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ON RETENTIVENESS

WORLD 9
ISRAEL WIDENS EVACUATION
ORDERS IN SOUTHERN GAZA

MONEY 10
GOLD RISES ₹200, SILVER RALLIES
₹1,000 PER KILOGRAM

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DULEEP TROPHY:
ASHWIN, BUMRAH
TO PLAY
12 SPORTS

Docs strike work over rape, murder in WB

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Doctors at various hospitals across India began their indefinite strike from Monday, halting all elective services — scheduled, non-urgent procedures and outpatient services — until a fair investigation into the alleged rape and murder of a Kolkata doctor is concluded and their demands for safe working environment for their fraternity is met.

The trainee medico worked at the State-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, and her body was found inside the facility's seminar hall on Friday, sparking outrage within the medical community.

While pause in elective services left many patients visiting the OPDs left them high and dry, emergency care, however, remained operational, to address critical patients needs in the hospitals.

The nationwide indefinite strike is being led by the Federation of Resident Doctors' Associations (FORDA) with the Delhi Medical Association (DMA) also coming out in support of the doctors on strike. The brutal nature of the crime has intensified calls for justice and has led to the nationwide strike as a mean of expressing solidarity with the victim and demanding systemic changes to ensure the safety of healthcare



Doctors protest against the sexual assault and killing of a postgraduate trainee doctor in Kolkata, in New Delhi, on Monday
Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

workers, said Dr Sarvesh Pandey, general secretary of the RDA, RML Hospital. In its letter, FORDA listed five demands including expeditious acceptance of Residents' demands, resignation of all the responsible authorities, which include the principal, MSVP, Dean, HOD of pulmonary medicine, ACP of RG Kar MC&H police outpost, alleging that they could not perform their duty of protecting the dignity and life of a woman who was, in this case, an on-duty doctor, no police brutality, swift justice for the deceased and security protocols for healthcare workers and formation of expert committee.

Dr Aviral Mathur, FORDA president who participated in the protest at a hospital in Delhi, said, "Our cause is that the incident at RG Kar Hospital is the worst that could have happened to any on-duty doctor... rape followed by murder is deeply disturbing. "The services will remain suspended until the acceptance of demands of Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College residents as well as immediate appointment of a Central agency to investigate the case and the establishment of a Central Protection Act."

The strike has garnered widespread support across the country. Continued on Page 8

Mamata hints at handover of case to CBI

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In yet another climbdown Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday set a deadline for the police department to crack the RG Kar Medical College doctor rape and murder case but her act of bending back failed to pacify the agitating junior doctors who insisted on sustained cease work till all their demands were met throwing the health service in the entire State completely out of gear.

Mamata earlier met the parents of the victim at their Sodpur residence in the northern suburbs of Kolkata and said she would wait till Sunday for the police to crack the case failing which she would transfer the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Emerging from her meeting with the parents of the victim she said, "I am extremely shocked by the incident of a young lady doctor being killed in such a manner ... this

cannot be accepted... I have been told by the parents of the victim that there is an insider angle to the case... if so then I ask the police to hasten the investigation process... I give them time till Sunday to crack the case after which I will hand it over to the CBI." A postgraduate student of the department of chest medicine was in the wee hours of Friday found dead in a semi-nude condition inside the seminar hall of the hospital. Continued on Page 8

CURTAIN COMES DOWN



India's flag-bearers shooter Manu Bhaker and men's hockey team goalkeeper PR Srejeesh and others during the closing ceremony of the 2024 Summer Olympics at Stade de France, in Paris, France
PTI



Indian soldiers patrol near the LoC ahead of Independence Day, in Rajouri district, on Monday
PTI

Terror module busted in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir police claimed to have busted an active terror module by arresting at least eight enemy agents responsible for providing food, shelter, and other logistic support to the Pakistani terrorists behind targeted strikes on the security forces across the Jammu region.

The terror module busted by the police is believed to be behind the recent infiltration that has resulted in increased terrorist activities and terrorist movements in the upper reaches of Doda, Udhampur, and Kathua. The police teams carrying out a detailed investigation have also managed to identify the kingpin of the module as Mohd Lateef alias Haji. The investigations were launched by the police teams after eliminating three Pakistani terrorists in the Gandoh area of Doda district on June 26, 2024. Continued on Page 8

Tihar jail terms Kejrival's letter to LG abuse of privileges

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a strongly worded letter, the Tihar jail has taken exception to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's recent letter to Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena seeking permission to allow Cabinet Minister Atishi to hoist the national flag on the occasion of Independence Day, terming his letter to the LG was "an abuse of privileges" granted to him under the Delhi Prison Rules. The superintendent of Tihar's jail number 2 cited provisions of the Delhi Prisons Rules, 2018, and advised Kejriwal in a letter "to desist from any such impermissible activity" or his privileges would be curtailed. In a communication, Tihar jail official said it is surprising to note that the contents of the letter... were leaked to the media without any authority which amounts to violation of the prison rules. Meanwhile, Delhi Cabinet Minister Gopal Rai on Monday directed the General Administration Department to make arrangements for the hoisting of the national flag on Independence Day by his Cabinet colleague Atishi. Continued on Page 8



SC orders Shambhu border partial opening

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Punjab Government to persuade the farmers protesting at the Shambhu border since February 13 to remove tractors and trolleys from the road, saying "highways are not parking space". A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan directed the police chiefs of both Punjab and Haryana to hold a meeting along with the Superintends of Police of adjoining Patiala and Ambala districts within one week for partial reopening of the highway at the inter-State Shambhu border. "We are not directing but we are definitely impressing upon the State of Punjab to immediately persuade the farmers to remove their tractors and trolleys. Even parking will create problems.

Now, we are seized with the issue and we are keeping it pending till some respectable, amicable and fair and just solution of all the problems are found," the bench told the Punjab Government. Underscoring that farmers or the agricultural community don't face difficulty of any kind, the bench said, "After all, we are also concerned. Both the States are concerned and everybody is concerned about it."

"The DGPs of Punjab and Haryana and SPs of Patiala and Ambala along with Deputy Commissioners of both the districts are to meet within one week and lay down the modalities for partial opening of highway, initially for the purpose of ambulances, senior citizens, women, girl students, essential services and daily commuters of nearby areas," the court said. Continued on Page 8

'At Home' events lined up for icons this I-Day

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

King of those killed in the line of duty, Olympic Games participants and winners, competitive examination toppers and a host of other prominent people are part of a list shared by the Home Ministry with State Governments for extending invitation to the 'At Home' function at Raj Bhavans on Independence Day. Those whose names were mentioned during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Mann ki Baat" radio broadcast, "Swacchagrahi" or foot soldiers who have played a key role in cleanliness drives and women sarpanches (village heads) are also part of the list shared by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to be invited for the function. Every Governor and Lieutenant Governor hosts the respective Chief Minister, Ministers, top civil, police officers, prominent citizens with high tea at their official residence —



Raj Bhavan or Raj Niwas — in the evenings of every Independence Day and Republic Day. The event is called 'At Home'. In a communication to Chief Secretaries of all States, the Home Ministry said the 'At Home' function should be commenced after 6 pm. "This function represents a diverse

set of invitees apart from usual protocol-based invitees, on this occasion, the following indicative categories of guests could be invited," the communication said. They are 'Divyangians'; achievers in different fields; people who made exemplary contribution to society, including during the Covid pandemic; eco-warriors; people who performed exemplary for environmental conservation; "Swacchagrahi"; references from the state and Union Territories in "Mann ki Baat"; Padma awardees; next of kin of martyrs; participants and winners in Olympic Games; and other important sports events of national and international standards. Exceptional educators, frontline health workers, children bravery awardees, women sarpanches, student toppers, best researchers and innovators may also be invited, the Ministry told the States. "At least 25-50 invites may be

reserved for such achievers. The names of such invitees should be announced in advance to enable the invitees to prepare for the occasion. The majority of the gathering could be under the category of special invitees under different categories," the communication said. The States and Union Territories were told that a system where the invitee list was generated afresh every year should be instituted so that an opportunity was given to a broad set of people. It could be considered that a person gets an invite just once. The Ministry said special attention might be paid to the band at the Governor or the Lieutenant Governor's house. It should play patriotic songs and not simply songs from movies. A system of competition among school bands should be instituted where the winners get to perform during the reception.

Explore Sikkim's landscape from home soon

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Soon, visitors worldwide will be able to explore the marvels of the famous Dzongri trek in Gyalshing District, Sikkim in India, from their homes through an innovative Virtual Reality (VR) Ecotourism Initiative. Aiming to promote sustainable tourism in the State which has taken various measures to be eco-friendly, this groundbreaking project from India's first Organic State merges travel delight with cutting-edge technology, offering an

immersive tour of the region's stunning landscapes and breathtaking views. By providing immersive experiences, VR technology provides a unique opportunity to experience natural environments that might otherwise be inaccessible to many travel enthusiasts to explore natural environments in a way that may not be possible due to geographical, financial, or physical limitations. The Dzongri trek, a popular trekking route that can be completed in about 6-7 days, is a delight for tourists and adventure trekkerst with pristine views. The VR

initiative opens new avenues for experiencing the natural beauty of Sikkim and ensures accessibility to breathtaking locations regardless of adverse weather conditions or natural calamities. Users can virtually trek through the dense forests of the track, encountering zig zag trails in a realistic setting. An official from the Union Tourism Ministry praised the State's initiative stating the project aims to contribute to the long-term growth and sustainability of the tourism sector in the region. Continued on Page 8



Family members of the victims mourn after a stampede at Baba Siddhanath temple, in Jehanabad district, Monday morning, Aug. 12, 2024. At least seven people were killed and 16 others suffered injuries in the stampede
PTI

Seven killed in Bihar temple stampede

PNS ■ JEHANABAD (BIHAR)

With the loss of over 100 precious lives in the tragic Hathras stampede still fresh in mind, report comes of shocking deaths of at least seven people, six of them women, in another stampede at Baba Siddheshwar Nath Temple in Bihar's Jehanabad district. Sixteen others were injured in the incident, an official said on Monday. The deceased, most of them Kanwariyas, have been identified as Pyare Paswan (30), Nisha Devi (30), Punam Devi (30), Nisha Kumari (21), and Sushila Devi (64). The identity of one woman remains unknown, the official added. Continued on Page 8

Residents prepare to move out over dam collapse fear

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

While people in the districts of Kottayam, Idukki, Ernakulam, Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha are getting ready for the eventuality of the collapse of Mullaperiyar Dam, the Tamil chauvinist outfits like DMK, MDMK, VCK and AIADMK are busy campaigning that the 130-year-old reservoir is safe. Homemakers like Ganga Gopalakrishnan and Sheela Das in Perumbavoor are ready with suitcases packed with essential clothing and identification papers to move out to safer places. There is a sense of uncertainty and unease across these districts, said Anita Prakash, a municipal Councillor. But the Kerala Government is maintaining a stony silence over the warning given by CP Ramaswamy Aiyer, the then Diwan of the

erstwhile Travancore State, which, together with the princely State of Kochi and Malabar, constitute the present-day Kerala. "The agreement signed between Madras Presidency and the State of Travancore in 1886 is highly discriminatory and detrimental to the interests of Travancore. Travancore was forced to sign on the dotted line by the then Madras Governor conceding the tenancy over Periyar water to the Madras Presidency for a period of 99 years. This was a major fraud committed on a vulnerable Travancore by the British rulers," Ramaswamy Aiyer had told the then viceroy Lord Mountbatten in 1947 itself. In his notes prepared after meeting the Viceroy, the Diwan pointed out that, while Madras Presidency (the present-day Tamil Nadu) stood to make a cool ₹25 lakh profit per year,



Travancore would get a paltry amount of ₹40,000 per year as compensation. "This is gross injustice," Aiyer wrote in his note. The note has been reproduced ad verbatim by Prof A Sreedhara Menon, a historian of international

repute in his book "Sir CP's Role in Travancore". Professor Menon was a staunch critic of Aiyer because of his intransigent approach to all issues concerning life. His books on history of modern-day India speak a lot about his reservations about the Diwan. But research led him to information hitherto inaccessible to all and proved the sincerity of Aiyer. A probe by P Sujathan, a chronicler of Kerala's history proves that the 1886 agreement between the two States were signed by K KV Rama Aiyangar, the Tamil Nadu-born Diwan of Travancore and the Resident Collector of Madras Presidency. "The 99-year-long tenancy itself is a mystery as all such agreements are for a period of 99 years. Aiyangar and other Tamils working for the Travancore Maharajah manipulated the deal in favour of Madras Presidency," Sujathan told The Pioneer. Though by 1941 Ramaswami Aiyer argued in favour of Kerala and made the umpire appointed to arbitrate on the dispute to nullify Madras

Presidency's right to generate power from Periyar River water, the alliance governments that ruled the newly carved out State of Kerala squandered the successes won by Aiyer. "The Mullaperiyar Dam agreement itself has lost its validity following the departure of the British from India for good. The question why the Kerala Government signed another deal with Tamil Nadu leaves much to be answered for," said P C George, veteran legislature, spearheading a battle for the decommissioning of the outdated and dangerous dam. Those who question the legality of the dam are arrested by the DMK government and jailed. "Interestingly, Tamil Nadu has done nothing to resolve its water shortage though it has spent crores on lawyers for filing cases in the apex court," said George.

Girl gangraped by live-in partner, his friends

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A youth and his friends allegedly raped his live-in partner in Mohanlalganj, police said. The accused beat her and threw her out of the house when she said she would report the matter to police, they added. The victim also alleged that she was asked to fast and eat beef while living with the accused. On the complaint of the victim, the police registered an FIR and started investigations. The complainant, a resident of the city area in Lucknow, is into a private job where she met a boy from a different faith. However, he befriended her by allegedly hiding his religious identity. The duo moved in together in Mohanlalganj. She alleged that he and his friends raped her. She also alleged that the group beat her and shooed her away. After a few days, they called her and allegedly gangraped her again. Chintah SHO Alok Rao said a case was registered and the main accused had been taken into custody. Meanwhile, police claimed to have arrested two accused, including a mauvi, who alleged-

ly forced a minor girl to convert and marry a Muslim youth. The mauvi also allegedly raped the girl, who later became pregnant and died at a hospital. Sister of the girl's father had filed a complaint in this regard. The victim, a resident of a village in Mohanlalganj, was forced to marry Murtaza, a resident of Khujauli, a year ago. The mauvi, identified as Mohammed Ahmed of Bahraich, also allegedly raped the girl. About a month and a half ago, she died during treatment while giving birth to a girl at a private hospital in Mohanlalganj. After her death, Murtaza and his mother secretly buried the deceased in Khujauli. When the girl's uncle came to know about the incident, a complaint was lodged. A spokesman said the allegations were probed and the accused were arrested. He said a case under various sections of the IPC (for rape, child marriage, religious conversion, etc) was registered and the accused — Murtaza of Khujauli in Mohanlalganj and Maulvi Mohammed Ahmed of Bahraich — were arrested. They were also booked under POCSO Act.

