself "Swiftkirchen" before its mid-July concerts. Austria's Vice-Chancellor Werner Kogler wrote on social platform X: "For many, a dream has been shattered today. On three evenings in Vienna, tens of thousands of #Swifties should have celebrated life together." "I am very sorry that you were denied this. Swifties stick together, hate and terror can't destroy that," Kogler added. Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer posted on X that "the cancellation of the Taylor Swift concerts by the organizers is a bitter disappointment for all fans in Austria." "The situation surrounding the apparently planned terror attack in Vienna was very serious," he wrote. But he added that, thanks to intensive cooperation between police and Austrian and foreign intelligence, "the threat could be recognized early on, tackled and a tragedy prevented." Barracuda Music said that "all tickets will be automatically refunded

within the next 10 business days." The same wording was posted under the Vienna dates on Swift's official website. The Vienna stadium had been sold out for the planned concerts, APA reported, with an estimated 170,000 fans expected for the concerts in Austria. Some who posted on X lamented months of now-wasted efforts to make friendship bracelets and pick out fashionable outfits for the performance. Swift is expected to perform at London's Wembley stadium in five concerts between Aug 15 and 20 to close the European leg of her record-setting Eras Tour. In 2017, an attack at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, killed 22 people. Suicide bomber Salman Abedi set up a knapsack bomb in Manchester Arena at the end of Grande's concert as thousands of young fans were leaving. More than 100 people were injured. Abedi died in the explosion. An official inquiry reported in 2023 that Britain's domestic intelligence agency, MI5, didn't act swiftly enough on key information and missed a significant opportunity to prevent the bombing, the deadliest extremist attack in the United Kingdom in recent years.

Anti-racism protesters march counters violence in UK

PTI ■ LONDON

A massive turnout of anti-racism counter-protesters swarmed the streets of London and other UK cities in an effort to outnumber the far-right violent mobs causing mayhem over the past week, described by Scotland Yard as a "show of unity from communities". Fears of violence at several planned extremist rallies targeting immigration lawyers and agencies across London and other cities on Wednesday evening abated as thousands of specialist police officers patrolled the streets and counter-protesters waving placards reading "Smash Facism & Racism" and "Stop the far right" turned out in hoards for peace marches. The UK government, however, cautioned that there is intelligence that more far-right action could take place in the next few days even as there was relief that violent disorder was averted overnight. "Last night more than 1,000 officers were deployed across the capital ready to respond to any scenes of disorder. Their efforts and the strength of unity demonstrated by London's communities resulted in a largely peaceful evening," said Metropolitan Police chief Mark Rowley, who



revealed that dawn raids were carried out early on Thursday morning to arrest suspected violent offenders from the past few days. "What I want to make really clear is those we've arrested aren't protesters, patriots or decent citizens. They're thugs and criminals. Around 70 per cent have previous convictions for weapon possession, violence, drugs and other serious offences. Some have football banning orders. These are violent people taking to the streets under the guise of protest to engage in disorder," he said. London Mayor Sadiq Khan thanked people who peacefully stood "united against racism and Islamophobia", as well as the "heroic police force" for working round the clock to

keep Londoners safe. "To those far-right thugs still intent on sowing hatred and division, you will never be welcome here," he said in a post on X. More than 400 people have been arrested since the first clashes last Tuesday, when false claims spread online that the suspect in the fatal stabbings in Southport, north-west England, was a refugee who had come to the UK in a small boat last year. "I am cautious about what happened last night. It's good that we didn't see the level of disorder and criminality on our streets that we have in previous days, but obviously this is just the start," UK Policing Minister Diana Johnson told 'Sky News'. "There is now further intelligence of events during the

next few days, and we need to see what happens there," she said. A large chunk of those arrested have already been charged with various offences, including violent disorder, racially aggravated harassment and using threatening words online to stir up racial hatred, and have been appearing in courts for fast-tracked sentencing, as pledged by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Meanwhile, an inquest into the death of the three little girls stabbed in the Southport knife attack was opened and adjourned earlier on Wednesday. Bebe King, 6, Elsie Dot Stancombe, 7, and Alice da Silva Aguiar, 9, were killed when a knife-wielder entered a Taylor Swift themed holiday club on July 29, seriously injuring 10 others who have since been discharged from hospital. Senior coroner Julie Goulding said the hearing was a "short, sombre and formal process" to allow criminal proceedings to continue "unfettered". Axel Rudakubana, 17, who was born in the Welsh city of Cardiff to Rwandan parents, remains in custody charged with the murder of the three girls and attempted murder of eight other children and two adults.

Trump allies amplify a false claim about Harris' racial identity

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Ohio Sen JD Vance, Donald Trump's running mate, defended on Wednesday a false claim the former president made about Vice President Kamala Harris' racial identity, suggesting wrongly that Harris had downplayed her Black heritage in trying to suggest she's inauthentic. "What I took it as was an attack on Kamala Harris being a chameleon," he told reporters when asked in Michigan about the former president's suggestion that Harris, the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, had only recently identified as Black. "I think he was observing the basic foundational reality that Kamala Harris pretends to be something different depending on what audience she's speaking to," Vance said. "She fakes who she is depending on the audience she's in front of, and that's who she is and that's who she's always been." Vance's was the most recent of the Republican criticisms of how Harris portrays herself, in the wake of Trump's comments last week to the National Association of Black Journalists conference in Chicago. Florida Rep. Byron Donalds, a high-profile Trump surrogate who is a Black man, echoed the claim

on Sunday as a guest on ABC's "This Week." The proliferation of Trump's falsehood by other Republicans is part of their effort to stay in his favor, said former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele. "It's I'll do anything and I don't want to be on the wrong side of you," said Steele, a former Maryland lieutenant governor who was the first Black man to lead the RNC. "It's not I don't want to take the heat that comes with calling out your racism, that comes with calling out your ugliness, so I will pretend that's not what it is." The Harris campaign has declined to comment specifically on Trump's false claim. The vice president, speaking to a Black sorority last week,

accused Trump of "the same old show: the divisiveness and the disrespect." Harris has frequently talked about being Black in addition to being Indian American during her political career. She was the first African American to serve as California attorney general and became the first Indian American to serve as a U.S. senator and the second Black woman, after Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois. As an undergraduate, Harris attended Howard University, one of the nation's most prominent historically Black colleges and universities, where she also pledged the historically Black sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha. As San Francisco's first Black district attorney, she was recognized as a "Woman of Power"

by the National Urban League and received the Thurgood Marshall Award from the National Black Prosecutors Association in 2005. She was recognized in India Abroad during her 2010 campaign for California attorney general as being potentially "the first African American as well as the first Indian-American" to hold the office. Harris identified as both Black and Indian in an Associated Press story published that same year about the number of candidates of Indian descent running for prominent offices that year. "I grew up in a family where I had a strong sense of my culture and who I am, and I never felt insecure about that at all," she said at the time. "Slowly, perhaps, with each of us taking on more prominent positions, people will start to understand the diversity of the people." Harris joined the Congressional Black Caucus when she entered the Senate in 2017. And writing about her time at Howard in her 2019 memoir, "The Truths We Hold," Harris wrote: "Every signal told students that we could be anything - that we were young, gifted, and black, and we shouldn't let anything get in the way of our success."