Man, son electrocuted

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man and his son, both fish farmers, died from electric shock in Chinhat police station area on Monday. Reports said that the victims were preparing to fill their fish pond with water. When Ramu Sahni (50) was connecting wires to a switchboard to start the water-lifting pump, he suffered and died as a result. His son Tillu Sahni (19) tried to save him and also suffered electric shock and died. The family, originally from Muzaffarpur (Bihar), lived in a hut in Surya Vihar (Phase 4) near Naubasta Kala village, under the jurisdiction of Upton police chowki. Ranjit Sahni, another son of Ramu, also suffered electric shock. Neighbours alerted the police and cut off the main electricity supply. The police reached the scene and rushed the trio to a hospital where Ramu and

Tillu were pronounced dead upon arrival, while Ranjit's condition is said to be critical. The family, who worked as labourers and were involved in fish farming, had been employed by Sanjeevan, the owner of the pond. Meanwhile, an e-rickshaw driver died under mysterious circumstances in the state capital. There were injury marks on his hands, legs, and the back of his head, even as his mobile phone was missing. The driver's family suspected foul play and informed police. The incident occurred in the jurisdiction of the Mohanlalganj police station. The deceased, identified as Ram Kumar Shukla (46) from Brahmadaspur village in Nigohan, arrived at a clinic in Mohanlalganj while severely injured. According to his family, his condition deteriorated at the clinic, and he died later. They

also found a bag in his e-rickshaw containing an ATM card in the name of Anoop Kumar, ITR Form-16, a prescription from the Government Homeopathic Hospital, and some other documents. The family reached out to the clinic based on information from its operator and immediately alerted the police. "When we reached the clinic, Ram Kumar Shukla was in severe pain," said his family members, who believe he was assaulted. Initial investigations reveal that Ram Kumar Shukla had two sons and a daughter; his son is an Agniveer. The police have launched an investigation into the case. The police are examining the crime scene and considering the possibility of murder. The body has been sent for the postmortem examination. Senior police officers have also inspected the scene to oversee the investigation.



Preparations in full swing on Monday for Independence Day celebrations on Vidhan Sabha road

Pioneer

Woman loses over ₹2 lakh in cyber fraud

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A woman was defrauded of over Rs 2 lakh on Monday through a fake refund offer. According to reports, Shagufta Naz Ansari, a resident of Vinay Khand, was added to a WhatsApp group on August 5 by an unknown person. She was instructed to download the Telegram app, with the promise of earning money for writing Google reviews. The group claimed she could earn Rs 6,500 by investing Rs 5,000. Shagufta made the investment, but did not receive the refund as promised. Instead, she was told that she could not exit the task midway and would need to invest an additional Rs 32,600 to recover her initial investment. After Shagufta paid Rs 32,600, she was told that it would be

the final withdrawal task and that she was required to deposit Rs 90,000 with a guarantee of receiving Rs 1,87,140. While there were three other individuals in the group, they reportedly claimed to have received their money. Shagufta was then told her bank account had been frozen and she would need to pay Rs 78,599 to unfreeze it. With no other option, she complied and made the payment. The fraudsters then told her that her credit score had dropped from 100% to 95% and demanded an additional Rs 2 lakh to restore it to 100%. Realising she was being duped, Shagufta stopped further payments and filed a complaint with the police, who are now investigating the case. In a separate incident in Vibhuti Khand, Dr Pratibha Kumari reported a cyber fraud

in which she lost Rs 20,000. On August 8, she received a call from a woman claiming to be a customer care representative from her bank. The caller informed Kumari that a health insurance service was active on her credit card and an immediate payment of Rs 20,000 was required. Kumari denied having opted for such a service and said she would have it deactivated. The caller assured her that the service could be deactivated within two minutes and requested her credit card details. Kumari received an OTP but refused to share it. The caller claimed the OTP was necessary to stop the service and would not result in any loss. Despite this, Kumari ended up losing over Rs 20,000. She lodged a complaint with the police. Meanwhile, a nurse from

SGPGIMS was injured after being hit by a dumper and dragged for nearly 100 feet on VIP Road, in Alambagh police station area on Sunday night. The nurse, identified as Himanshi Verma, a resident of Sitapur, was returning home on her scooter after visiting a shopping mall. She lives in Vrindavan Colony. As she was crossing VIP Road, a municipal corporation truck heading towards Bangla Bazaar collided with her scooter. The truck driver attempted to speed off the scene, dragging both the nurse and the scooter underneath the vehicle in the process. Passersby chased the dumper, overtook it, and blocked its path, forcing the driver to stop. They called the police, who arrived to find the dumper driver being attacked by the crowd.

RMLIMS staff member hurt as oxygen cylinder regulator explodes

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An employee was injured in an accident during the shifting of a patient at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences on Monday. RMLIMS spokesperson Bhuvan Chandra Tiwari stated that the regulator of an oxygen cylinder was being tightened while preparing to shift a patient in the medicine ward on the second floor of the hospital block. "Suddenly, the regulator burst with a loud noise. Some sparks

flew, and the employee suffered a minor injury to his hand. This incident occurred at a designated location away from patients and attendants. No patients or attendants were injured, nor did they suffer any loss," he said. Upon receiving information about the incident, RMLIMS director Dr CM Singh, CMS Dr Ajay Kumar Singh, and other administrative officers arrived at the scene and assessed the situation. Nursing staff and employees were instructed to exercise greater caution in the future.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

INB SUB akash kumar of hq-77 MTN BDE c/o99 APO have changed my both daughter's name from jashan to aashi nishad and from ayushi to ayushi nishad in all documents.

सूचना

मेरा आधारकार्ड जिसका नं. 255481549660 जुबिन नाम योगेन्द्र सिंह अंकित है जबकि सदस्कूल मार्केटिंग में विप्रेन्द्र कुमार है जो सत्य व सही है मेरे आधारकार्ड में सही नाम विप्रेन्द्र कुमार (Vipendra Kumar) अंकित कर दिया जाए। विप्रेन्द्र कुमार पुत्र देवी सहाय निवासी ग्राम निरखी, पोस्ट दयाल नगर, निरखी फतेहपुर, ड.प्र. 212621

NOTICE

let it be known that the actual date of birth of my son kaif khan as per the birth certificate is 15.01.2009, but the aadhar card number is 525674398935 mention the date of birth is 15.01.2010, so please correct it as 15.01.2009. meraj ahmad house number-68 manecha khetasarai tahsil- shahganj distt- jaunpur up.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Mohammad Anees Siddiqui to Mohd Anees Siddiqui for all future purpose. Mohd Anees Siddiqui S/O Mohammad Rafoeq Siddiqui R/O 105/38, Prem Nagar Gurudwara, Kanpur.

NOTICE

I, Rekha w/o Naveen Kumar, resident of Dadua Bazar, Badgaon, Gonda, inform that at the time of admission in my son's school, due to an error in his educational record, my name was written as Rekha Modanwal, which is Rekha.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Jasmin Kaur to Jasmine Kaur to be known as Jasmine Kaur in all future references. Jasmine Kaur, H.No. 122/238 Flat No. 1104, B Block, Dilbagh Rose Garden, Fazalganj, Kanpur.

NOTICE

In my Fatima Senior Secondary School Gonda records, my Name recorded as Pratyaksh Pathak & my father's name recorded as Sharad kr Pathak, which is wrong. Whereas my father's correct name SHARAD KUMAR PATHAK & my name is PRATYAKSH PATHAK. In future we are known as this name. Pratyaksh Pathak s/o Sharad Kumar Pathak, resident of Pared Sarkar Gonda (UP).

NOTICE

I Army No. 14663534 N Hav. Rajesh Kumar yadav S/o Balrup yadav Present address 803 Maidani Karmsihala Company C/o 56 APO New Cantt Prayagraj Permanent Address Village Paveva Rudrapur Post Bardiha Dist. Azamgarh U. P. my Service Record by mistake my daughter Anjali D. O. B. 03-11-2006 which wrong is correct D. O. B. 03-11-2005 in all future purpose.

NOTICE

Last 04 Page of My Sale Deed No. 19600 its duplicate No. 19601 dated 18-07-1988 belongs to house no 116/RN/934 (5) Koshan Nagar has been lost which are not for used to another and treated misuses if any one used such missing pages. Shahida Parveen W/o Nizamuddin Khan, Mo. Fatehpur Taj Narja Bhojipura, Mau.

NOTICE

MY CORRECT NAME IS SHYAM DULARI DEVI WIFE OF GIRDHARI LAL WHICH IS MENTIONED IN ALL GOVERNMENT RECORDS. BY MISTAKE AS LIC MY NAME IS MENTIONED IN POLICY NO 233206644 AS SHIVDULARI WHICH IS HOUSEHOLD NAME. IN FUTURE I WILL BE KNOWN AS SHYAM DULARI DEVI W/O GIRDHARI LAL R/O-11 BAREPUR, BARALPUR, FATEHPUR UP.

DECLARATION

I, Arun Kumar My Service Number-15224628X Rank - Havildar (SKT) Unit 174 Field Regiment Residence Vill-Kanspur, Post- Surendha, Teh- Bidhuna, District Auraiya, Uttar Pradesh declare through an affidavit that the date of birth of my mother is mistakenly 01/07/1967. Through this affidavit, I declare that my mother name is Marg Shri. And his actual and correct date of birth is 01/01/1970 in my Army documents.

NOTICE

MY CORRECT NAME IS AMOGH TRIVEDI S/O VIMLESH KUMAR TRIVEDI WHICH IS MENTIONED IN ALL GOVERNMENT RECORDS BY MISTAKE AS LIC MY NAME IS MENTIONED IN POLICY NO 233239468 AS RAHUL TRIVEDI WHICH IS MY HOUSEHOLD NAME. IN FUTURE I WILL BE KNOWN AS AMOGH TRIVEDI S/O VIMLESH KUMAR TRIVEDI R/O 173 MINI LIG BARRA-2 KANPUR NAGAR.

NOTICE

"NOTICE is hereby given Sri Manoj Kumar Agarwal (Borrower) have agreed to create mortgage in respect of Property situated at Maukharhi Mohalla Indira Nagar Orai With M/s CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED (CICFL), and the Last two pages of Original sale deed dated 14/09/2018 executed by Sri Rajesh Kumar Agarwal and Sri Sanjay Kumar Agarwal in favour of Sri Manoj Kumar Agarwal which is registered in Book No. 1 Vol. No. 6470 on pages 101 to 120 at serial no. 8767 at the office of Sub Registrar Kanpur Nagar is lost, if any person having any claim against the said Property can contact to me, within 07 days. Bharat Bhatnagar, Advocate Office - Room No. 14 Second Floor Mudgal Adhivakta Bhawan Civil Court Kanpur Nagar Mob. 09839034426

NOTICE

I, Pradeep Kumar s/o Ganpati Pandey, resident of Dulhupur, Ambedkar Nagar, inform that at the time of admission in the school of my daughter Prachi Pandey, my name has been written by mistake as Pradeep Kumar Pandey and wife's name as Amita Pandey, whereas my correct name is Pradeep Kumar and wife's name is Amita Tripathi.

'Ek Pahal' to make people proactive in helping victims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant move towards community policing, Uttar Pradesh's emergency service number UP-112, has launched a public awareness campaign named 'Ek Pahal' aimed at encouraging citizens to be more proactive in assisting victims and reporting crimes. The campaign was inaugurated here on Monday by Director General of Police Prashant Kumar. During the launch, ADG of UP-112 Neera Rawat emphasised the importance of timely assistance to accident victims, noting that quick action can save lives. She highlighted that vigilant citizens

who monitor their surroundings and promptly report suspicious activities or incidents can make a valuable contribution to strengthening law and order. The 'Ek Pahal' campaign aims to address the apathy among the public that often leads to underutilisation of emergency services. Through this initiative, UP-112 seeks to promote community policing by educating people on how they can collaborate with the police in various ways, such as reporting accidents, providing timely assistance to injured individuals, alerting authorities about suspicious persons or vehicles, and notifying the

police about potential disputes. DGP Prashant Kumar underscored the critical role of community policing in enhancing law enforcement and public safety. He commended the UP-112 initiative, stating that it will not only aid in controlling crime but also assist victims who may be unable to call for help due to various reasons. The campaign is expected to bridge the gap between the police and the community, fostering a safer and more secure environment in the state. The identities of those providing information will be kept confidential.

Expansion of national highways will not stop in UP: CM Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attended a review meeting on national highway-related projects held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Monday. During the meeting, he presented the demand for the expansion of national highways in the state to Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari. He also assured that the process of expanding national highways in Uttar Pradesh will not be halted and that any obstacles in this process will be resolved on time. He said land from any department required for the expansion of national highways would be provided free of

charge. The chief minister mentioned that in 2017, the state had 48 national highways spanning 8,364 kilometres, while by 2024, their number increased to 93, and the length of the national highways also grew to 12,733 kilometres. However, he also pointed out that in terms of population, this is still below the national average of 11.77 kilometres per lakh population. To bring it up to the national average, an additional 11,500 kilometres of national highways will need to be constructed, he added. Yogi noted that in the state, 500 kilometres of national highways are less than two lanes wide, and 1,500 kilometres of national highways are only two-lane

wide. The minimum standard for a national highway should be two lanes plus paved shoulders, he added. Additionally, he emphasised the necessity of completing the projects related to the Maha Kumbh to be held in 2025, including the Prayagraj Ring Road, by December 2024. The chief minister, while specifically mentioning Varanasi, Mathura and Ayodhya, stated that these are the main tourist attractions in the state, where the number of tourists and pilgrims is steadily increasing. He emphasised the need to complete the remaining work on the Varanasi Ring Road (Ganga Bridge) and to open the ring road for traffic as soon as possible.

1.40 crore students, teachers pledge to make UP drug-free

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): After cracking down on drug mafia in Uttar Pradesh through extensive police and administrative operations, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is now focused on raising awareness among children to keep them from falling into the trap of drug abuse. In this effort, approximately 1.40 crore students and teachers from council schools took a pledge on Monday morning to make UP drug-free. The oath taking ceremony took place at all the council schools at 9 am. Minister of State for Basic Education (Independent Charge) Sandeep Singh said, "Under the leadership of CM Yogi, 1.40 crore students and teachers across all council schools in the state were administered the oath to stay away from drugs all their lives and to make the state drug-free. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanathji has been actively working on this initiative, having launched the 'Drug-Free State, Empowered State' campaign, with all state departments playing a vital role in its implementation." It is worth mentioning here that the UP government previously formed the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) on the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi and launched a series of crackdowns on drug dealers. The government's action against the drug mafia resulted in numerous arrests and the seizure of large quantities of narcotics substances. The UP government is paying attention to the weaker sections of society in its efforts to achieve the goal of a 'Drug-Free State, Empowered State'.

BBAU, SGPGI top gainers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In the latest National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) list released on Monday, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU) secured the 58th position overall, while King George's Medical University (KGMU) achieved 88th place among the top hundred institutions in the country. In the university category, BBAU ranked 33rd, and KGMU 53rd. Lucknow University was the only state university to make the list, coming in at 97th. In the management category, the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow (IIM-L) was ranked 7th, Jaipuria Institute of Management 72nd, and BBAU 86th. In the dental category, KGMU attained 4th place. For law, BBAU was ranked 10th, Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University 20th, and Lucknow University 23rd.

NIRF RANKINGS

Among medical colleges, SGPGI was ranked 6th, and KGMU 19th. KGMU spokesperson Dr Sudhir Singh indicated that the institution will analyze and address areas for improvement. Meanwhile, BBAU, which improved to 58th place from 69th last year, saw a notable rise in its ranking. Vice-Chancellor Prof NMP Verma congratulated the university community, attributing the success to their collective efforts. He emphasised that they would strive to further excel in teaching, research, and outreach to achieve greater success and global recognition in the future. SGPGI spokesperson highlighted that they are the only Uttar Pradesh government institute to improve its ranking from 7th in 2023 to 6th in 2024, thanks to strategic planning

311 farmers get ₹32L for silt removal

Lucknow (PNS): The Yogi Adityanath has set a new record in Uttar Pradesh by becoming the first chief minister to provide compensation to farmers for silt removal from their fields. In an unprecedented move, the government has allocated over Rs 32 lakh to 311 farmers in flood-affected Lakhimpur Kheri for silt removal from their agricultural farms. Making the above claims here on Monday evening, an official spokesman of the government claimed that the beneficiaries have hailed Chief Minister Yogi as their messiah, while flood-affected people across the state have lauded the relief efforts of his government. Relief Commissioner GS Naveen

CITYBRIEFS

LU STUDENT OFFERED ₹25L PACKAGE Mohammad Atif Naem, a student from the Faculty of Engineering and Technology at Lucknow University, has secured a placement with Amazon, earning an impressive annual package of ₹25 lakh (CTC). Vice-Chancellor Professor Alok Kumar Rai and Dean Professor AK Singh congratulated Atif, praising his dedication and hard work. Professor Rai described Atif's success as an inspiration for other students, while Professor Singh highlighted its potential to boost student confidence. Dr Himanshu Pandey, the Placement Incharge, noted that Atif, from the 2022 B.Tech in Computer Science Engineering batch, excelled in Amazon's rigorous recruitment process, landing a role as Cloud Support Associate.

ANTI-RAGGING WEEK The department of public administration, in collaboration with the Counselling and Guidance Cell (CGC) at Lucknow University, is celebrating Anti-Ragging Week under the patronage of Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai. Director of CGC Vaishali Saxena welcomed Prof OP Shukla, the additional proctor, and the students. The week-long initiative began with a lamp-lighting ceremony and a discussion on the negative effects of ragging. Prof Shukla highlighted the importance of positive senior-junior relationships and reviewed the Raghavan Committee's provisions on ragging, including prevention measures on campus and in hostels. Head of the department Prof Nand Lal Bharti encouraged students to build friendly relationships. Saxena stressed the significance of trust, respect, and affection in preventing such incidents and fostering a harmonious student environment.

BIHAR MIN CONGRATULATES HOCKEY TEAM Bihar minister Shrawan Kumar, also the president of Bihar Hockey, sent a letter to president of Hockey India Dilip Tirkey, and general secretary Bhola Nath Singh, congratulating the Indian hockey team on their bronze medal win at the Paris Olympics 2024. "Winning medals in two consecutive Olympics is a remarkable achievement that brings immense pride to our nation. We deeply appreciate the dedication of our players, coaches, support staff, and their families. Our gratitude also extends to the Hockey India leadership for their pivotal role," Kumar said. He also thanked the Government of India for its support. "This historic achievement will inspire young players nationwide and strengthen the spirit of hockey in India. Please convey our best wishes to the entire team and everyone involved," he added.

Monika Garg is new APC

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government, in a reshuffle of IAS officers on Monday, posted Monika Garg as Agriculture Production Commissioner. She will also retain the charge of the Minorities Welfare department. Monika Garg has succeeded Manoj Kumar Singh, who was elevated as chief secretary on July 1. Following the deputation of Devesh Chaturvedi to the Centre as Secretary, Agriculture, Ravindra Kumar has been posted as Principal Secretary, Agriculture. Ravindra Nayak has been

given the charge of Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Livestock Department. He will retain the charge of Principal Secretary, Secretariat Administration. M Devaraj has been appointed as the new Additional Chief Secretary, Appointment Department. He will retain the charge of the Technical Education department. Veena Kumari Meena will look after the Excise, Sugarcane and AYUSH departments. Leena Johri has been appointed as Principal Secretary, Child Development Nutrition and Women Welfare.

102 cops in security of Guv, CM to be replaced

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant shake-up of VIP security arrangements, 102 police officers currently assigned to the protection of the governor and chief minister of Uttar Pradesh will be removed from their posts. These officials will be replaced by constables and head constables from the PAC, commissionerates, districts, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and other special security forces. The decision to remove these officers follows their failure to pass firing tests, among other reasons. Additionally, police officers tasked with the protection of several other Very Very Important Persons (VVIPs) are also expected to be reassigned soon. The Security headquarters has requested service details from the relevant branches to promptly deploy the selected officers. The changes are part of a broader review process conducted by a committee, which evaluated fitness and firing tests for constables and head constables who applied

for VIP security roles. Previously, police officers who had been in VIP security positions for years were called for firing and fitness tests. A significant number of these officers failed the firing test and did not appear for retesting, presumably to maintain their current assignments. In response, the Security headquarters has adopted a stringent approach, selecting 102 officials from the PAC, commissionerates, districts, SDRF and special security forces for VIP protection duties. The VIP security roles offer an additional allowance of Rs 25,000, up from the previous Rs 12,500, which may have contributed to the reluctance of officers to leave these positions. In a related incident on April 23 last, during a public event in Pilibhit, a commando assigned to the chief minister's security collapsed and fainted. This prompted an urgent replacement with another commando. Additionally, the Security headquarters recently decided not to assign officers over the age of 40 to the chief minister's security.

Expedite drinking water supply in villages: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday, directed officials to expedite the supply of pure drinking water to all villages. The chief minister's directive came during a review meeting on the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission in the state. He emphasised that in addition to pipeline installation, adequate measures for operation and maintenance must be in place. Highlighting the critical role of plumbers in ensuring clean water access for every household, the chief minister instructed officials to ensure they receive proper training. The chief minister emphasised that only high-quality materials should be used in the Jal Jeevan Mission, ensuring that pipes, taps and other components are of the best standard. He also instructed that any stolen or damaged taps be promptly replaced. During the meeting, officials informed the chief minister that arrangements are being made to provide pure drinking water to over 2.63 crore households in the state, with a total cost of Rs 1.60 lakh crore. Additionally, approximately Rs 4,500 crore will be allocated annually for the operation and maintenance of the system. The chief minister stated



ed that access to pure drinking water is crucial for health. Providing clean water to rural communities will prevent various diseases, contributing to overall village health. He likened the scheme to a form of water therapy, which will significantly relieve conditions such as digestive issues, urinary problems, jaundice, kidney stones and kidney failure. He emphasised the need to raise awareness among villagers about the Jal Jeevan Mission through officials and public representatives. He suggested that a detailed action plan be developed in

collaboration with the gram pradhans. He stated that villagers should be informed that pure drinking water is being provided at a cost lower than their monthly mobile expenses. Panchayat assistants and BC Sakhis should be involved in this effort, he said. He also specifically instructed that roads excavated for pipeline installation must be repaired promptly. The chief minister also instructed officials to focus on making villages in the state healthy and self-sufficient. He emphasised the goal of achieving self-reliance for every village. He suggested starting fish farming in village ponds that are not associated with temples and exploring income opportunities by establishing gram haat and permanent shops. For this, officials, local public representatives and ministers should also visit villages and have detailed discussions with the Pradhan and villagers, he added. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath highlighted that the Gram Sachivalaya model is garnering national attention for its effectiveness in addressing village issues. Villagers now have access to services locally that previously required a visit to the tehsil. He encouraged fostering healthy competition among villages to achieve self-reliance.

CM for desilting, channelisation of Terai rivers

Reviews Ken-Betwa Link Project

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed the Ken-Betwa Link Project on Monday and issued key directives to the Irrigation and Water Resources department. He highlighted that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed

between Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and the Government of India for this project, which aims to provide irrigation to 2.51 lakh hectares in Uttar Pradesh, benefiting Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur districts. The project includes construction of a 21-kilometre link channel in Uttar Pradesh, which requires 271 hectares of land acquisition. The executive engineer of the Ken-Betwa Link Canal Construction Block 2 has been appointed as the nodal officer. The chief minister suggested including

Hamirpur district in the project's benefits and instructed officials to expedite dam desilting. He also emphasised the need for a rubber dam near the Taj in Agra. Noting the increased silt and current state of the Saryu river in Ayodhya, he proposed construction of a dam to mitigate future risks and recommended consulting the Indian Institute of Technology for expertise. He directed the officials to channel the Terai rivers and ensure coordinated efforts for river desilting.



Devotees offering prayers at Koneshwar temple in Lucknow on the fourth Monday of Shravan

Pioneer

Raise B'desh issue at int'l level: AKY to Indian govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Monday said any country that uses the political situation of another country to serve its own designs weakens itself. Yadav was apparently referring to the situation in Bangladesh though in his post on X, he did not specifically name Bangladesh or India but without elaborating, he mentioned the "failure" of foreign policy. "Many times, interference by any other country at a single level in the internal matters of a country is not considered appropriate on global diplomatic standards, but in such a case, for the all-round protection of the affected country and its culturally related people, that country should activate its silent foreign policy and take courageous and positive vocal initiatives in collaboration with the world community, so that meaningful solutions can be found," Yadav said. "The government which remains a silent spectator in such a situation should believe that it is the failure of its foreign policy that the conditions in the countries adjacent to it in all directions are



neither normal nor favourable for it. This means that from the 'geopolitical' point of view, there has been a grave mistake in its foreign policy. Only by binding a large geographical area with the thread of cultural-proximity and mutual understanding and brotherhood can peace be brought to various troubled land blocks of the world," the SP chief said. "World history is a witness that in different countries, violent mass revolutions, military coups and anti-government movements have taken place against the government for various reasons, right or wrong, depending on the test of the time," Yadav posted on X in Hindi. In such a situation, only that country has "risen again" which has not discriminated against anyone on

any ground. In another tweet, Akhilesh Yadav said: "No community, whether it is the majority of Bangladesh with a different viewpoint or the minority of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists or any other religion-sect-belief, should become a victim of violence." He urged the Indian government to take a strong stance at the international level, saying, "The Indian government should strictly raise this issue at the international level as a matter of protection of human rights. This is also a very sensitive issue of our defence and internal security." A number of Hindu temples, households and businesses were vandalised, women assaulted and at least two Hindu leaders affiliated with the Awami League party headed by Sheikh Hasina were killed in the violence in Bangladesh after she fled the country, according to community leaders in Dhaka. More than 230 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government last week, taking the death toll to 560 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-July.

UP to set up two universities for affiliation of madrasas: Rajbhar

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Amid the ongoing controversies over shifting the students of unrecognised madrasas imparting Islamic theology to the schools run by the state government, the Uttar Pradesh government is contemplating to set up two universities to affiliate the madrasas with them. UP Minorities Welfare Minister Om Prakash Rajbhar said here on Monday that the government planned to reform the process of granting recognition to madrasas in the state by proposing the establishment of two new universities. These universities would affiliate all madrasas, aiming to streamline their recognition process, he added. The affiliation of the madrasas with these universities would be done on the lines of affiliation of colleges with the Lucknow University and other universities in the state. Rajbhar said, "Our goal is to open two universities. We want to integrate the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa

Education with these universities so that all madrasas are officially recognised, eliminating any future disputes." He compared the proposal to the current affiliation of many colleges with institutions like Lucknow University, Purvanchal University and Shakuntala University, suggesting that if madrasas are similarly affiliated with universities, the situation will be different. Currently, madrasas in UP are recognised by the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education. The announcement follows a letter from the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) dated June 7. Subsequently, on June 26, the then UP chief secretary Durga Shanker Mishra issued directives to all district magistrates regarding the education of children in madrasas. The NCPCR had instructed that all non-Muslim students in government-funded madrasas be transferred to Basic Education Council schools to ensure they receive

formal education. It also recommended that children in madrasas not recognised by the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education be admitted to these schools. The letter also asked the state government to shift all students studying in unrecognised madrasas to state-run schools. The UP chief secretary had written letters to all the district magistrates to implement the directives of the NCPCR. The letter also asked for an inquiry into admissions of non-Muslim children in madrasas. UP has approximately 25,000 madrasas, of which around 16,500 are recognised by the government, including 560 government-aided institutions. However, approximately 8,500 madrasas remain unrecognised by the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education. Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind's legal advisor Maulana Kaab Rashidi emphasised that the government should consult all stakeholders, including organisations like Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind, Nadwatul Ulama and

Darul Uloom Deoband, before implementing any changes in the system. He stressed that the constitutional rights of minorities to establish and run their educational institutions must be respected in any new system proposed by the state government. Earlier on July 31, a delegation of All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIM-PLB) had met UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and demanded the withdrawal of a government order that directed the shifting of all students in unrecognised madrasas to state-run schools. The AIMPLB objected to the notice issued by the state government to 8,449 madrasas in UP on the basis of which the district administration was ordering these madrasas to admit children studying there to schools for basic education. The AIMPLB also expressed strong objection to the letter issued by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights to the chief secretary of the state on June 7.

One arrested with heroin worth lakhs

PTI ■ BAHRAICH

A joint team of the Sashastra Seema Bal and the Uttar Pradesh Police arrested a suspected drug smuggler from the Rupaidiha area bordering Nepal and seized 100 grams of heroin worth about ₹80 lakh, an official here said on Monday. Acting on a tip-off, a joint team of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and the police stopped a man near Chauri Kutia Morh Bagh in Rupaidiha on Sunday. Deputy Commandant of the SSB's 42nd Battalion Dilip Kumar said. The man was searched and 100 grams of heroin wrapped in polythene was seized, Kumar said. The drug recovered is worth Rs80 lakh in the international market, he added. A case has been registered against Gopal Nishad from Subhanpur village in the district's Ramgaon area under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he further said. Nishad said during interrogation that he received the contraband from an Indian man named Lalu.

'SP' leader held for rape bid on minor girl in Kannauj

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The police in Kannauj district raided a college on Monday night and claimed to have arrested Samajwadi Party leader Nawab Singh Yadav after he was allegedly found in a compromising situation with a minor girl. A case has been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. This is the second such incident. Earlier in Ayodhya, another SP leader Moid Khan was arrested for allegedly raping his 12-year-old daily-waged employee for close to two months. Police claimed that Nawab Singh Yadav, a SP leader and an ex-representative of party chief Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple Yadav, was arrested on charges of raping a minor girl. Recently, Nawab had shared a video on social media wishing Akhilesh Yadav on his birthday. In his video, Nawab also shared his old photos with the SP chief. As per the police, the accused leader had called the minor victim along with her aunt with the promise of giving her a job. However, when she went to

meet him, Nawab allegedly raped her. Nawab, however, denied the charges and called it a political conspiracy. Sharing details of the incident, the police said, "At 1:30 in the night, information was received that the victim's top was removed and an attempt was made to do something wrong. Immediately after receiving the information, the police team reached the spot. Upon reaching the spot the police found the accused, victim, and her aunt inside." In her complaint to the police, the victim said that she was a member of the Mahila Morcha in Bharatiya Janata Party and was formerly in the Samajwadi Party. The victim further said that she had known Nawab Singh for a long time and had come to meet the SP leader. She said when her aunt went to the washroom, the accused allegedly tried to rape her. When the aunt came out and found that the victim was being harassed, she immediately called the police. The police filed a case under the relevant sections and took Nawab Singh Yadav in custody. Meanwhile, launching

a scathing attack on the Samajwadi Party, UP BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi sought to equate the Kannauj incident with that of a recent Ayodhya rape case involving a minor girl. Tripathi said, "Nawab Singh Yadav is not only a small leader of SP, but he has also been (former) MP Dimple Yadav's representative." "Samajwadi Party has always covered up such crimes under the policy that 'boys are boys and they make mistakes' (ladko hai, ladko se galti ho jaati hai). First, it was Moid Khan of Ayodhya and now it is Nawab Yadav of Kannauj. This is the real character of the Samajwadi Party," he said. However, in a press release, Samajwadi Party's Kannauj unit president Mohd Kaleem Khan claimed that Nawab Singh Yadav was not a member of the party. He said as Nawab Singh was involved in anti-party activities for about the last five years he was removed from the party. Khan said that police and media were projecting Nawab Singh Yadav as SP member just to defame the party.