Policemen in Bangladesh slowly returning to work

PTI ■ DHAKA

Policemen in Bangladesh were slowly returning to work from Thursday in response to the call by the newly-appointed chief, the official media reported, amidst the political turmoil and street violence in the country. Following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on Monday due to student-led protests, several police stations were attacked and set on fire, leading to many officers evacuating their stations due to the threat of more attacks. More than 400 people, including police personnel, were killed in the violence centring the students' movement. On Wednesday, the newly-appointed Inspector General of Police, Md Mainul Islam, ordered

officers to join their respective units within the next 24 hours. People from all walks of life, including different political parties leaders and students, are extending all-out necessary support to the returnee police personnel so they can come to their workplaces safely, according to a press release issued by police headquarters on Thursday. The policemen are returning to their working places from Thursday responding to the call of the newly-appointed IGP, the BSS news agency reported citing the release. Meanwhile, quoting witnesses, The Daily Star newspaper reported that some police personnel in plainclothes were arriving at Rajarbagh Police Lines, signed in the attendance registers.

However, they are not going to their respective workplaces, such as police stations, due to security concerns. Addressing a press briefing at the Police Headquarters on Thursday, IGP Islam said some unprofessional officers did not follow the accepted principles of applying force and violated human rights. "It is because of them [unprofessional officials] that this ongoing violence and casualties have occurred," he was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper. Many police officials have been injured, killed, and tortured because of some unprofessional and overly ambitious officials, he said. Islam assured that every murder would be properly investigated.

Israeli strike in Gaza kills 7

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A new report from Human Rights Watch says Israeli soldiers killed at least seven people and severely wounded two, including a 5-year-old, when they attacked a home in Gaza City where a Palestinian family was sheltering from the Israel-Hamas war in December. Gaza faces a severe humanitarian crisis with Israeli restrictions on aid and ongoing fighting limiting access to crucial medical, food and other supplies. The Health Ministry says the death toll in the territory is nearing 40,000. Regional tensions have soared since Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed July 31 in Iran by a pre-

sumed Israeli strike. Retaliation has been expected. French President Emmanuel Macron beseeched Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in a phone call to do everything in his power to avoid a new military escalation that he said would do lasting damage to regional stability. World leaders have been pushing for a cease-fire in Gaza, and United States President Joe Biden spoke with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Tuesday about their hopes for a deal calming tensions in the Middle East. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his Cabinet over the weekend that Israel is already in a "multi-front war" with Iran and its proxies.

Resolve Kashmir issue by peaceful means: UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

A Kashmir settlement of the Kashmir issue should be reached by peaceful means under the UN Charter and full respect for human rights, a spokesperson for UN chief Antonio Guterres has said, recalling the 1972 Simla agreement between India and Pakistan which rejects any third-party mediation. "Our position on Kashmir remains unchanged," Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, said at the daily press briefing here Wednesday. India has repeatedly told Pakistan that the United Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral

part of the country. The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. Haq said this while responding to a question by a Palestinian journalist on the UN Secretary-General's position on Kashmir and the situation there five years after the abrogation of Article 370. Haq said that the final settlement of the issue concerning Jammu and Kashmir "is to be reached by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and full respect for human rights." He added that the position of

the United Nations is governed by the charter of the United Nations and applicable Security Council resolutions. "The Secretary-General also recalls the 1972 agreement on bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, also known as the Simla Agreement," he said. The Simla Agreement was signed by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and then Pakistan President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972 and is a bilateral agreement between the countries and rejects any third-party mediation on the Kashmir issue. The 1972 Simla agreement provides that the resolution of differences between the parties should be resolved by peaceful means and by bilateral negotiations.

'Hunter Biden was hired by Romanian businessman to influence US agencies'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Hunter Biden was hired by a Romanian businessman accused of corruption who was trying to "influence U.S. government policy" during Joe Biden's term as vice president, prosecutors said in court papers Wednesday. Special counsel David Weiss said Hunter Biden's business associate will testify at the upcoming federal tax trial of the president's son about the arrangement with the executive, Gabriel Popoviciu, who was facing criminal investigation at the time in Romania. The allegations are likely to bring a fresh wave of criticism of Hunter Biden's foreign business dealings, which have been the center of Republicans' investigations into the

president's family. Hunter Biden has blasted Republican inquiries into his family's business affairs as politically motivated, and has insisted he never involved his father in his business. An attorney for Hunter Biden didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday. Prosecutors plan to introduce evidence that Hunter Biden and his business associate "received compensation from a foreign principal who was attempting to influence US policy and public opinion," according to the filing. Popoviciu wanted U.S. government agencies to probe the Romanian bribery investigation he was facing in the hopes that would end his legal trouble, according to prosecutors. Popoviciu is identified only in court

papers as G.P., but the details line up with information released in the congressional investigation and media reporting about Hunter Biden's legal work in Romania. Popoviciu was sentenced to seven years in prison in 2017 after being convicted of real estate fraud. He denied any wrongdoing. An attorney who previously represented Popoviciu didn't immediately respond to a phone message Wednesday. Prosecutors say Hunter Biden agreed with his business associate to help Popoviciu fight the criminal charges against him. But prosecutors say they were concerned that "lobbying work might cause political ramifications" for Joe Biden, so the arrangement was structured in a way that "concealed the true nature



of the work" for Popoviciu, prosecutors allege. Hunter Biden's business associate and Popoviciu signed an agreement to make it look like Popoviciu's payments were for "management services to real estate prosperities in Romania." However, prosecutors

said, "That was not actually what G.P. was paying for." In fact, Popoviciu and Hunter's business associate agreed that they would be paid for their work to "attempt to influence U.S. government agencies to investigate the Romanian investigation," prosecutors said. Hunter Biden's business associate was paid more than \$3 million, which was split with Hunter and another business partner, prosecutors say. The claims were made in court papers as prosecutors responded to a request by Hunter Biden's legal team to bar from his upcoming trial any reference to allegations of improper political influence that have dogged the president's son for years. While Republicans' investigation has raised ethical questions, no

evidence has emerged that the president acted corruptly or accepted bribes in his current role or his previous office as vice president. Hunter Biden's lawyers have said in court papers that he has been "the target of politically motivated attacks and conspiracy theories" about his foreign business dealings. But they noted he "has never been charged with any crime relating to these unfounded allegations, and the Special Counsel should thus be precluded from even raising such issues at trial." Hunter Biden's trial set to begin next month in Los Angeles centers on charges that he failed to pay at least \$1.4 million in taxes over four years during a period in which he has acknowledged struggling with a drug addiction.

Prosecutors say they won't introduce any evidence that Hunter Biden was directly paid by a foreign government "or evidence that the defendant received compensation for actions taken by his father that impacted national or international politics." Still, prosecutors say what Hunter Biden agreed to do for Popoviciu is relevant at trial because it "demonstrates his state of mind and intent" during the years he's accused of failing to pay his taxes. "It is also evidence that the defendant's actions do not reflect someone with a diminished capacity, given that he agreed to attempt to influence US public policy and receive millions of dollars" in the agreement with his business associate, prosecutors wrote.

RBI keeps interest rate unchanged Sensex, Nifty tumble nearly 1%

For ninth time in a row

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting, saying it cannot afford to look through persisting high food inflation and has to remain vigilant to prevent spillover.

Retaining its unambiguous focus on inflation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which consists of three RBI and three external members, kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

Four out of the six members of MPC voted in favour of the rate decision. The panel, whose four-year term ends in October, also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target.

Inflation climbed to 5.08 per cent in June, primarily driven by the food component. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said food inflation



remains "stubbornly" high. "Without price stability, high growth cannot be sustained," he said, adding that "monetary policy must continue to be disinflationary."

He said the MPC could have looked through high food inflation if it was transitory. "But in an environment of persisting high food inflation, as we are experiencing now, the MPC cannot afford to do so. It has to remain vigilant to prevent spillovers or second round effects from persistent food inflation and preserve the gains made so far in monetary policy credibility."

The MPC last revised interest rate in February 2023, when it was hiked to 6.5 per cent. The status quo by RBI comes

amid varied central bank action in advanced economies. While the Bank of England reduced interest rates last week, Bank of Japan hiked rates to their highest levels since 2008. Also, fears of a US recession have risen on the back of weak employment numbers, piling up pressure on the Federal Reserve to start cutting rates to support the economy.

RBI retained India's GDP growth forecast at 7.2 per cent and headline CPI inflation at 4.5 per cent for the current fiscal 2024-25.

Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank said, with growth remaining robust, the MPC still has room to hold on to policy stance to get

confirmation on the disinflationary trend. "We continue to expect scope for change in stance in the October policy with rate cuts beginning from December. The prospects of simultaneous change in stance and rate cuts could increase depending on how domestic inflation and global environment transitions," she said.

Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist, DBS Bank said, policy guidance reinforced that domestic considerations will be prioritised, despite a sharp buildup in rate cut pricing for the US Fed.

"The RBI MPC retained its cautious tone on inflation, in the face of an anticipated passthrough from perishables price pressures and tariff adjustments. With domestic demand conditions calling for a focus on inflation, we expect the policy rate to stay on hold for the rest of the year," Rao added.

The Governor flagged alternative investment avenues becoming more attractive to retail customers leading to bank deposits trailing loan growth. Though he did not specify the alternate avenues, he may have been referring to investors flocking the stock markets.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly 1 per cent down on Thursday after the Reserve Bank of India decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the ninth time in a row, saying food inflation remains stubborn.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 581.79 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 78,886.22 in a volatile trade. During the day, it tumbled 669.07 points or 0.84 per cent to 78,798.94.

After a day's breather, the NSE Nifty retreated to close lower by 180.50 points or 0.74 per cent to 24,117. During the day, it tanked 217.8 points or 0.89 per cent to 24,079.70.

The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting, saying it cannot afford to look through persisting high food inflation and has to remain vigilant to prevent spillover.

Retaining its unambiguous focus on inflation, the Monetary



Policy Committee (MPC), which consists of three RBI and three external members, kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

The panel, whose four-year term ends in October, also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target.

Inflation climbed to 5.08 per cent in June, primarily driven by the food component.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said food inflation remains "stubbornly" high.

"RBI MPC is in wait and watch mode and has kept the interest rates unchanged, waiting for clues from the largest Central Bank of the world, the US Federal Reserve, before acting. Stock markets will continue to consolidate in the meanwhile," said Umeshkumar Mehta, CIO, SAMCO Mutual Fund.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Asian Paints, Infosys, JSW Steel,

UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, HCL Technologies and Tata Steel were the biggest laggards.

Tata Motors, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ITC, IndusInd Bank and Axis Bank were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher while Seoul and Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading in the negative territory. The US markets ended lower on Wednesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,314.76 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.66 per cent to USD 77.83 a barrel.

On Wednesday, the BSE benchmark rallied 874.94 points or 1.11 per cent to settle at 79,468.01. During the day, it jumped 1,046.13 points or 1.33 per cent to 79,639.20.

The NSE Nifty jumped 304.95 points or 1.27 per cent to 24,297.50. Intraday, it surged 345.15 points or 1.43 per cent to 24,337.70.

Sebi amends alternative investment funds norms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has amended alternative investment funds (AIF) norms specifying maximum permissible limit for extension of tenure by 'Large Value Funds'.

In a notification, Sebi said a large value fund for accredited investors may be permitted to extend its tenure up to five years. This is subject to the approval of two-thirds of the unit holders by value of their investment in the large value fund for accredited investors. The extension in tenure of any existing scheme of a large value fund for accredited investors will be subject to such conditions as specified by the regulator.

The move is aimed at providing clarity to investors in Large Value Funds for Accredited Investors (LVFAs) about their investment horizon.

Large Value Fund (LVF) for accredited investors means an AIF or scheme of an AIF in which each investor



(other than the manager, sponsor, employees or directors of the AIF or employees or directors of the manager) is an accredited investor and invests at least Rs 70 crore.

Additionally, the regulator has allowed Category I and II AIFs to borrow for a period of up to 30 days for the purpose of meeting temporary shortfall in drawdown from investors while making investments in a bid to facilitate ease of doing business and provide operational flexibility.

Category I and II AIFs shall "not borrow funds directly or indirectly or engage in

any leverage for the purpose of making investments or otherwise, except for borrowing funds to meet temporary funding requirements and day-to-day operational requirements for not more than 30 days, on not more than 4 occasions in a year and not more than 10 per cent of the investable funds and subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Board from time to time."

To give this effect, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has amended AIF rules on August 5.