Toll-free number for Vidya Samiksha Kendras soon

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government, as part of its pursuit to enhance quality of education in Uttar Pradesh, is implementing a toll-free number system for the state's Vidya Samiksha Kendras. This toll-free line will serve as a platform for gathering feedback, addressing issues and resolving school education enquiries from parents, students and teachers. Aligned with Chief Minister Yogi's vision, the system will use interactive voice response (IVR) technology to address various educational concerns. The Uttar Pradesh Development Systems Corporation Limited (UPDESCO) oversees the creation and implementation of this automated system, allowing callers to access or provide informa-

tion without direct interaction with a live agent. UPDESCO has initiated selecting and allocating agencies for this project, extending opportunities to currently empanelled agencies. The toll-free number and associated system being developed in Uttar Pradesh aim to address various aspects of school education. It will facilitate the sharing of information, feedback and queries about education across all levels, including primary schools. Additionally, it will provide details about primary and composite schools across different districts in the state. The system is designed to resolve enquiries from the public, parents, registered students and teachers while also gathering their feedback and input. This initiative is expected to enhance public engagement and strengthen the education

system to help students in primary, upper primary and composite schools throughout the state. All Vidya Samiksha Kendras will also be integrated into this process. Vidya Samiksha Kendras will leverage their resources and personnel to address enquiries received through this toll-free helpline. The helpline will offer easy access to information on educational schemes, programmes and services while enhancing the education system through increased public participation. This initiative will boost citizen satisfaction and improve educational outcomes by expanding public reach and engagement. The toll-free number will strengthen the existing operations of the Vidya Samiksha Kendras and play a critical role in the programme's overall success. Parents will

also be able to voice their concerns about their children's education, and the solutions provided through the helpline will help resolve the challenges students face. The proposed toll-free number system will be designed to meet both current and future needs. It will include advanced features such as IVR integration, parallel channels on the same number, call waiting, messaging, scalability, reliability and 24x7 accessibility along with comprehensive call reporting. Additional capabilities will include voice ticketing, voice tracking, a web interface, a live call dashboard, voicemail, call logs, multi-language support, SMS notifications, call queuing, waiting announcements, agent and supervisor logins, and follow-up and task reminders.

Banda jail constable held for demanding ₹1 cr from farmer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A constable posted in Banda district jail allegedly demanded a ransom of Rs 1 crore from a local farmer, threatening to kidnap his son. He also fired shots to intimidate the farmer. The incident came to light when the farmer lodged a report with the Jaith police. Ramkumar, a farmer from Maghera village under Jaith police station of Banda, had recently finalised the sale deal of his farmland for Rs 2.5 crore. Ajit Gautam, a constable posted at Banda jail, learned of this transaction and he took a four-day leave and visited

Ramkumar's farm on August 5. He demanded Rs 1 crore as ransom and threatened to abduct Ramkumar's son if the demand was not met. To intimidate Ramkumar, Ajit also fired shots. The frightened farmer stayed indoors for two days. On August 7, Ramkumar went to Jaith police station and informed Station Officer Ashwani Kumar of the extortion attempt. Taking the matter seriously, the police formed a team and began an investigation. On Sunday night, the police arrested Ajit Gautam at Maghera crossing and seized a firearm and five cartridges from him. During interrogation, Ajit admitted to the ran-

som demand. Station Officer Ashwani Kumar confirmed that Ajit Gautam was a constable at Banda jail, saying he would be sent to jail. Further investigation revealed that Ajit had planned to kidnap Ramkumar's son, Anuj, and had called three accomplices to Maghera for this purpose. However, these accomplices were arrested by the police in Chhatrapur, Madhya Pradesh. The Chhatrapur police have confirmed the arrests, and further information about the criminals is being gathered. Meanwhile in Sonbhadra, a 5-year-old missing boy's body was found in a pond on Monday morning.

Reports said that Golu, the five-year-old son of Om Prakash, had wandered approximately 400 metres away from his home to the vicinity of a pond. It is believed that he slipped and fell into the water. When the family realised that Golu was missing, they began searching for him and eventually reported his disappearance to the Karma police. The police arrived at the scene and began a search but were initially unable to locate the child. On Monday morning, the family members found the boy's body floating in the pond and informed the police about it. The body was sent for post-mortem.

Kashi Vishwanath Temple draws huge crowd

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Over 2.5 lakh devotees offered prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) on the fourth Monday of Hindu month of Shravan. Due to the increase in the number of Kanwariyas, the entire sprawling Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham (corridor) premises echoed with the traditional slogan of 'Har Har Mahadev' along with 'Bol Bom' throughout the day. There were long queues of people towards the temple throughout the day not only from Godowlia and Maidagin areas but also from the river side.

In view of the heavy rush of devotees, elaborate security arrangements were made and no vehicles were allowed to move between Godowlia and Maidagin throughout the day. To maintain law and order, the devotees were checked at many places through metal detectors. Senior administrative and police officers were present there to keep a watch on the stock of situation in the KVC premises. All the activities were also watched through various CCTV cameras. To avoid congregation the devotees were



Devotees gather near the Kashi Vishwanath Temple on the fourth Monday of Shravan month in Varanasi. PTI

asked to move towards the corridor only through barricading and Rapid Action Force (RAF), paramilitary and Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) personnel were deployed both inside and outside the premises. Right from the wee hours after Mangla Aarti, the devo-

tees started thronging the temple and queues of devotees were seen on both sides of the temple, including Maidagin and Godowlia as well as Lalita Ghat. A large number of Kanwariyas came from Prayagraj and other places. For the convenience of the devotees, large LED screens

were installed at six places to display the activities of 'garbhagriha' (sanctum sanctorum) as the devotees were not allowed to touch the Shivaling and they offered 'jalabhishek' through the big metal structure from outside the 'garbhagriha'. Apart from the KVT, lakhs of devotees also offered

prayers at several other famous temples located in the city as well as its outskirts. The maximum crowd was seen at Markandey Mahadev located near the confluence of Ganga and Gomti rivers at Kaithi. Besides, there was a heavy rush of devotees at all famous temples, including Mahamritunjya Mahadev (Daranagar), Gauri Kedareswar (Kedar Ghat), Jogeshwar Mahadev (Ishwargangi), Omkleshwar Mahadev (Chittanpura), Teel Bhandeshwar (Pandey Haveli), Sarangnath Mahadev (Sarnath) and many others in the city areas. On the outskirts, all the Shiva temples located on Panchkoshi Parikarma Marg including Karmdeshwar Mahadev, Bhim Chandi, Rameshwar Mahadev, Paach Pandev and Kapildhara also witnessed huge crowds of devotees. Apart from these famous temples, heavy rush of devotees was also seen at Vishwanath Temple in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) premises and Shool Tankeshwar Mahadev and scores of all others as the city is famous for having the replicas of all the Dwadasa Jyotirlingas.

BHU 5th best in university category in NIRF 2024

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has been ranked 5th best in the university category in National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024. The university has got 66.05 points to secure this position. India Rankings 2024 was released by Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of State for Education Dr Sukanta Majumdar, in New Delhi, on Monday. In the year 2023 as well, BHU was at the 5th spot in the university category. In the overall category, the varsity has retained 11th position, same as 2023. Expressing elation over BHU maintaining its place in NIRF 2024, Vice-Chancellor Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain congratulated the members of BHU fraternity for their efforts and hard work. Prof Jain said, "We improved our ranking in 2023 and have successfully maintained it this year. However, I feel there is still scope of further climbing the ladder and we are working on it. In the past



A building of Banaras Hindu University.

few years, the university has taken several initiatives that are aimed at encouraging quality research and education, as well as attracting the best minds and talents. We are facilitating teaching-learning and research by providing incentives, financial assistance, attractive funding, and scholarships as well as building state-of-the-art infrastructure. This, as a result, is helping us in upgrading the university's research profile, and establishing BHU as a leading public university which is striving towards fulfilling the

aspirations of students from across the world." The university has made significant improvements in the Management, Medical, and Dental categories. University's Institute of Medical Sciences has climbed up one spot to secure 7th ranking in 2024, while the Faculty of Dental Sciences has been ranked 17th, one level up from 2023. Institute of Management Studies is at 48th spot as compared to 56th last year. In the Agriculture and Allied sectors too, the university has retained its 4th position with 68.32 points. Last year too, the university was at the 4th pedestal in this category. Institute of Agricultural Sciences of the BHU is known internationally for its excellent academic and research contributions. The rankings issued by the National Institutional Ranking Framework, Ministry of Education, Government of India, has added three new categories this year. These are State Universities, Skill Universities and Open Universities.

Devotees offer prayers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A large number of devotees congregated at the Shiva temples on the fourth Monday of the month of Shravan. The entire city reverberated with the chant of 'Bol Bum' and 'Har Har Mahadev'. From the banks of the Ganga to all the temples, the echo of Har Har Mahadev was heard. A large number of Kanwariyas reached the ghats to collect the water of the Ganga. Devotees were seen standing in long queues since 4 am outside the Mankameshwar temple located on the banks of the Yamuna. After the Mangala Aarti, the gate of the temple was opened for the devotees. Special security arrangements had been

made here. A crowd of devotees reached the Nagvasuki temple located in Daraganj since morning. Some did darshan puja, while others got the Rudrabhishek done as per rituals. The flood water has reached the gate of the Nagvasuki temple. This was the reason why devotees were not able to get entry from the gate on the banks of the Ganga. Devotees were reaching the temple for darshan via the Daraganj locality. A crowd of devotees gathered to perform 'jalabhishek' on the shivaling in the Lord Koteswar Mahadev Temple and Shiv Kachheri Temple located in Shivkuti. 'Jalabhishek' also performed in the Padila Mahadev Temple.

KDA secy inspects New Kanpur City Project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

KDA's new secretary Abhay Kumar Pandey inspected the New Kanpur City Project to be developed between Mainawati Marg, Singhpur and Kalyanpur on Sunday. During the inspection, he directed to seal the illegally constructed houses and demolish them. As there is a ban on sale and purchase of land in the project area, he directed to lodge FIR against people still involved in such practices. Officials informed that out of 153.3 hectare, KDA had acquired 54.9 hectare land in the past which is in its possession and registered in revenue records. Besides, 8.5 hectares of land belongs to gram sabha. Of the private land owners of 89.8 hectares, the KDA had purchased 25 hectares through mutual consent. The KDA had so far spent ₹208 crore on the acquisition of land from the private land owners. Talks are on with the farmers to acquire more land required for the project, they informed. Secretary also inspected the KDA Greens and KDA Heights apartments and directed to prepare action plan for the sale of vacant flats in all the group

housing schemes in due course. **CASTING WORK:** Casting work of the mid-slab below the concourse level was started at Rawatpur underground station on Sunday. On the occasion, Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (UPMRC) officials and the representatives of the contracting agency were present. Unlike other underground stations in the Kanpur Metro corridors, Rawatpur will feature four levels. The casting of the concourse slab, part of the top-down construction method, is already advancing quickly, with 70 per cent of the work completed. The concourse level will include the station control room, ticket counter and passenger amenities. A mid-slab will be constructed below the concourse to accommodate various operational system rooms. Three metro stations will be built under the Rawatpur-Double Pulia underground section: Rawatpur, Kakadeo, and Double Pulia. The Rawatpur underground station will serve as a key interchange, linking both corridors of the Kanpur Metro. Metro passengers will change trains from this station to go from first to second or from second to first corridor

stations. The underground stations of Kanpur Metro Corridor-2 will be built using the "Top-Down method", where construction progresses from the top down. Initially, the roof of the stations will be cast, followed by the concourse and platform levels. However, at Rawatpur, an additional floor above ground necessitates that the concourse level be cast first. This method minimises traffic disruption during construction. The same Top-Down approach is also being used for all underground stations in Corridor-1. Congratulating the entire team of Kanpur Metro, Managing Director, Sushil Kumar, said, "After the priority section, construction on all the balance sections of Corridor-1 and Corridor-2 is advancing at a fast pace. Now the casting work of mid-slab has started after the concourse slab at the under-construction underground station of Rawatpur. This is a big achievement for UPMRC because the construction of this route will open a new convenient route for transportation within the city. By ensuring uninterrupted movement within the city, there will be huge savings of time and energy for the people.

Motorcyclist killed in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A motorcyclist was killed in a road mishap on Tauns-Sadh road near Naraura village under Narval police station area late on Sunday night. Arvind Trivedi (45) of Baradari, Narval, was a salesman in a tractor agency. On Sunday he had gone to Ghatampur on a bike. On return around 10 pm he was hit by a speeding pickup. As a result Arvind fell on the road and succumbed to his injury on the spot. Police sent the body for autopsy after pacifying the irate kin and villagers for initiating action against the guilty DCM driver. Arvind is survived by wife and son. Station Officer Rajesh Singh said vehicle had been impounded and efforts are on to nail its driver. On the basis of kin's complaint, further action will be initiated in the matter, he said. **BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIP:** The four-day Yonex-Sunrise UP State State Junior (U-15 and 17) Badminton Championship concluded at the multi-purpose hall of Green Park Stadium here on Monday. MLC Arun Pathak was the chief guest at the prize distribution ceremony.

Resident docs boycott work



A group of people protesting, holding signs.

The resident doctors of Swaroop Rani Nehru (SRN) Hospital boycotted work on Monday in protest against the recent rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata. Even the prescription counter was closed. The resident doctors gathered in the hospital premises and raised slogans with placards in their hands. On the call of Federation of All India Resident Doctors Association, the doctors boycotting work demanded that mandatory protocols for the security of health staff be implemented in all hospitals. There was a long queue outside the registration counter. **ACCIDENT:** A 45-year-old man was killed after being hit by an unidentified vehicle in Koraon Bazar under Meja police station area here on Monday. According to informant, Satya Prakash Singh of Pipraon under Koraon police station used to do the business

of buying and selling milk. He was returning home after delivering milk on Monday when he was hit by an unidentified vehicle. The driver fled from the spot. Satya Prakash, who was seriously injured in the accident, was admitted to a nearby hospital with the help of passersby, but his condition deteriorated. He was referred to a private hospital in Prayagraj, where he died soon after his admission. The police were informed and the body was sent for the post-mortem examination. Satya Prakash's untimely death caused a wave of grief among the family and local people. Many local leaders and citizens, including district panchayat member Somdatt Singh Patel, Deepak Patel, Arun Kumar Chaturvedi, Pintu Choubey, Rajesh Pandey have expressed grief over his death. Koraon inspector Shailesh Singh said the police is taking necessary action after post-mortem examination and a search for the unknown vehicle is going on.