Rupee falls 1 paisa to close at 83.96 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 1 paisa at 83.96 (provisional) against US dollar on Thursday, after the Reserve Bank expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting.

Forex traders said weak domestic markets, surge in crude oil prices and foreign fund outflows weighed on the rupee. However, a decline in the US Dollar index prevented the local unit from declining sharply.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.94 and touched an intraday low of 83.97 and a high of 83.93 against the dollar during the session.

It finally settled at 83.96 (provisional) against the American currency, down 1 paisa from its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 3 paise at 83.95 against US dollar.

The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the



US dollar on Monday.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on selling pressure from foreign investors and weak domestic markets. On geopolitical tensions in the Middle East may also pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

However, weak US dollar may support the rupee at lower levels. Any intervention by RBI may also support the rupee.

"Traders may take cues from weekly unemployment claims data from the US. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range

of Rs 83.75 to Rs 84.20," Choudhary said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.12 per cent to 103.07 points.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.78 per cent lower at USD 77.72 per barrel in futures trade.

On the macroeconomic front, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

Announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy review RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

said Indian rupee remained largely range-bound so far this financial year.

The panel also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target.

The status quo by RBI comes amid varied central bank action in advanced economies. While the Bank of England reduced interest rates last week, the Bank of Japan hiked rates to their highest levels since 2008.

Also, fears of a US recession have risen on the back of weak employment numbers, piling up pressure on the Federal Reserve to start cutting rates to support the economy.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 581.79 points, or 0.73 per cent, to close at 78,886.22 points, while the Nifty declined 180.50 points, or 0.74 per cent, to 24,117.00 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Wednesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,314.76 crore, according to exchange data.

India's forex reserves at record high of USD 675 billion, says Das

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's forex reserves touched a record high of USD 675 billion on August 2, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Thursday.

The previous all-time high for the kitty was USD 670.857 billion on July 19 this year, and the last reported reserve was USD 667.386 billion as on July 26.

Das said overall, the country's external sector "remains resilient" as indicated by an improvement in key indicators.

"We remain confident of meeting our external financing requirements comfortably," he said in his statement after the review of the monetary policy.

Das said foreign portfolio investors turned net buyers in the domestic market from June 2024 with net inflows of USD 9.7 billion during June - to August 6, after witnessing outflows of USD 4.2 billion in April and May.

India could gain in readymade garment exports amid B'desh crisis, says report

PTI ■ KOLKATA

India can be a beneficiary in the international readymade garment markets as Bangladesh, the world's second-largest exporter in the sector, grapples with economic challenges, amid ongoing political unrest there, according to a report released on Thursday.

India could gain monthly export orders worth USD 200-250 million in the short term, a CareEdge study said. While Bangladesh has historically captured a significant portion of China's declining share in global readymade garment (RMG) exports, India has been unable to fully capitalise on the opportunity, it said.

However, the current situation in Bangladesh presents a golden chance for the Indian RMG sector to expand its footprint both in short and medium terms, the report said.

"If the unrest in Bangladesh persists for an extended period, it could result in a significant shift in export orders towards India. Industry estimates suggest India could gain monthly export orders worth USD 200-250 million in the short term and around USD 300-350 million in the medium term," the rating agency said in its observation.

17 new printers launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Japanese printer manufacturer, Brother, today launched a new range of 17 laser printers designed to improve the productivity of SOHO, SMB & Corporate segments.

From compact to versatile printing devices catering to the needs of businesses, this powerful new range offers a solution to various work settings and demands with an array of efficiency-boosting features.

The newly launched Mono & Color Printers allow seamless integration with various devices and networks with support for Wireless and USB connectivity, along with the Brother Mobile Connect App. With the ability to send documents straight to a mobile, tablet, or desktop, the devices make document management more efficient for users.

"With these new single functions and multifunction printers, Brother International is offering cost effective printing solutions that boost business productivity without any compromise. These new printers cater to the ever changing need of having the best of printing technology at an affordable price. The Monochrome and Colour LED series also improves workflow by offering features like security function, wireless connectivity and mobile printing. We have ensured that customers get the



optimal usage out of our printers," says Alok Nigam, Managing Director at Brother International India. This new range will be available in the market through Brother India's genuine retailers and channel partners across the country & even on e-commerce platforms to the customers, said Mr Nigam.

With faster print speeds of up to 34 pages per minute, automatic 2-sided print, and a generous paper-tray capacity for up to 250 sheets, users can print, scan & copy large quantities, efficiently and without interruption.

From the initial setup to efficient print management, Brother has designed these printers with the end user in mind, simplifying the printing experience without compromising the performance & print quality. The Toner Box Series is a cost-effective printing solution for SMBs looking for high-volume, good-quality printing. It comes with 2600 pages yield in-box toner. Its cost-saving toner box technology reduces printing costs to 33 paise per page, making it the perfect printing partner. The series has 4 Multifunction Printers and 2 Single function printers.

Stability in mortgage rate to help maintain strong housing demand: Realtors on RBI policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The housing market will continue to see strong demand in the coming months as mortgage rates are likely to remain stable following the RBI move to keep the repo rate unchanged, according to real estate developers.

They are hopeful for a rate cut in the next monetary policy committee meeting. Commenting on the RBI policy, realtors body CREDAI President Boman Irani said, "RBI's decision to keep the repo rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent would maintain the borrowing costs for homebuyers and their ongoing home loan EMIs. However, we do expect and hope for a rate cut in the upcoming MPC meets, given the relatively favourable macro-economic dynamics."

"Coupled with the festive season in the coming months, we expect the housing sales momentum to continue going into the final quarters of the 2024 calendar year," he added.

NAREDCO President G Hari Babu the central bank's decision creates a stable environment for the real estate sector.

"With steady borrowing costs, home loans become more affordable, which is likely to boost demand in the housing market, especially during the upcoming festive season. This stability allows developers to plan projects confidently, knowing that

financing conditions will remain favourable," he added.

The Reserve Bank of India expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting, saying it cannot afford to look through persisting high food inflation and has to remain vigilant to prevent spillover.

Leading housing brokerage firm Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said this sets a positive tone for the housing industry.

"Maintaining interest rates offers consistency in borrowing costs, which will prompt more aspiring homebuyers to consider taking the plunge — and thus drive demand in the housing market. With interest rates staying steady, EMIs will remain manageable for current and potential homeowners, potentially leading to increased home sales — particularly in the price-sensitive affordable segment," he added.

Housing.Com Group Chief Executive Officer Dhruv Agarwala noted that stable home loan interest rates continue to support robust demand in India's housing sector. Real estate data analytic firm PropEquity CEO Samir Jasuja said, "Any rate hike would have halted the real estate sales momentum which in the past few years have been on an upward trajectory. Going forward, a reduction in the benchmark interest rate will

go a long way in providing a further boost to the real estate sector, a major segment of the economy."

Shrinivas Rao, CEO of Vestian, said that the steady monetary policy for the past one-and-a-half years has ensured stability in the real estate sector, boosting demand for all asset classes.

Among developers, Gurugram-based Krisumi Corporation Managing Director Mohit Jain said, "While a rate cut would have been an ideal scenario to propel economic growth across industries, including real estate, maintaining the status quo will help prevent borrowing cost from rising, enable affordability, propel the residential demand and boost the overall economy."

Bengaluru-based Sterling Developers CMD Ramani Sastri said the decision fosters consumer confidence and offers a sense of continuity and predictability to the real estate sector, which is already witnessing a strong demand from end-users.

"The decision will keep the ongoing sales momentum on track and boost the optimistic attitude currently prevailing in the market," he added.

Nayan Raheja of Delhi-NCR-based Raheja Developers said, "As luxury housing gains momentum, maintaining the status quo will further boost the demand for more properties and strengthen market confidence."

IT hiring likely to grow by 8.5% by next year as demand grows: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With IT companies gradually coming out of the slump and actively ramping up their hiring efforts, a report on Thursday said that recruitment is set to surge with an estimated 8.5 per cent increase in job roles within the industry by next year.

The demand for skilled IT talent is growing after a slow period late last year and early this year. Hiring is set to surge, with an estimated 8.5 per cent increase in job roles within the industry by next year, according to a report by Indeed, a global job matching and hiring platform and a subsidiary of Recruit Holdings.

This data from Indeed has been compiled from Indeed Hiring Tracker and Indeed's platform data. Indeed Hiring Tracker is a quarterly report that explores the employment landscape and job market.

The report further revealed that almost 70 per cent of all tech jobs currently on the Indeed platform are for software roles.

The dominance of software roles on Indeed is driven by the rapid adoption of technologies by companies like AI, machine learning, and blockchain which has further amplified the need for specialised software development, the report stated.

The thriving tech startup ecosystem also plays a

significant role, as new ventures prioritise hiring developers to build and scale their products, it said.

According to Indeed data, companies are actively hiring for roles such as Application Developer, Software Engineer, Full-Stack Developer, Senior Software Engineer, and PHP Developer.

There's also a growing demand for NET Developers, Software Architects, DevOps Engineers, Data Engineers, and Front-End Developers, it stated.

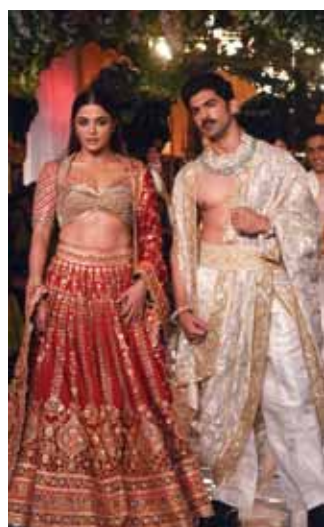
Also, the continuous need for updates, security patches, and new features in existing software is driving a steady demand for skilled professionals who can keep pace with evolving user needs and technological advancements, it said.

"The IT sector has consistently stood as a major employment powerhouse. However, recent quarters saw a slowdown in hiring, with companies exercising caution as they navigated through global uncertainties and economic shifts. Now, the tide is turning. Companies are actively ramping up their hiring efforts. We can also expect Global Capability Centers (GCCs) to significantly contribute to this uptick in hiring, particularly in software and technological roles, Indeed India Head of Sales Sashi Kumar added.



GLITTER AND GRACE INDIA COUTURE WEEK 2024

With 14 breathtaking shows, Hyundai India Couture Week 2024 spotlighted the artistry of India's finest couturiers. From opulent bridal wear by Abu Sandeep to avant-garde creations by Rahul Mishra. This edition underscored the visionary leadership of FDCI and the boundless creativity of the designers, leaving fashion enthusiasts eager for more, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



The 17th edition of Hyundai India Couture Week 2024 unfolded with 14 breathtaking shows, spotlighting top couturiers who seamlessly fused tradition with modernity. This glamorous event underscored the creativity and craftsmanship of the Indian fashion industry, offering a mesmerising glimpse into the future of haute couture. The Hyundai India Couture Week opened with a breathtaking display by *Abu Sandeep* with *Wamiqa Gabbi* as the 'ASAL' bride and *Taha Shah Badussha* as the 'MARD' groom, setting a high bar for the week's fusion of tradition and modernity. Following this, *Isha Jajodia's* 'Roseroom' featured *Ridhima Kapoor* in an elegant golden ensemble, while *Jacqueline Fernandez* dazzled as the showstopper in a dramatic black gown. In *Siddhartha*



Tytlar's 'Caligula's Feast', *Malaika Arora* wowed in a gray and black lehenga adorned with intricate silver and gold embroidery, complemented by *Rahul Khanna* in a richly embellished sherwani and bold



black boots. *Kunal Rawal's* 'Sehra' collection, showcased by *Aditya Roy Kapur*, redefined wedding couture with a modern twist on traditional elegance. In contrast, *Suneet Varma's* 'Nazm'



reimagined Indian decorative arts with luxurious fabrics like metallic tissue and pastel organza, creating a fresh aesthetic. *Dolly J's* 'La Vie En Rose' was highlighted by *Sonakshi Sinha* in a glamorous

pink gown adorned with gold and glitter, whereas *JJ Valaya's* 'MURAQQA' elegantly blended historical richness with contemporary flair. Among the standout moments, *Amit Aggarwal's* 'ANTE VORTA,' inspired by the Greek goddess of the future, and *Rahul Mishra's* 'Nargis' Collection, celebrated nature's beauty, with *Lisa Ray* as the showstopper in an exotic ensemble. Additionally, *Jayanti Reddy's* 'Evocative Nawabi Canvas,' featuring *Aditi Rao Hydari*, highlighted Nawabi grandeur, while *Gaurav Gupta's* 'Arunodaya,' with *Khushi Kapoor* and *Vedang Raina*, captured the transformative beauty of dawn. *Rimzim Dadu's* 'Stucco,' showcased by *Sobhita Dhulipala*, impressed with its innovative textures and *Tarun Tahliani's* 'Otherworldly'

pushed couture boundaries with futuristic designs. The week concluded spectacularly with *Falguni Shane Peacock's* 'Rang Mahal,' featuring *Vicky Kaushal* and *Rashmika Mandanna*, marking a memorable end to the fashion extravaganza. As the curtains fall on this year's India Couture Week, the event leaves behind a legacy of innovation and elegance. The week was a tribute to the visionary leadership of FDCI Chairman *Mr. Sunil Sethi* and the dedication of all involved in showcasing the brilliance of Indian fashion. With creativity and tradition celebrated in equal measure, the fashion world eagerly awaits the next chapter, inspired by the extraordinary displays of artistry and craftsmanship from this year's spectacular event.
Photos: Pankaj Kumar

A New Chapter in Indian Luxury Fashion

The luxury fashion world has been set ablaze by the recent launch of the *Tiger Toy* collection, a groundbreaking collaboration between *Tiger Marrón* and *KoyToy* by *Kunaal Kyhaan*. This union of two powerhouse Indian brands has redefined the accessories market with its bold fusion of cultural heritage and contemporary design



diverse preferences and environmental concerns. This approach has been lauded as a significant step forward for luxury brands in addressing sustainability without compromising on quality or aesthetics.