Farmers given training

Prayagraj (PNS): A farmer seminar based on Nano Urea Plus and Nano DAP was organised by IFFCO Phulpur and IFFCO Cordet in Gonnana village under Tharvai police station here on Monday. IFFCO Phulpur PRO Swayam Prakash said Nano Urea Plus and Nano DAP are based on new technology and farmers should adopt them because they are beneficial for

the crop, soil and environment. CORDET principal Dr Harishchandra told farmers in detail about the use of Nano Urea Plus, Nano DAP and also gave training to the farmers through drones. Veterinarian Dr Ved Prakash gave information to the farmers about the care and health of livestock. The programme was conducted by Mukesh Tiwari.

CDO: Over 4 lakh flags for 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Kashi, which took part in the freedom struggle with bravery and enthusiasm, is now preparing to celebrate 78 years of independence. Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal said that more than four lakh national flags are being made this year through self-help groups (SHGs), many institutions and others. "Under the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, people are also being encouraged to hoist the flag kept with them as a souvenir of the Amrit Mahotsav of the year 2023 under the protocol of the national flag. He said that in the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign from August 13 to August 15, along with motivating people to hoist the national flag on government, semi-government and private offices and buildings, arrangements are also being made to provide flags. "Flag distribution will be done mainly by 29 departments. Apart from this, other

Thyroid checkup camp held at Sarnath UCHC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A free thyroid checkup camp was organised at Urban Community Health Centre (UCHC), Sarnath, here on Monday in collaboration with Abbott organisation. A total of 71 people were examined in the camp. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary inspected the camp. He said that the objective of this camp is to raise awareness about thyroid and provide accessible diagnostic services to the community. "Thyroid often comes up with subtle symptoms, which people do not pay attention to. Early identification is important to prevent its complications and for effective management, so thyroid must be checked on the

Ganga continues to show receding trend

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The water level of Ganga river in the city continued to recede for the fourth consecutive day here on Monday as well as in various districts of this belts of Purvanchal (eastern UP). However, the residents of low-lying areas not only in Varanasi but also in Ghazipur and Ballia are still facing flood-like situation. As per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC) the Ganga was receding by 20 mm per hour but the water level was still at high point as it was recorded at 67.98 metres at 8 am against 68.48 metres a day ago, which is now more than two metres below the warning level (70.262 metres) in this

Goldiee Mehndi Queen Competition held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The first round of the Goldiee Mehndi Queen Competition 2024 under the Goldiee Pratibha Parichay Manch was organised at the Juhari Devi Girls Inter College, Canal Road, here on Sunday. Director Som Goenka said about 700 students of Juhari Devi, MG Inter, Gyan Bharti, Onkarnath Dhavan, PPN Girls and SN Sen Girls Inter College took part in the competition being organised consecutively for the past 24 years. The judges' panel included Neelam Agarwal, Madhu Goenka, Rajni Gupta and Niharika Gupta. A total of 30 students (five from each college) were adjudged winners in the first round. Director Surendra Gupta said this competition was being organised in around 20 cities of

Rohit, Ajay bring laurels

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Two players Rohit Yadav and Ajay Bind were brought laurels to Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) performing excellently in the 89th All India Railway Athletic Championship held at Modern Rail Coach Factory, Rae Bareilly, UP. BLW employee Rohit Yadav won the silver medal by throwing the javelin 76.20 metres, while Ajay Kumar Bind won the bronze medal by completing the 1500 metres race in 3:46:65 minutes. Both these players have made Banaras Locomotive Works proud with their excellent performance. This championship was held from August 9 to 11, in which about 600 players from 24 teams including 15 railway zones of Indian Railways, 6 production units, Railway Protection Force, Research Design and Standards Organization, Lucknow and Railway Board participated. The BLW's winning athletes Rohit Yadav and Ajay Kumar Bind were heartily congratulated and wished by General Manager (GM) Abhay Bakre, Sports Association President SK Srivastava, General Secretary Sunil Kumar, Deputy General Manager Anuj Katiyar, Senior Sports Officer Bahadur Prasad, Public Relations Officer (PRO) Rajesh Kumar and other sports lovers.

IIIT-A celebrates foundation day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad (IIIT-A) marked a significant milestone as it celebrated its 26th Foundation Day at the Jhalwa campus here on Monday with great fervour and enthusiasm. Mukul Kanitkar, a renowned scholar and the chief guest at the event, delivered a thought-provoking speech on the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita, is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and the warrior prince Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Kanitkar spoke on the teachings of the Gita shed light on its profound spiritual wisdom and practical guidance for daily life. He explained that the Gita does not merely offer moral lessons or religious doctrines, but instead provides profound insights into the nature of existence and human consciousness. Through a series of dialogues between Krishna and Arjuna, the Gita explores the fundamental questions of life, death, duty and righteousness. He explained that Arjuna's inner dilemma on the battlefield represents the conflict between his duty as a warrior and his personal attachments to his family and loved ones. By exploring the teachings of the Gita, we can gain a deeper understanding of our own nature and purpose in life. Acting Director Prof OP Vyas said that this annual event not only commemorates the establishment of the prestigious institute but also serves as a platform to showcase its achievements, progress, and contributions to the field of information technology and education. The foundation day celebration brings together students, faculty, alumni and esteemed guests to reflect on the journey of IIIT-A and chart a course for its future endeavours. A four-day tree plantation drive was also launched on the campus where hundreds of saplings would be planted by IIIT-A fraternity. In the evening students presented cultural programmes.

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BJP rejects Cong's JPC demand, says Hindenburg report plot against India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday rejected the Congress' demand for a JPC probe into Hindenburg's allegation against the SEBI Chairperson, saying it is a sham with an eye on weakening the Indian economy and destroying investment in the country. BJP Leader and former Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad reiterated the party's line that the short-selling firm's charge and the Opposition's criticism of the market regulator are part of a wider conspiracy. While India is being globally seen as a safe, stable and promising market, the Congress party wants to project that the Indian investment scenario is not safe, he alleged, suggesting that the Opposition party was seizing on the "chits" provided by foreign entities to damage economy. Billionaire investor George Soros is an investor in Hindenburg and he is known for running propaganda against the Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Prasad said. The Congress wants stock market, which has given good returns to crores of



small investors, to crash, he said. "After being rebuffed by people, the Congress, its allies and its closest ally in the toolkit gang have conspired together to usher in economic anarchy and instability in India," he told reporters. The 10-year-old rule of the Congress between 2004 and 2014 was marked by several alleged scams, Prasad noted, as he questioned why such critical reports were not brought out then. He alleged, "The Congress party Leadership is involved in creating economic anarchy based on this fictitious report." He, however, asserted that investors have come to realise the "conspiracy" and rejected the attempts to



jolt the market. "In its pathological hatred for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress, led by Rahul Gandhi and his toolkit friends, has developed hatred for India." The SEBI had sent a notice to the US-based Hindenburg as part of its probe on the Supreme Court's order following the firm's allegations of stock market manipulation against the Adani group. Hindenburg never replied but has instead launched an attack on SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, he said. With Rahul Gandhi spearheading his party's attack on the Government over the issue, Prasad said he has a habit of throwing unfounded charges and noted that he never

gave his phone for investigation after an investigation was ordered over the Pegasus issue. The BJP will expose the Congress, he claimed. At the press conference, he also slammed the Trinamool Congress Government in West Bengal over the rape and murder of a doctor at a State-run hospital, alleging that it was trying to cover up the incident. The BJP MP said the State Government should hand over the probe to the CBI. Amid attacks on minority Hindus in the unrest-hit Bangladesh, the BJP Leader questioned the silence of the Opposition Leader s, including Gandhi, and noted that Modi had spoken about the need to protect them. The Congress has demanded Buch's resignation and urged the Supreme Court to transfer the Adani probe to the CBI or a Special Investigation Team given the "likelihood of SEBI's compromise". The Opposition party also reiterated that the path forward is to immediately convene a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to investigate the full extent of what it described as the "Modani mega scam".



ICG strengthens surveillance to foil illegal Bangladeshi migration via sea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Considering the recent political events in the Bangladesh and emerging situation, Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has aptly positioned operational units for robust surveillance in the region and to foil any attempts of illegal migration through sea routes, officials said here on Monday. Giving details, they said surface surveillance has been enhanced along the Indo-Bangladesh International Maritime Boundary Line or IMBL by Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) and Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs). Layered surface surveillance has been instituted by additional FPVs. All units at sea have been advised to monitor/Board all fishing boats and undertake positive identification of Indian Fishermen. Sea Air coordinated aerial sur-

veillance has been augmented along IMBL by Coast Guard Aircraft especially during dawn dusk hours to track scouting contacts, if any. Additional assets are also kept on standby at Paradip and Haldia for immediate deployment/ response, if any subversive activity is reported. Electronic surveillance has been promptly maintained for all close coast transferring contacts and interrogated. Necessary coordination has been maintained with agencies and stakeholders to prevent any ingress through possible infiltration/ landing points. So far, no instances of infiltration or any such activity have been reported on the maritime front. The enhanced surveillance measures will be maintained in the area until the situation improves and stabilises, they said.

SC rejects plea against cancellation of UGC NET examination

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a fresh plea filed by some examinees challenging the Government's decision to cancel the UGC-NET examination following alleged question paper leak, saying that entertaining it at this stage will create "chaos". A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said the Government is conducting the exam afresh on August 21 and the students, who are around nine lakh, must have some kind of "certainty now". "The Supreme Court stepping now will have a serious effect and there will be chaos all over," the CJ said while declining to entertain the plea filed by Praveen Dabas and others. The bench said the exam was held on June 18 and was cancelled a day after that. "Entertaining the plea at the present stage would only add to uncertainty and add to utter chaos," the CJ said, adding the Central Government must be "doubly cautious after the NEET-UG fiasco and thus it was cancelled. Let this process



go on now". Earlier, the top court had dismissed a PIL on the issue, saying it was filed by a lawyer and not by aggrieved candidates. "Why are you (lawyer) coming? Let the students come here themselves," the CJ had told the lawyer, adding "while declining the above PIL, we express nothing on merits". The bench had asked advocate Ujjawal Gaur, who has filed the PIL as a petitioner, to focus on some legal matters and leave such issues for aggrieved persons. The earlier plea was also filed against the decision of the Union education Ministry and the National Testing Agency to cancel the UGC-NET exam following inputs that its integrity may have been compromised. The Ministry on June 19 had ordered the cancellation of the UGC-NET exam and handed over the matter to the CBI for an investigation.

IIT Madras top in NIRF 2024, IISc ranked best university

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras remained on the top spot in the National Institute Ranking Framework, 2024 for the sixth consecutive year, while the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru was ranked as the best university for the ninth year in a row, according to the Ministry of Education. The ninth edition of the rankings was announced by Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday. IISc Bengaluru has bagged the second spot in the "overall" category followed by IIT Bombay while IIT Delhi, which was at the third spot last year in the category, has slipped

to the fourth position. Eight IITs have figured in the top ten besides All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi and the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Among universities, IISc Bengaluru is followed by JNU and Jamia Millia Islamia. Nine IITs are in the top ten list for engineering colleges with IIT Madras being at the top for the ninth consecutive year in the category. IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay have also retained their second and third spot respectively in the category. National Institute of Technology (NIT), Tiruchirapalli is the only non-IIT in the top ten list. Among management colleges, the Indian Institute of Management (IIM)



Ahmedabad has retained its top spot, followed by IIM Bangalore and IIM Kozhikode. Two IITs Bombay and Delhi have also figured in the top ten list for management courses. In pharmacy, Jamia Hamdard rose to the top spot from its second position last year while the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Hyderabad slipped to the second rank. BITS Pilani has retained its third position in the category. Delhi University's Hindu

College and Miranda House have switched positions in the colleges' category with the former bagging the top spot. St Stephen's College is in the third position among colleges. Similarly for law, the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru followed by the National Law University, Delhi and NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad have retained first, second and third spots respectively. For Architecture and Planning, IIT Roorkee has been announced as the best, followed by IIT Kharagpur and NIT Calicut. Among medical colleges, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi has bagged the top position followed by PGIME, Chandigarh and CMC Vellore

at second and third spot. Among the dental colleges, Saveetha Institute of Medical And Technical Sciences, Chennai and Manipal College of Dental Sciences retained the top two positions while the third rank has been bagged by Maulana Azad Institute of Dental Sciences, New Delhi. For research, IISc Bengaluru has been acknowledged as the best followed by IIT Madras and IIT Delhi at second and third spot. For education in Agriculture and Allied Sectors, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi is at the first spot while ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute, Haryana has bagged the second rank, followed by Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana.

Centre advises news channels to add timestamps on disaster footage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday issued an advisory to private news channels to carry a date and timestamp on visuals of natural disasters and major accidents while reporting on such incidents. The advisory, issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, noted that television channels provide continuous coverage of natural disasters, major accidents over several days but keep showing the footage from the day the incident took place. The Ministry argued that the footage shown by television channels several days after the



accident or disaster does not necessarily reflect the real-time ground situation which leads to "unnecessary confusion and potential panic among viewers". "Therefore, to avoid any misunderstanding among viewers, all private satellite TV channels are hereby advised to ensure that visuals of disasters, natural calamity or major acci-

dents should prominently display a 'DATE AND TIME' stamp on the top of the footage," the advisory read. The display of date and timestamp will ensure that viewers are suitably informed about the exact date of the footage being telecast and the fact that it does not necessarily reflect the real time position at the location of the incident. The I&B Ministry advisory also "strongly advised" private news channels to ensure adherence to the Programme Code while telecasting such incidents. The advisory comes in the wake of extensive coverage of the landslides in Wayanad and Himachal Pradesh that claimed several lives recently.



Centre to launch contest to designate Model Solar villages

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In an ambitious new effort to promote solar energy aimed to reduce dependence of conventional energy amidst climate change threats, the Centre is launching a competitive "challenge" under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana (PMSY) to designate Model Solar Villages. In this regard, the Government has announced a central financial assistance grant of Rs one crore to the winning hamlet in each district with the highest renewable energy capacity. "The goal is to promote solar energy use and help villages become self-reliant in meeting their energy needs," said an official from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. The incentive comes under the 'Model Solar Village' initiative under the PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana for which the Guidelines for implementation of 'Model Solar Village' under PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana were notified by the Ministry on August 9, 2024. The initiative aims to inspire and support villages across India to transition to solar power and serve as models for sustainable energy practices," said the official.

components: enhancing solar installations on residential properties, commercial/industrial/Government buildings, and creating Model Solar Villages. Through this challenge, villages will compete for a central financial grant, designed to accelerate their transition to solar power and establish them as beacons of sustainable energy adoption. This initiative not only seeks to boost solar energy use but also to inspire other communities to follow suit, added the official. In order to be considered a village under the competition mode, a village must be a revenue village with a population size above 5,000 (or 2,000 for special category states). The selection process involves a competitive mode where villages are assessed on their overall distributed renewable energy (RE) capacity installed 6 months after the declaration of the potential candidate by the District Level Committee (DLC). The Government had given go ahead to the PM-Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana in February this year, with the aim to increase the share of solar rooftop capacity and empower residential households to generate their own electricity. The scheme has an outlay of Rs 75,021 crore and is to be implemented till fiscal 2026-27.