Kunaal Kyhaan Seolekar's involvement has added an extra layer of excitement to the collaboration. His background in architecture and interior design has resulted in innovative structures and shapes rarely seen in handbags and accessories. Fashion enthusiasts have been thrilled to see how Seolekar's renowned bold yet harmonious style has translated into wearable art. The fashion world has responded with overwhelming enthusiasm to the *Tiger Toy* launch. The collection has successfully bridged the gap between cultural nostalgia and modern functionality, inspiring a new wave of designers to explore their heritage through a contemporary lens. It's clear that the *Tiger Toy* collection represents more than just a line of accessories. It stands as a bold statement about the evolving identity of Indian luxury fashion on the global stage.

This collaboration between *Tiger Marrón* and *KoyToy* has challenged perceptions, pushed boundaries and reshaped the landscape of luxury accessories. As the collection makes its mark, it heralds a new era in fashion - one that celebrates cultural richness, embraces innovation and makes luxury more accessible than ever before. The *Tiger Toy* collection has not just met expectations, it has exceeded them, setting a new standard for what Indian luxury fashion can achieve on the world stage.

and *Paan Saddle bag*, in particular, have been praised as game-changers, offering a fresh interpretation of traditional Indian elements for the global luxury market. Sustainability is at the forefront of this collection, with *Tiger Marrón* and *KoyToy* showcasing a commitment to eco-conscious fashion. The use of organic vegan leather alongside high-grade natural leathers demonstrates a nuanced understanding of modern consumer's



TEAM VIVA

Industry insiders have been captivated by the collection's audacious blend of influences. The incorporation of Mughal architectural motifs alongside modern pop culture elements represents a daring departure from conventional luxury aesthetics. This innovative approach has fashion critics hailing *Tiger Toy* as a new benchmark for cultural fusion in high-end accessories. The *Arch bag* series has emerged as the standout of the collection. Inspired by the elegant pointed arches of Mughal architecture, these pieces have instantly become classics. The Maharani purse



A FUSION OF STYLE, WELLNESS AND TIMELESS ELEGANCE

The FDCI Manifest Wedding Weekend is where luxury, creativity and personal expression converge to redefine the art of celebrating love, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

The Fashion Design Council of India's (FDCI) Manifest Wedding Weekend, stands as a premier event that manifests the height of bridal fashion and lifestyle. The second edition of this event promises an exceptional experience, showcasing a star-studded line-up of India's top designers, jewellers and wellness experts, all coming together to celebrate love and style. The fashion segment of the event was nothing short of spectacular. Attendees were treated to an array of designs from renowned couturiers such as *Asal & Mard* by *Abu Sandeep*, *Gaurav Gupta Couture*, *Amit Aggarwal*, *Dolly J* and *Tarun Tahliani*. Each designer brought their unique flair to the forefront, from the regal elegance of *Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla's* creations to the innovative and avant-garde ensembles by *Gaurav Gupta*. This variety ensured there was something to captivate every taste and preference, making it an essential visit for anyone wishing to make a statement on their wedding day. Jewellery was another



highlight of the weekend, with exquisite pieces from prestigious brands like *Prakshi Fine Jewellery*, *Raj Mahtani Couture Jewellers* and *Archana Aggarwal Timeless Jewellery*. The craftsmanship on display was exceptional, merging traditional techniques with contemporary designs. The inclusion of regional jewellers such as *Kishandas & Co.* and *Shree Jee Jewellers Jaipur* added depth and diversity to the collection, celebrating the rich heritage of Indian jewellery while incorporating modern twists. What truly set this year's event apart were the masterclasses, which provided invaluable insights and practical tips for attendees. *Sumaya Dalmia*, a renowned wellness expert, conducted a compelling session on sustainable fitness. Her focus on long-term health and balanced living, rather than quick fixes, was enlightening. Her engaging and humorous approach made the session accessible and relevant, offering practical advice on maintaining wellness as part of wedding preparations and

beyond. On the photography front, *Badal Jain* offered a masterclass on capturing the emotional essence of weddings. His perspective on wedding photography as a form of storytelling, rather than mere documentation, encouraged couples to focus on authentic moments and genuine experiences. His approach focuses on documenting real, unposed moments, reflecting the true essence of the celebration. Jain's philosophy ensures a sincere and lasting representation of the couple's special day. The FDCI Manifest Wedding Weekend was a celebration of beauty, creativity and personal connection. It seamlessly combined fashion, jewellery and wellness to create a holistic experience for attendees. Beyond the stunning displays and insightful masterclasses, the event underscored the importance of personalisation and meaning in weddings. It celebrated not just the grandeur of the occasion but also the stories and emotions that make each celebration unique.

WRESTLER AMAN LOSES IN SEMIFINALS

PTI ■ PARIS

Young Indian grappler Aman Sehrawat lost to Japanese top-seed Rei Higuchi in the 57kg free-style semifinal bout as the country's hopes of winning a gold from wrestling suffered a big blow at the Olympics here on Thursday.

The 21-year-old Aman will now play for the bronze medal. Aman, who had raised hopes of securing a place in the final following two big victories against celebrated opponents in the earlier rounds, was no match for the 28-year-old Higuchi — the 2016 Rio Olympics silver medallist — as the Japanese toyed with the Indian to stamp his technical superiority with a 10-0 win in just over two minutes.

Higuchi's superior technique was evident in the first few seconds when he attacked Aman's legs to take a 4-0 lead.

The Japanese, a former world champion in 2022 at Belgrade in the 61kg category, kept up the pressure on the Indian, targeting Aman's legs and effecting regular throw downs with ease to garner six more points to end the contest.

Aman had earlier rekindled the country's hopes, demolishing former world champion Zelimkhan Abakarov of Albania by technical superiority to seal a place in the semifinal.