10th India-Sri Lanka military exercise begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The 10th edition of India-Sri Lanka Joint Military Exercise Mitra Shakti commenced on Monday at Army Training School, Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka. The Exercise is scheduled to end on August 25, army said here. Giving details, officials said Indian contingent comprising of 106 personnel is being represented by a battalion of Rajputana Rifles along with personnel from other arms and services. The Sri Lankan contingent is being represented by personnel from Gajaba Regiment of Sri Lankan Army. Joint Exercise MITRA SHAKTI is an annual training event conducted alternatively in India and Sri Lanka. Last edition was conducted in Pune in November last year. Aim of the Joint Exercise is to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake counter insurgency operations in a Sub Conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the



United Nations Mandate. The exercise will focus on operations in the semi-urban environment. Tactical drills to be rehearsed during the exercise include Response to a Terrorist Action, Establishment of a Joint Command Post, Establishment of an Intelligence and Surveillance Centre, Securing of a Helipad/Landing Site, Small Team Insertion and Extraction, Special Heliborne Operations, Cordon and Search Operations besides employment of Drones and Counter Drone Systems, among others. The Exercise will enable both sides to share best practices in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures of conducting joint operations.

Former Foreign Minister K Natwar cremated, leaders pay tribute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The mortal remains of Former Foreign Minister K Natwar Singh were consigned to flames here on Monday as several political Leader s, including External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, joined in paying tribute to him. Natwar Singh passed away on Saturday night after a prolonged illness, according to his family members. He was 93. His funeral was held in the afternoon at the Lodhi Crematorium amid rains in Delhi. External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, National Conference Leader Omar Abdullah, Congress Leader and former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, and several other Leaders, besides many family members, friends and admirers



of Natwar Singh gathered at the crematorium to pay tribute. Jaishankar offered a piece of wood to the funeral pyre before Singh's mortal remains were consigned to flames. "Many political Leaders came to pay tribute to Natwar sahab," said a family friend who attended the funeral. The former Union Minister breathed his last at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram near Delhi, where he had been admitted for the past few weeks, they said. Natwar Singh was born in 1931 at Jaghina village in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan.

He was a career diplomat, who brought a wealth of experience in diplomacy to his political career, and a prolific author on subjects ranging from the life of a 'maharaja' to nuances of foreign affairs. During his distinguished career, he wore many hats, and for his service to the nation, the former external affairs Minister was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1984. Shekhawat described the departure of Natwar Singh as an "irreparable loss" both in the fields of politics and diplomacy. "As a diplomat, the way he served the nation, and the way he worked as a politician for the interest of the nation, both shall be scripted in golden letters in the pages of history," he told reporters here. "Natwar Singh ji was a fearless and courageous man, and he always put forth his thoughts fearlessly and openly whatever was in interest of the nation and the society..."



Priyanka concern at Bangladesh minority attacks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

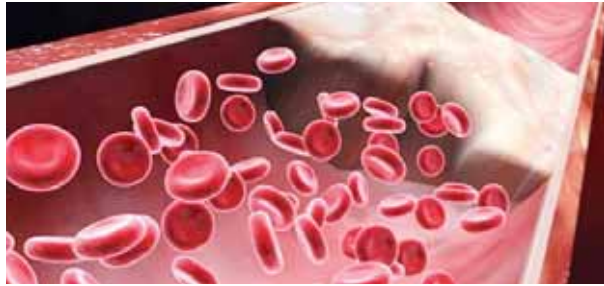
Congress Leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday said news of continuous attacks on minorities in neighbouring Bangladesh was disturbing and expressed hope that the Government there would ensure the safety of Hindus, Christians and Buddhists. The Congress general secretary said discrimination, violence and attacks on the basis of religion, caste, language or identity were unacceptable in any civilised society. "The news of continuous attacks on minorities in neighbouring Bangladesh is disturbing. Discrimination, violence and attacks on the basis of religion, caste, language or identity are unacceptable in any civilised society," Priyanka said in a post on X. She expressed hope that the situation in Bangladesh would soon become normal and the interim Government there would ensure the safety and respect for people following Hindu, Christian and Buddhist religions. Bangladesh's interim Leader Mohammad Yunus on Saturday condemned attacks on minority communities in the violence-hit nation, terming them as "heinous", and urged youngsters to protect all Hindu, Christian and Buddhist families from harm. A number of Hindu temples, households and businesses were vandalised, women assaulted and at least two Hindu Leaders affiliated with the Awami League party headed by Sheikh Hasina were killed in the violence in Bangladesh after she fled the country, according to community Leader s in Dhaka.

Indian researchers create xerogel for blood clot relief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Indian researchers have developed a porous composite xerogel dressing incorporating Silica Nanoparticles and calcium, that can help blood clot rapidly and provide relief from uncontrolled hemorrhage. The composite showed significant improvement in rate of blood clotting in comparison to commercial dressing, said scientists from Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) Pune, an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology (DST) under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology. Uncontrolled hemorrhage is one of the leading causes of traumatic death resulting from accidents or injuries and dur-

ing military or surgical operations. More than 40 per cent of trauma deaths are due to severe loss of blood. Gauze, a commonly used first aid material or the natural defences of the human body operating through reduction in blood flow to the injury site, platelet plug formation by fibrin activation and activation of blood clotting pathways are inadequate to halt severe hemorrhage. Therefore, improved hemostatic materials are urgently required to reduce blood losses. The scientists said that the highly porous spongy xerogel hemostatic dressing supplemented with substances bind to a receptor inside a cell (agonists) like silica nanoparticles (SiNPs) and calcium. They studied composite material and



found that it increased the blood clotting index by 13-fold in comparison to commercial dressing clotting capacity. The well-characterised xerogel showed presence of multiple pores of around 30 µm size that contributed to the high absorbance capacity of the dressing. The supplements improved the clotting capacity and resulted in quick absorbance of blood.

"Platelets are an important component of blood and contribute to the blood clotting process. Several factors like change in platelet shape, secretion of calcium, and activation of receptors on platelet surface play a role in the intricate pathway of blood clotting. The xerogel hemostatic dressing showed enhanced platelet aggregation due to the development of

well-formed pseudopodia in the activated platelets resulting in agglutination which play a major role in the clotting process. In addition, the composite enhanced calcium release, and its extrusion," said the authors Gokul Patil, Rutuja Pawar, and Vandana Ghormade from the institute. Furthermore, a significant increase of the active form of the protease activated receptor gene (PAR1 gene- present in the platelet membranes facilitates thrombin signaling) was noted in human platelets. Platelet calcium release and upregulation of PAR1 on the platelet surface are critical for platelet shape change and aggregation. The study is published in the Journal Applied Polymer Science.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Capital of monsoon misery

Thee national capital grapples with waterlogging and a host of issues that accompany the rains

T S Eliot wrote, "April is the cruellest month..." in his famous poem *The Waste Land*. He was, of course, speaking of a different context and place, but one might wonder if he would have felt the same had he experienced Delhi in August. This year has brought a good monsoon, but for Delhiites, heavy downpours rarely bring good news. They must brace themselves for waterlogging, traffic snarls, a host of diseases, unclean water, power failures, and what have you. Streets turned into rivers, traffic reached a standstill, and daily life was thrown into disarray. The scene is all too familiar, a recurring nightmare that haunts the city every monsoon. But why does Delhi, with its sprawling infrastructure and resources, continue to grapple with such chaos year after year? More importantly, what can be done to mitigate this annual misery? Heavy rainfall over the past 24 hours has left several key areas in Delhi, including Connaught Place, Minto Road, and the Ring Road, severely waterlogged. Commuters faced long hours in traffic jams, and pedestrians struggled to navigate the flooded streets. The drainage system, overwhelmed by the sheer volume of water, failed to cope, leading to a cascading series of problems: halted public transport and power outages.



The residents of low-lying areas are the worst hit, with water entering homes and causing significant damage to property and belongings. Unfortunately, it's an annual ritual: heavy monsoon showers overwhelm the infrastructure, bringing the city to a standstill. The blame game ensues, followed by knee-jerk responses and funds allocated for improvements. Yet, by the next year, those efforts are washed away, leaving the city again

at the mercy of the weather gods. It is not rocket science to find the root cause of the problem and even fix it. Surely, the authorities would know that but the execution plan is missing. Despite being a metropolitan hub, Delhi's drainage system is outdated and poorly maintained. Besides, rapid and often haphazard urban development has led to the encroachment of natural water bodies and green spaces. These areas, which once absorbed excess rainwater, have been replaced by concrete structures, exacerbating the problem of water runoff. There is an urgent need to remove those encroachments and upgrade the drainage system. But unfortunately, urban planning in Delhi often happens in silos, with little coordination between different departments. This lack of an integrated approach has led to a situation where roads are built without adequate drainage. Delhi needs a multifaceted approach that addresses both the immediate challenges and long-term vulnerabilities: Utilising smart city technologies, such as real-time monitoring of drainage systems and predictive weather modelling, can help in better preparedness and response to heavy rains. While heavy rains are a natural phenomenon, the resulting waterlogging and disruption are largely man-made problems. To tackle this issue, concrete measures and decisive actions must be taken immediately.

PICTALK



Devotees carry a Lord Ganesh idol for the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Mumbai

Progress depends on retentiveness

Today, as political discord echoes through our democracy, I find myself reflecting on those dark days of Emergency and the enduring wounds inflicted on our nation's soul



J S RAJPUT

It was only in 1956 that I got some idea of how the Constitution of India was framed, and who were the major personalities that constituted the historic Constituent Assembly. The teacher who introduced me to it was a great admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and adored Pandit Nehru and Neta Ji Subhash Chandra Bose. The library had a copy of the constitution of India having the signatures of all of the members of the Constituent Assembly and also images representing Indian culture and heritage. We learnt the Preamble by heart. This teacher-created interest amongst students interested in dramatics, and after hectic preparation of a couple of weeks, a mock Constituent Assembly was enacted in the presence of a huge gathering.

This young teacher was also confident that the ancient Indian culture now be resurrected, and the entire world would know how advanced Indians were in 'thought and deed'. In 1975, I read the constitution in all seriousness, and witnessed how it was being mercilessly mutilated! After nearly five decades, as one peruses the print and electronic media, one witnesses a slugfest between the union government and the opposition, it makes one reflect on the emergency days, and one just can't avoid reflecting on the 18 months of democratic darkness that shattered the lives of millions of the people. It ruined the credibility of Indian democracy internationally. No apology could erase the wound inflicted on the constitution and the humiliation of the stalwarts who created the constitution of India. Was it not a shameful humiliation inflicted on Baba Sahib Bhim Rao Ambedkar? He had repeatedly opposed the inclusion of the term 'secular in the Preamble of the Constitution. How could any active and alert citizen forget the fact that the 44th Constitution Amendment Act was passed by a Parliament that was in its arbitrarily-extended sixth year? Practically all of the opposition stalwarts were in jail! Today, any voice that says 'I want my



original Preamble back' should be deciphered in the spirit it deserves to be comprehended in its objectivity. It could certainly be a great tribute to Dr Baba Sahib Ambedkar! This correction would offer a healing touch to persons like me who had witnessed the emergency and also - to a great extent - to those who had suffered damages of an irreversible nature. Let me narrate a personal experience. One senior academic was appointed head of a regional institute in Bhopal in December 1974. In August 1975, he was asked to report to his central office New Delhi next day 'for consultations'. I was number two in the institutional hierarchy and had become a full Professor just a year back in August 1974. I assisted him in preparing certain project proposals he would carry that evening for obtaining sanction from New Delhi. The next morning, I received a 'lightening call' to take over as Head of the institution immediately, as the incumbent stood removed from his position. It was shocking, and I was just not ready to comply. I was advised by all my well-wishers including those from senior bureaucracy and police services to quietly 'take over', without in any way indicating unwillingness.



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On return, the summarily sacked academic described the ordeal he suffered. As he was to reach the designated office, a peon was waiting with a letter that he swiftly handed over, obtained his signatures on the peon book, and vanished! I got instructions to ensure that no one even meets him! I insisted that the head of an academic institution should not be humiliated before his students. A lady bureaucrat from the New Delhi office reposed faith in me, but told me that only I, and I alone, would be responsible for any mishap that may occur, and its consequences. The academic who was humiliated and removed never got justice during his remaining lifetime of around two decades. Those who would not like even a mention of emergency could recall how strongly India was proud of the persona of that great intellectual and jurist Nani Palakivala. He had refused the brief from Mrs Indira Gandhi and fought for the constitution in draconian conditions. His reflections on emergency shall remain ever-relevant: "No period in the history of our republic is of more educational value than 1975 to 1977. George Santayana said, 'Progress far from consisting

in change, depends on retentiveness... Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. If our basic freedoms are to survive, it is of vital importance that we remember the happenings during emergency when the freedoms were suspended'. Is it necessary to 'fight facts' to negate the truth? What we witness all around us in the world of the current-day average politicians was envisioned by Sri Aurobindo in his lifetime: "The modern politician in my part of the world does not represent the soul of a people or its aspirations. What he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception that is about him and these he represents well enough as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionalty, timidity and pretence". All of these attributes have grown up in gigantic proportions in our times. The only way out is the sincere acceptance of diversity of every imaginable hue, and revert back to the great dialogical tradition. The adults and elders must realize what the young of India are getting from them in the years of their growing up! (Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity; views are personal)

Revamping the English literature curriculum

Once a cornerstone of intellectual pursuit, English literature studies are now facing a troubling decline in popularity among students in India

Once a most demanding course among youngsters, English literature studies has seen a significant decline in the past decade. In many colleges in India seats of B.Literature remain vacant despite its huge potential in this digital age. The policymakers and academicians should brainstorm the reasons and come out with concrete plans to overcome this dilemma. In India, many students see STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) as a subject of intellect and opportunities, compared to humanities. Emerging fields like data science, artificial intelligence, and digital marketing are gaining popularity among students due to their perceived relevance and lucrative opportunities. This trend reduces the appeal of traditional literary studies. The perception that a degree in English offers limited career options and lower earning potential can deter students from pursuing it. This view is compounded by a lack of clear and well-promoted career pathways specifically tied to English studies. Many



English literature programs may have curricula that have not been updated to reflect contemporary literary trends and regional and global issues. The stress on Shakespearean and other literary works doesn't get connected to present-day society. Shakespearean plays and other classical works were written in very different historical and cultural contexts. The social norms, political structures, and everyday concerns of ancient times may seem foreign to modern readers. This historical gap can make it hard for students to see how the themes and issues of these works relate to their own lives. A focus on classic literature without integrating contemporary and diverse voices may alienate students who are more interested in

modern and global literary trends. The rise of digital media and alternative forms of entertainment, such as social media, video games, and streaming platforms, has altered reading habits. Students may be less inclined to engage with traditional literature due to these competing interests. Though science education reformations forms part of national policies, literature education rarely finds its place in national policies, though NEP stresses the need to undertake literary studies. To make literature more relatable and engaging, integrate a diverse range of texts. Include contemporary works from different cultures, genres, and perspectives. For instance, introducing novels, short stories, and poetry from emerging voices around the world, alongside regional literature, can provide students with a broader view of the literary landscape. Academicians should link literature with other fields such as history, psychology, sociology, and environmental studies. For instance, studying dystopian novels alongside discussions of climate sci-

ence and environmental issues can provide students with a deeper understanding of both the literature and the real-world issues it reflects. Thrust should be given to include components that prepare students for the job market, such as resume writing, interview skills, and networking opportunities. Connecting literature studies with science and other relevant fields will enhance career prospects. In the age of bots, literature students should even be taught the fundamentals of computer programming. Revitalising the literary syllabus necessitates a deliberate strategy that incorporates current issues, embraces digital and multimedia resources, fosters interdisciplinary linkages, and emphasises practical skills. Educational institutions can establish a literary program that is relevant and exciting for 21st-century students by using a variety of texts, utilising technology, and regularly updating the curriculum. (The writer is the Academic affairs, GCU and adjunct faculty at NIAS, Bengaluru; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT REMEMBERED

Madam — Mahatma Gandhi's relentless efforts were instrumental in India's journey to independence. From the 1930 Dandi March to the 1942 Quit India Movement, Gandhi's leadership was pivotal in challenging British rule. On August 9, 1942, India embarked on a crucial new phase in its fight for freedom—a mass uprising against colonial rule that heralded the imminent end of the British Empire in India. Although Gandhi and the Congress leadership were imprisoned on August 8, the call to "Quit India" ignited a nationwide movement. With the leaders behind bars, the people took to the streets, driven by Gandhi's urgent call to action. Their resolve and sacrifice laid the groundwork for India's eventual independence, a testament to their undying commitment to freedom and self-determination.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Mumbai

PM VISIT REASSURES WAYANAD

Madam— On Saturday, the Prime Minister visited Wayanad, a region recently struck by an unprecedented disaster that claimed around 400 lives and forced thousands into relief camps. His visit uplifted the spirits of the disillusioned and distressed and fostered the hopes. Their eyes were filled with tears emotionally as they recounted their ordeals to him. The visit also expedited the rehabilitation process, with authorities working tirelessly to restore normalcy, as the Prime Minister promised to provide all possible assistance. This gesture has won the hearts of the people, and such initiatives are now expected in the future. In the aftermath of the Prime Minister's visit, the people of Wayanad find themselves not only comforted by his empathy but also reassured by his commitment to their recovery. The renewed hope in their eyes speaks to the power of genuine leadership in times of crisis. As the region begins to rebuild, the memory of this visit will linger, a reminder that in the face of

Bangladesh on boil



This is in response to the news article, "Bangladesh: Uncertainty and Chaos Grip the Nation" (August 10). The recent vio-

lence in Bangladesh has tragically impacted hundreds of Hindus. The growing relationship between Bangladesh and India under Sheikh Hasina's leadership has become intolerable to Islamic fundamentalists in the region. Targeting Hindus as part of the anti-national movement in Bangladesh could backfire on the newly elected interim government led by Mohammad Yunus. This unrest is likely to have negative repercussions on the yarn trade between India and Bangladesh. Unfortunately, international human rights organizations have remained silent in the face of these atrocities against minorities. It is imperative to take immediate action to stop the violence against Hindus in Bangladesh. The call for Hindu unity is resonating strongly both within the country and abroad.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

adversity, they are not alone.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

RAHUL GANDHI'S EVOLUTION

Madam — Apropos the article, "The Evolution of Rahul Gandhi," published on August 8, this is my response. Rahul Gandhi, once mocked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his supporters as "Pappu" and an "entitled dynast," staged a remarkable comeback in the 2024 general elections. He became the central figure of an alliance that successfully penetrated BJP strongholds, particularly in Uttar Pradesh. As the heir to India's renowned Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty, Rahul Gandhi led two nationwide marches against what he termed Modi's politics of hate and fear, revitalizing his Congress party and redefining his own public image. Rahul Gandhi has repeatedly emphasized that his fight against Modi's BJP is not merely about seizing power but about challenging the party's and the RSS's "Hindu-first" ideology, which contradicts India's secular principles as outlined in

the Constitution. The results of the last general election significantly boosted Rahul Gandhi's morale, prompting people to view him more positively and take him seriously as a leader. They have come to recognize him as a leader focused on real-life issues—such as unemployment, women's safety, the violence in Manipur, NEET exam paper leaks, rising prices of gas cylinders, petrol, and diesel, and caste-related issues. Most importantly, he is seen as the one who will uphold the spirit of secularism in the nation. These factors have collectively reshaped public perception of Rahul Gandhi. Now, having emerged stronger and as the Leader of the Opposition with substantial support from Opposition MPs in Parliament, Rahul Gandhi, known for his oratory skills, is poised to present significant challenges to Mr. Modi and his party in the days ahead on various issues facing the country.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

CELEBRATING WORLD LEFT-HANDERS DAY

This day honours the 13 percent who navigate a world designed for the right-handed



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

The 13th of August is commemorated as World Left-Handers Day, a day dedicated to the 13% of the world's population who make do in a world that wasn't meant for them. To many of us, left-handedness is just a fascinating statistic, something we mention in passing or wonder at during a discussion. However, for those of us who lean left, this is a quiet, everyday rebellion against a world that expects us to fit in when we don't quite belong. From the moment we grip our first crayon, left-handers are thrust into a world where ease can be transformed into hand-to-hand combat.

Scissors bite painfully; pens spill over the paper; spiral notebooks are a tangle of discomfort. It's completely out of tune, like music played in a different key. However, this dissonance does not weaken us, but rather it strengthens us. In a world designed for right-handers, left-handers learn to improvise, create, and, eventually, prosper. This kind of adaptability lends itself to creativity, which is sometimes cited as a virtue among lefties. To us, however, creativity is more than just an artistic talent; it is a survival ability. Being left-handed means seeing the world from a different perspective and approaching difficulties with a different mindset.

Our brains are wired to think beyond the box because, honestly, the box was never meant for us in the first place. It is no surprise that left-handers such as Leonardo da Vinci, Nikola Tesla, and Marie Curie are among history's most recognised thinkers. They did not think differently; they saw differently, creating visions that changed our per-



ception of what is possible. However, it is not only about inventiveness. Being left-handed entails a quiet fortitude, borne of years of adjusting to a world that frequently forgets to include you. Each southpaw has a story to tell: awkward contortions in class, struggles with right-handed instruments, and ink-stained palms. However, these events do not diminish us; rather, they define us. They teach us how to be resourceful, to face challenges with fortitude, and to see beauty in the unexpected. Being rare has a mystical quality about it.

Being left-handed means standing out in a crowd, but more significantly, in life. It represents the fact that normalcy can be overvalued while the difference is powerful.

The left-handed intellect does not only accomplish what most others avoid; it frequently forges a new path where none previously existed. In art, science, sports, or leadership, a left-hander will do things differently, deviate from the norm, and transform the ordinary into remarkable. As we commemorate World Left-Handers Day, let us remember that being left-handed is much more than a biological quirk; it is a way of life, a sign of creativity, perseverance, and inventiveness that stems from a worldview that sees things not as they are, but as they could be.

Left-handers, living in a right-handed society, remind us that magic sometimes happens in the opposite direction. Here's to the lefties—the visionaries who prove that being different is not only acceptable but also remarkable. In celebrating World Left-Handers Day, we honor more than just a minority group—we recognize a testament to human adaptability and creativity. Left-handers remind us that thriving often means forging our own path, embracing differences, and finding strength in what sets us apart.

As we acknowledge the challenges lefties face, we also celebrate the unique perspective they bring to the world. Here's to the left-handers, whose quiet resilience and innovative spirit show us that being different isn't just okay—it's extraordinary.

(The writer is a freelance writer; views are personal)

Can Muhammad Yunus micro manage Bangladesh



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

As the world watches, the implications of this power shift resonate far beyond Dhaka's borders; the once peaceful country has plunged into anarchy

South Asia's youngest nation has been thrust into a new era following a four-day power vacuum, decisively crossing a point of no return. A new messiah has emerged to rule over 171 million people, arriving from Paris in a full-circle moment. Had Hasina remained in power, he would have been sentenced to life for corruption on the very day Hasina fled the country she had ruled for over 15 years. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has assumed the role of head of the interim government. A 14-member interim government including a Hindu psychiatrist and a Buddhist human rights activist led by Prof. Yunus has taken charge.

Alarming, most of these members are heads of Western-funded NGOs, exposing the true manipulators behind the scenes. It was a nightmare for them to run their NGOs during Hasina's tenure, with many facing harassment, intimidation, and even imprisonment. Now, they have set their yardstick. Nobel laureate Prof. Yunus, who has received the Congressional Gold Medal and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honours in the United States, illustrates the adage that, as Americans say, there's no such thing as a free lunch. The coming months will reveal how Dhaka's political shifts will reverberate across borders. Nearly 300 people have been killed in the post-Hasina period, with rampant looting, attacks on minorities, and intimidation of state institutions. Images show disturbing violence, including the burning of Hindu temples. The riots go beyond protests against the Awami League, revealing deeper conflicts. Simultaneously, one should not overlook the deep-rooted anti-India sentiments in Bangladesh and its diaspora, exacerbated by the India Out campaign. Unfortunately, Delhi policymakers may have underestimated this sentiment and placed undue trust in Hasina.

It was a bloodbath, and the incidents that unfolded suggest it was a well-planned political scheme, executed promptly to overthrow Hasina—a time-tested leader, though surrounded by controversies. The humiliating destruction of Bangabandhu's statue starkly echoes the fall of Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, known as Bangabandhu, laid the foundation of Bangladesh with his political ideology and dedication during the struggle for independence. Despite overcoming initial challenges, fear has once again taken hold in the country. The chaotic situation exemplifies a state of total anarchy. This is not a revolution; revolutions are meant to improve the lives of people, not to indulge in bloodlust against unarmed citizens with opposing political viewpoints or religious beliefs. However, given the nation's violent history even before its inception, it seems to be passing through yet another despicable period.

Is this merely a student uprising, or is someone manipulating them behind the scenes to exploit the situation? When the political intelligentsia abstains from protests, reducing them to mere emotional outbursts, it fosters an environment ripe for the creation of new, equally monstrous situations. This cycle will inevitably doom us to repeat the same failures. The harrowing video of an unemployed youth wearing a black t-shirt being shot by a policeman only deepened the unrest. Hasina bears blood on her hands; whether direct-



DESPITE OVERCOMING INITIAL CHALLENGES, FEAR HAS ONCE AGAIN TAKEN HOLD IN THE COUNTRY. THE CHAOTIC SITUATION EXEMPLIFIES A STATE OF TOTAL ANARCHY. THIS IS NOT A REVOLUTION; REVOLUTIONS ARE MEANT TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE, NOT TO INDULGE IN BLOODLUST AGAINST UNARMED CITIZENS

ly or through those who ordered lethal force against protesters, accountability is imperative. Thanks to India, Hasina narrowly escaped a fate akin to Muammar Gaddafi's. In the January elections, she set a trap with her abuse of power and legislative misogyny, even denying medical treatment to opponents. Her opponents seized on the quota issue as the tipping point. Although she addressed it, she failed to recognise it was merely a façade. Her inability to understand that 15 years is too long for any democracy to be managed alone highlights a grim historical lesson. However, history teaches us a valuable lesson: despite Ferdinand Marcos' ousting, his family's influence persisted, and in 2021, his son made a notable comeback in the Philippines. That's the nature of politics. Consequently, whoever comes to power next will face a challenging situation. The manipulations behind these shocking events, which unfolded within a month while the Prime Minister was in China, may be revealed in the future, much like how America tried to obscure the genocide in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) during the early 60s, with Henry Kissinger maintaining a political alliance with General Yahya Khan of Pakistan as a secret route to engage with China. Commenting on the situation, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, reflecting his country's global ambitions, urged the Bangladeshi people to ensure that 'any decisions made by the interim government need to respect democratic principles, uphold the rule of law, and reflect the will of the people.' This statement came shortly after the arrival of F-16 fighter jets in Ukraine, continued arms supplies to Israel, and the brutal killing of

Black woman Sonya Massey by law enforcement in her own home—just a few examples that highlight the contradictions in America's respect for the rule of law and international norms. Ironically, many have started comparing the situation in Bangladesh with Sri Lanka. However, there are significant differences between the unprecedented exit of the Bangladeshi Prime Minister this week and the relinquishment of power by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka two years ago. One key factor was India's attitude, which was drastically different in these cases. Reliable sources with knowledge of the events in Sri Lanka have asserted that India believed Gotabaya Rajapaksa should not resign but should stay in power. This stance resulted in no airlift facilities being provided for a safe exit, forcing the then-President to flee to the Maldives in an over-50-year-old Air Force plane. In contrast, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh received swift support from India. Second, Gotabaya Rajapaksa came to power through free and fair elections with a significant majority, whereas Sheikh Hasina was re-elected after a series of repressions against opposition political parties. Her handling of the elections reflected growing public displeasure. Winning over regional powers and maintaining their support certainly made her powerful and influential. Her development projects offered to India, China, Russia, and Japan highlighted bold decisions in her foreign policy. She effectively balanced both India and China, showcasing her capability more effectively than any other South Asian leader in contemporary political history. However, a com-

mon trait between these two leaders is their stance on China. Despite unprecedented pressure from the West, both leaders continued to work harmoniously with China. For instance, when Mike Pompeo, then Secretary of State and former CIA Director, criticised China during his visit to Colombo, President Rajapaksa directly told him that "the opinion held by America against China in Sri Lanka is factually wrong." Since then, Rajapaksa's politics began to crumble, pointing to the decisions he made and the protests that followed. Similarly, after successfully concluding a visit to India right after Modi's re-election, Hasina flew to China to initiate more Chinese-funded development projects. By then, her fate at home was already sealed. In this context, Elon Musk's recent comment on Venezuela is apt: 'We will coup whoever we want! Deal with it.' Amidst the social media spectacle dominated by profit-driven motives and emotionally manipulative politics, the unemployed youth who ignited change in Bangladesh may soon face this harsh reality. Western ambitions in unstable countries often focus on destruction and manipulation through proxies rather than genuine improvements in livelihoods. The new interim government may well understand this realpolitik. With Hasina's downfall, the direction of the interim government's foreign policy and its approach towards the Global South, including BRICS, remains uncertain. While it may be premature to fully assess this interim arrangement, the situation poses a significant challenge for India, China, and Asia as a whole. (The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are personal)

Pushpanjali Medicon 2024: Top doctors share insights on health and wellness

This unique medical conference covered topics ranging from liver health to the often-overlooked connection between sex and wellness

It's not every day that you see India's top medical professionals gathering under one roof to discuss various health conditions and offer advice on leading a healthy life. This rare opportunity drew people of all ages in large numbers to the capital, eager to hear the insights and wisdom of these renowned doctors.