Aman was in imperious form as he toyed with Abakarov in the second round. The 21-year-old Indian locked his legs at the start of the second round and turned him over multiple times to earn eight straight points to secure a 12-0 victory.

The bout started with Aman earning a passivity point after his Russian-turned-Albanian opponent did not initiate any attacking move.

Moments later, the Indian effected a left-leg hold to earn two more points to showcase his dominance by going 3-0 up at the end of round 1.

Aman was on song in round 2 and Abakarov, world champion in 2022, bore the brunt. The Indian's superb agility against the 31-year-old Albanian was on display as he attacked the left leg to bring him down.

He then effected a 'fitley' (leg lace), turning the Albanian around several times to end the contest with more than two minutes to go. Abakarov contested the last two



points awarded to Aman but the referee ruled in favour of the Indian and awarded him a point.

Aman will meet Japanese top seed Rei Higuchi in the last-four round later in the day.

Earlier, Aman ensured himself an easy passage into the quarterfinal with a dominating performance against North Macedonian rival Vladimir Egorov.

The 21-year-old Indian, an Asian Championship gold medallist and the only male wrestler from the country to qualify for the Olympics, was amazingly agile as he kept his defence intact while regularly overpowering his 29-year-old former European champion with leg holds to win the bout on technical superiority (10-0).

Egorov seemed to be in a bit of bother after the first round, requiring medical attention on his knee following Aman's all-out attack.

But the Macedonian could not stage a comeback with Aman effecting a takedown to earn two more points and go 10-0 up with more than two minutes remaining on the clock.

ANSHU MALIK LOSES: Woman grappler Anshu Malik displayed



AP ■ LE BOURGET (FRANCE)

For many athletes at the Paris Olympics, the fun was just beginning after they were done competing.

During the second full week of the 2024 Olympics, going home wasn't an option. Now that the pressure of having to compete is gone, it was time to become a fan: Enjoy Paris and watch other sports.

"I'm a huge track fan," said triathlete Morgan Pearson, who won the silver medal with the U.S. Team in the mixed relay on Monday. "I hope to go to some of those races. I'm a huge Olympic fan in general."

American sport climber Zach Hammer, who was finished competing on Tuesday, also was headed to the track.

"I would definitely be excited to watch the men's 200(-meter) with (Noah) Lyles. He's one of my favorite athletes," he said. "I'm definitely excited to get the full Olympic experience, and I'll go watch whatever there is to watch. It will definitely be cool to see Americans competing on the

Athletes stick around Paris Games to watch other sports, get full experience

biggest stage."

U.S. Rower Jacob Pihaj was among those who stayed in town after competing during the first week.

"Hopefully I can watch a little handball if that's still going, maybe 3x3 basketball," he said. "I don't know what the schedules are. I've been focused on the racing but I'm excited to stick around and watch other sports, cheer Team USA on and get to know some athletes at the (Olympic) Village."

Another American sport climber, Sam Watson, who broke the speed world record in an elimination heat on Tuesday, was making the most out of his stay at the village. He was challenging fellow athletes to chess games and trying to get selfies with a member of



every delegation at the Games. Some of the American women rowers who competed last week were at the women's basketball game between the U.S. And Nigeria on Wednesday.

Molly Thompson-Smith, a

British sport climber, was interested in watching some of the other smaller sports that don't often get much attention. She said "it's been really cool to kind of learn how they work and all the weird things about them."

Thompson-Smith added that she "did see a bit of beach volleyball" but "I think everyone wants to see the athletics, just to see something like that and feel the atmosphere of the crowd would be incredible. But I'm open to seeing anything now ... I'm here to make as many memories and see as much as I possibly can."

Rower Viktorija Senkute, who won Lithuania's first medal at the Games last week, was sticking around to watch her boyfriend, Simonas Maldonis, compete in canoe sprint.

Athletes can watch their own discipline with their accreditation, but need tickets for other sports. Some said they can get them through their national Olympic committees, or with the

International Olympic Committee, which gives each athlete one free ticket per day.

There was an additional Olympic experience for athletes this time in Paris, as for the first time in the Summer Games organizers gave them a place to be closer to fans and celebrate their medals. In the new Champions Park, athletes got a chance to parade with their medals and interact with fans.

"I feel as if this year you've done a really good job of treating around winning athletes with memories that we're going to cherish forever," French rugby player Aaron Grandier Nkanang said after going to the Champions Park. "We're just in front of the Eiffel Tower, and there's thousands of people out to come and cheer us on.

Panghal likely to get three-year ban for indiscipline: Source

PTI ■ PARIS

Wrestler Antim Panghal, who caused embarrassment to the Indian Olympic contingent by trying to facilitate her sister's entry into the athletes village through her accreditation card, is likely to be banned for three years by the IOA, a source told PTI on Thursday.

Panghal had crashed out of the Olympics after losing her opening bout in the women's 53kg category on Wednesday.

"IOA (Indian Olympic Association) officials discussed the issue that caused embarrassment to all. It is considering a three-year ban on everyone involved, including the coaches," a source in the Indian contingent told PTI.

"First, we need to ensure that she reaches home. The decision will be announced only after she reaches India," the source added.

Panghal is set to take a flight to Delhi this evening.

The IOA decided to send her and her support staff back after the disciplinary breach was brought to its notice by the French authorities. The body, however, asserted that the ban has not yet been imposed.

"A ban has not been imposed as yet," said an IOA official. Speaking with PTI before her flight back to India, the 19-

year-old said, "I did not intend to do anything wrong. I was not well and there was confusion. All of this happened due to confusion."

Later, in a video, she admitted that she had to go to the police station but only for the verification of her accreditation card.

"It was not a good day for me. I lost. A lot is being spread about me, that's not true. I had high fever, and had taken permission from my coach to go to the hotel with my sister."

"I needed some of my belongings which were in the Games Village. My sister took my card and asked the officials there if she could take my belongings. They took her to the Police Station for accreditation verification."

She also denied that her coaches were drunk and got into an altercation with a taxi driver over fare.

"My coaches had stayed back at the venue and when they wanted to come back, we booked a cab for them. My coaches did not have enough cash and due to the language issues, led to an argument with the taxi driver."

"Since they came to collect some Euros from the hotel room, it took some time and led to the situation. I already have had a bad time, please don't spread rumours. Please support me," she said.

Weinberg helps US beat Australia 11-10 in men's water polo quarters

AP ■ NANTERRE

Adrian Weinberg made two blocks in a penalty shootout to help the United States beat Australia 11-10 in the quarterfinals of the men's water polo tournament at the Paris Olympics.

Hannes Daube and Alex Bowen each scored two goals in regulation as the U.S. Reached the semifinals at the Olympics for the first time since 2008. Daube and Bowen also converted their penalty shots in the tiebreaker.

"It was exhausting," U.S. Attacker Marko Vavic said. "Both of us fighting for our country, each trying to get to the semifinal. It's what we've been dreaming about since we were kids. Everyone put it down on the line."

It was the third straight win for the U.S., which will play Serbia on Friday at Paris La Defense Arena. Serbia is trying to become the third men's team to win three consecutive Olympic gold medals.

Croatia will face Hungary in the other semifinal. Croatia beat Spain 10-8 in the first quarterfinal of the day, and Hungary edged Italy 12-10 in another game that went to a penalty shootout.

Serbia advanced when captain Nikola Jakic skipped home a perfect shot from deep with 3 seconds left, lifting his country to a 12-11 victory over Greece.

"We finally looked like the team that came here to win it," Jakic said. "We didn't give up from the first to the last moment."

Angelos Vlachopoulos had just tied the game for Greece with 6 seconds remaining.

"In this moment, I really hope this is a dream right now, just a nightmare and I will wake up and play again," Greece's Dimitrios Skoumpakis said. "Every guy on this team really tried a lot. We worked very hard, but this is the sport."

The U.S. Rallied after a tough sequence in the first quarter. Max



Irving had a goal waved off when the game was stopped for a video review and U.S. Attacker Johnny Hooper received a brutality foul, taking him out for the rest of the contest.

Luke Pavillard converted a penalty shot to give Australia a 3-1 lead.

Australia also got a 4-minute power play that it turned into two more goals and a 5-2 advantage.

But the U.S. Went ahead 6-5 when Daube scored with 6:03 left in regulation. After Pavillard scored two straight for Australia, Bowen's man-

up goal with 32 seconds remaining tied it at 7.

Irving also connected for the U.S. In the tiebreaker before Vavic closed it out for the U.S., beating Australia goaltender Nic Porter after they played together in college at Southern California.

"I didn't even look at him until I went up to shoot," Vavic said. "He was trying to eye me down and talk to me about the pressure before I got there. He was chirping me, but I just tried to keep my composure and luckily I stuck it."

Pavillard scored four times for Australia in regulation on four shots. He also converted his penalty shot in the tiebreaker.

"Full credit to the U.S.," Porter said. "They really pulled it out of the fire there. It was our game to win, and they snatched it from us for sure."

Krisztian Manhercz scored five times for Hungary in its quarterfinal win, and Gergo Zalanki had three goals. Manhercz and Zalanki also made their penalty shots in the tiebreaker.

Francesco di Fulvio and Gonzalo Echenique each scored three goals in the loss. When it was over, Italy's Nicholas Presciutti directed a middle finger toward Hungary's players.

AP ■ PARIS

Oleksandr punches his way to Paris Gold

Oleksandr Khyzhniak was one minute away from winning an Olympic gold medal three years ago when he was rocked by one miraculous punch. Khyzhniak went down, the fight was stopped and the most fearsome boxer in Tokyo had to settle for silver.

The middleweight from Ukraine decided he would wait three years to make it right. Khyzhniak got his epic redemption Wednesday night at the Paris Games with a gold medal finally around his neck - but only after he paid for it in time, sweat and pain.

Khyzhniak beat Nurbek Oralbay of Kazakhstan 3:2 in a thrilling final at Roland Garros, securing the championship that evaded him in heartbreaking fashion in Tokyo. The fighters unloaded on each other for three action-packed rounds, but Khyzhniak

clinched the win by dominating a final three minutes filled with a jaw-dropping number of uppercuts, combinations and power punches for an Olympic fight.

When Khyzhniak's hand was raised, the 29-year-old dropped to his knees in cathartic relief. Even though he is an obvious blue-chip professional prospect, Khyzhniak put any other chapters of his life on hold because he was determined to do what he couldn't in Tokyo. Khyzhniak spent the last three years thinking about his loss to Hebert Sousa of Brazil, a game competitor who clearly wasn't the best middleweight in a stacked division in Tokyo. Khyzhniak was up 20-18 on all

five cards after two rounds in their gold medal bout, meaning he only had to avoid a stoppage or a point deduction to win.

But Khyzhniak simply couldn't stop himself from coming forward relentlessly. He knows no way to fight other than to throw as many punches as his arms can muster for nine minutes of bruising, bleeding pressure.

So Khyzhniak kept coming forward, and the artful Sousa floored him with what might have been just a flash knockdown in the pros but was enough to persuade the Olympic referee to stop the bout.

After the loss, Khyzhniak devoted himself to an Olympic comeback, winning every



amateur bout he took since Tokyo. When the Olympics eliminated the 75-kilogram division in which Khyzhniak fought in Tokyo, he even moved up to 80 kilograms - now called middleweight.

Although he has been probably the most exciting fighter in his second Olympics, Khyzhniak didn't steamroll through his four bouts in Paris. He was tested in his early fights before he reached the semifinals against Arlen Lopez, the two-time Olympic gold medalist from Cuba.

The veteran amateurs put on a memorable show worthy of their combined star power, but Khyzhniak won with another phenomenal third round. He simply wouldn't stop pressuring Lopez, who finally

ran out of stratagems to keep the Ukrainian star off him.

In the final, Khyzhniak faced a dynamic prospect in the 24-year-old Oralbay, whose twin brother also fought at Paris. Oralbay had ample skill and punching power to challenge Khyzhniak, and the fighters were essentially even on the scorecards heading to the third round.

And what a round it turned out to be.

Oralbay bled from a cut near his right eye early in the third, but the fighters unloaded on each other for three minutes. All five judges favored Khyzhniak, who snapped Oralbay's head back on his neck multiple times with pinpoint-perfect uppercuts.

Khyzhniak was the second

gold medal winner at Roland Garros on Wednesday, joining Erislandy Alvarez of Cuba. Alvarez edged Sofiane Oumih of France 3:2 in an exciting lightweight bout - but it couldn't match the emotion and savagery on display between Khyzhniak and Oralbay, who fights one weight class below his twin brother.

Earlier on the card, Lin Yu-ting of Taiwan advanced to the women's featherweight gold medal bout with her third straight victory while dealing with widespread scrutiny regarding misconceptions about her gender.

Tokyo gold medalist Bakhodir Jalolov of Uzbekistan shut out Nelvie Tiafack of Germany to move within one victory of becoming the first two-time super heavyweight gold medalist in Olympic history. The 30-year-old Jalolov, a 14-0 professional, will fight Ayoub Ghadfa of Spain for gold.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.