VIVEK SHUKLA

This significant event was made possible through the tireless efforts of Dr. Vinay Aggarwal, the Past National President of the Indian Medical Association, and his dedicated team, who organized the Pushpanjali Medicon 2024 conference. The conference was meticulously planned to cover a wide range of topics, including Pregnancy-Related

Acute Kidney Injury, Headache Management, the Mystery of Dizziness, Suicide Prevention, Fatty Liver, and issues of reproductive health. The event saw the participation of leading doctors from the capital and various states such as Mumbai, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and beyond. One of the most anticipated sessions was led by Dr. Shiv

Kumar Sarin, a distinguished clinician and gastroenterologist, who captivated the audience with his talk on maintaining liver health. Dr. Sarin emphasised the liver's critical role as the controller and fulcrum of our metabolic well-being, comparing it to a chartered accountant that keeps a meticulous record of our body's intake and expenditure. He highlighted how any surplus, whether from genetic factors or excessive calorie consumption, can lead to fatty liver disease. This condition forces the pancreas to produce more insulin, which can eventually result in diabetes. Moreover, the excess fat in the liver doesn't just stay there; it circulates through-

out the body, potentially leading to complications such as gallstones. Another notable speaker, Dr. Rajeev Sood, the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences and former Dean of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and PGIMER in Delhi, shared his expertise on managing prostate health. His session provided valuable insights into a topic that is often overlooked but crucial for men's health, particularly as they age. One of the most engaging sessions was on the topic "Sex Has No Expiry Date," delivered by Dr. Deepak Juman, a Mumbai-based expert in sexual health. Dr. Juman spoke with remarkable eloquence on a subject



that is rarely discussed openly, especially in such forums. He stressed the undeniable link between sex and overall health, arguing that sexual activity is one of the

most vital biological functions, essential for a fulfilling life. Addressing a packed audience, Dr. Juman asserted that sexual pleasure is both a personal business

and a fundamental right, emphasizing that all sexual dysfunctions can be managed, allowing individuals of all ages to lead a sexually satisfying life. The success of this unique health conference, where top doctors interacted with both medical professionals and the general public, is indeed a great achievement. The importance of conferences like Pushpanjali Medicon 2024 cannot be overstated. Similar events must be held across the country. Dr. Aggarwal argues that such gatherings are vital for fostering closer ties between doctors, patients, and medical professionals. Healthcare conferences like Pushpanjali Medicon are

more than just formal events; they are epicenters of innovation and collaboration within the medical field. These gatherings offer invaluable networking opportunities with industry peers, critical for both personal and professional growth. They also provide continuing Medical Education (CME) sessions that are essential for staying updated with the latest advancements in healthcare. Beyond the educational value, these conferences are inspiring and refreshing, offering a chance to recharge while gaining new insights and connections. (The writer is an author and a columnist; views are personal)

High alert in J&K ahead of I-Day celebrations

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the run-up to the 78th Independence Day celebrations, the entire security grid in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has now been kept in a state of high alert to ensure peaceful and incident-free celebrations.

Amid heightened tensions and ongoing counter-terrorist operations in the South Kashmir district of Anantnag, the foot soldiers of the Indian army have been maintaining a tight vigil along the 750 Km-long line of control to foil any fresh infiltration bid by the Border Action Team of the Pakistan army and heavily armed terrorists.

On July 27, one soldier of the Indian army made a supreme sacrifice while four others received injuries in the BAT attack along the line of control in the Kamakari sector of Machhal in the North Kashmir district of Kupwara.

Meanwhile, preparations are being made across different district headquarters to mark the special celebrations. The entire region is witnessing large-scale participation in the nationwide 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign.

In Srinagar Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday joined thousands of citizens from all walks of life in



a walkathon from the International Convention Centre to the Botanical Garden to celebrate the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Utsav.

The Lt Governor said, "Har Ghar Tiranga campaign in J&K has grown to be a people's movement".

"Bring home the National Flag and hoist it with pride and honour. Be a part of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign," the Lt Governor told the citizens. On the occasion, the Lt Governor released a Monograph dedicated to the martyrs and bravehearts of Jammu Kashmir and launched the Tiranga signature campaign.

Since January 1, 2024 15 terror attacks have taken place across six districts of the otherwise peaceful Jammu region,

which have resulted in the deaths of 28 people, including 14 security personnel, a village defence guard, and five terrorists.

To contain the situation, the Union government has already deployed additional troops across the Jammu region to flush out the foreign terrorists from their safe hideouts carved inside the forested areas of Rajouri, Poonch, Reasi, Udhampur, Doda, Kishtwar and Kathua.

Two battalions of the Assam Rifles have also been inducted in the Machhedri area of Kathua and other upper reaches. Three thousand additional army troops and 2000 BSF men have been deployed across the region to plug the gaps and launch anti-terrorist operations across different sectors.

Kochi bids tearful adieu to last surviving Jew

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Queenie Hallegua, the last surviving woman member of Kochi's Jewish community is no more. Eighty nine-year old Hallegua, whom people addressed as Queen Hallegua breathed her last early Sunday morning leaving her friends and acquaintances in deep sorrow. She was the daughter of business baron S Koder, who was instrumental in bringing the super market culture to Kerala.

With the demise of Queenie, Kochi is left with just one Jew, Keith Hallegua, her 65 year old relation. The significance of being Queenie and a Jew could be understood from the fact that there were thousands of Jews in the Queen of Arabian Sea before the formation of the State of Israel. Most of them left Kochi and suburban regions for the Promised Land.

Queenie's father S Koder was part and parcel of Kochi as he was the one who launched a private power supply company in the metropolis much before other politicians spoke of bringing private capital in this sector. The power distribution network named Kochin electric Company was taken over by the State Electricity Board and since then the people understood



the meaning of load shedding and power cut.

The network of super markets S Koder & Co at Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi were launched by Koder and the people in the State got their first global shopping experience through these outlets.

There was a street named Jew Street in Kochi which was the hub of business activities. The Jews were also instrumental in ushering in etiquette, a culture alien to the Malayalis even today. For the Jews, Kerala and India were homes away from home and they always waxed eloquence on this State for the kindness and hospitality with which their ancestors were welcomed to the State by then

Maharaja of Kochi. Koder Buildings at Kochi built by her father S Koder is a leading tourist attraction in Kochi along with the elegant synagogue. Samuel Hallegua, her husband predeceased her and they are survived by Fiona and David. The last rites were performed as per Jewish tradition and her mortal remains were interred at the Jewish cemetery at Mattancherry. According to Jewish culture, there is a requirement of ten male members for such ceremonies, and the funeral was held following the tradition. Two Jews, who were in Fort Kochi as tourists, also took part in the funeral. Kochi has lost a loving and dedicated philanthropist.

Rain leads to waterlogging, traffic congestion in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A rain lashed the national capital on Monday morning, waterlogging and traffic congestion was witnessed by officer goers in different parts of the city on their way to their workplace.

The India Meteorological Department said that a 'yellow' warning was also issued after parts of Delhi recorded rainfall on Monday. Central, south, southwest and east Delhi recorded rainfall during the morning, it added.

The met department also said that the city's Primary weather station Safdarjung recorded 30 mm of rainfall till 8:30 am in the last 24 hours. Other weather stations including Najafgarh recorded 28.5 mm rain, Ayanagar 53.8 mm, Delhi University six mm, Lodi road 34.4 mm, Narela 14.5 mm, Palam 46 mm, Rajdwar seven mm, Pitampura 10 mm, Pusa 8.5 mm and Mayur Vihar's Salwan public school 59 mm. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) received 32 complaints regarding waterlogging and tree falling between 6 am to 6 pm. A total of 16 calls regarding waterlogging including Ajmeri Gate, Vijay Naga, Rohini, Nangloi, Prem Nagar, Uttam Nagar, Mayapuri, Vishwakarma



Ranjan Dlimri

Nagar, Mundka, Greater Kailash, Najafgarh, and Azad Market road. A total of 16 complaints were regarding tree falling from different parts of the city including Tughlakabad, Rohini, Pitampura, Sultanpuri, Jasola, Okhla Industrial Estate, Lodi Colony and Dwarka.

The Delhi Traffic Police advised commuters about traffic diversions due to waterlogging in different areas in a series of post on X. "Traffic is affected on Anuvrat Marg in both the carriageways due to water logging near Qutub Minar Metro Station. Commuters are advised to avoid the stretch and plan their journey accordingly," it stated. The maximum temperature was recorded at 31.6 degrees Celsius, three notches below the normal. Delhi's minimum temperature settled at 24.8 degrees Celsius while the relative humidity at 8:30 am was recorded at 100 per cent.

Meeting convened on flood preparedness by CEO, GMDA

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

A Sreenivas, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) on Monday convened an inter-department meeting in the GMDA office to deliberate on a broad and long-term comprehensive development plan for enhanced flood preparedness during the monsoon season. "GMDA has analysed satellite data collated over a period of five years to identify and map the low lying and potential waterlogging prone areas under Gurugram Manesar

Urban Complex area. Out of the 79 vulnerable spots falling along GMDA master roads in 2020, remedial measures and laying of adequate infrastructure have been taken by the Authority on 63 such locations to provide relief during heavy rainfall.

We will also identify additional hotspots where waterlogging has been reported this year which will be shared with the respective departments. A Committee will be formed to chart a cohesive and long-term comprehensive plan to equip the city with adequate and efficient drainage system and to mitigate urban flooding," said CEO GMDA.

Work to make India a developed nation: Mandaviya to youth

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Union Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday urged youth to work with commitment and dedication to become successful and make India a developed nation by 2047.

Addressing the 'Impact With Youth Conclave 2024' here on International Youth Day, the minister said the 'Mera Yuva Bharat - 'MY Bharat' portal launched by the Centre will become a single window platform for the youth.

This year's International Youth Day, themed 'From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development,' emphasises the importance of digitalisation and the pivotal role young people play in this

transformation.

"This is a country with a population of 140 crore. It is our collective responsibility to make India a developed nation. In such a situation, youth have a special responsibility," Mandaviya said.

He highlighted the significance of youth in realising the vision of a developed India by 2047, the 100th year of independence, and said the government will leave no stone unturned to ensure the financial security of the young generation.

The central government is making an effort to empower the youth of the country by creating opportunities for them, he said. "I found two to three points common in successful



people, which I adopted in my life. One common characteristic was commitment and dedication with which they worked. Commitment and dedication, along with hard work, and the fourth is goal...Set a goal.

Work with commitment and dedication to achieve the goal, and nothing can stop you from being successful," the minister said.

"Today, on International Youth Day, pledge to be successful for the country and yourselves. If you move ahead with this goal, you will become successful, and we will make India a developed nation when it celebrates the centenary year of its independence," he said.

The Union minister said around 1.5 crore people have registered themselves on 'MY Bharat', which will become a single window platform for the youth. "In the coming days, the MY Bharat portal will become a single-window platform for youth, helping them determine their future. It will

help them with career opportunities, enrolments and applications," Mandaviya told reporters later.

Users of MY Bharat will be able to connect themselves with national and international systems, he said. "Volunteers will visit 5,000 college campuses and offer a presentation regarding MY Bharat and how youth will benefit from the internship scheme and other initiatives announced in the Union Budget," he said.

Mandaviya said in the last two months, he interacted with 12-15 youth groups and consulted around 500 youngsters to seek their suggestions to make MY Bharat more robust. The Union minister urged youngsters to prioritise their

commitment to the nation alongside their careers.

UNICEF representative in India and co-chair of the UNICEF YuWaah board, Cynthia McCaffrey, stressed the importance of engaging youth in global action.

"International Youth Day is a reminder of the immense contributions young people make to their communities and the world," she said. "We are committed to improving young people's access to skilling, volunteering, innovation, entrepreneurship, and other economic opportunities through our deep and longstanding partnership with the Government of India and by harnessing youth potential through digital platforms such as YouthHub," she said.

If Centre decides to remove 50% cap on quota, Maha parties will support Modi: Sharad

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Monday lobbied the ball into the NDA government's court on the contentious reservations issue, by saying that if the Centre chose to remove the 50 per cent ceiling on reservations, all political parties in Maharashtra would support the Modi-led dispensation.

A day after pro-quota activists blocked his convoy in Solapur district in western Maharashtra and demanded to know his stand on Maratha reservations, Sharad Pawar asked chief minister Eknath Shinde to convene an all-party meeting to decide on the way forward to find solution to the vexed reservation issue



"The judiciary has put a 50 percent restriction on reservations in the country, but if there's a problem then all parties in the state should come together and insist the Centre remove it. The Centre has the power to remove the 50 per cent ceiling on reservations. If the Centre decides to increase the reservation cap beyond 50 per cent, we fully back such a decision," Pawar said.

SC orders Shambhu...

From Page 1 It said if both sides are able to resolve such modalities, they need not wait for any order of this court and implement the resolution immediately.

It was hearing the Haryana government's plea challenging the high court order asking it to remove within a week the barricades at the Shambhu border near Ambala where protesting farmers have been camping since February 13.

The Haryana government had set up barricades on the Ambala-New Delhi national highway in February after the 'Samyukta Kisan Morcha' (Non-Political) and 'Kisan Mazdoor Morcha' announced that farmers would march to Delhi in support of their demands, including legal guarantee of minimum support price (MSP) for their produce.

The bench posted the matter for resumed hearing on August 22 and said it will pass an order that day for setting up a multi-member committee which will talk to all the stakeholders and find a solution. "Now that we are intervening to an extent, which normally we don't do, we intend to constitute a committee which will go at the

site, hear them (farmers) and both the state governments. Take the views of all the stakeholders and then suggest a holistic view," it said.

The bench appreciated the initiative taken by both the Haryana and Punjab governments for suggesting the names of "totally apolitical" people for the proposed panel who have rendered "commendable services" in their respective fields.

During the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Haryana government, requested the bench to stay a direction of the Punjab and Haryana High Court by which it has ordered a judicial commission to probe the extent of force used by police during a clash between the protesting farmers and Haryana security personnel in February in which a farmer Shubhakaran Singh lost his life. Singh, 21, a native of Bathinda, was killed and several police personnel were injured in clashes at Khanauri on the Punjab-Haryana border on February 21.

The bench told Mehta that the panel is headed by a retired high court judge which would only increase the fairness and objectivity of the probe.

Docs strike work over...

From Page 1 At least ten Government hospitals in Delhi, including RML Hospital, VMMC, Safdarjung Hospital, and Lady Hardinge Medical College, among others, have halted elective services. In Maharashtra, the Maharashtra Association of Resident Doctors (BMC MARD) has announced a suspension of non-emergency medical services starting from Tuesday, August 13.

Protests have also spread to other cities, including Chandigarh, Bhubaneswar and Lucknow. Ram Naresh Yadav, President, RDA at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Odisha, said, "This horrifying incident underscores the severe deficiencies in security systems within our medical institutions. We demand an immediate, impartial, and transparent investigation. The safety of our doctors and staff must be prioritized."

Dr Alok Bhandari, DMA President said that "We call upon the NMC to urgently issue comprehensive guidelines aimed at ensuring safe and secure working conditions for all doctors across India. These guidelines must be implemented uniformly in all medical institutions to prevent further tragedies."

Tihar jail terms Kejriwal's letter to LG abuse... From Page 1 Lambasting the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi BJP said that since the Jail Superintendent's circular letter makes it clear that the Chief Minister cannot issue any governmental directives

from jail, it is evident that Gopal Rai's letter is unconstitutional, invalid, and Ms. Atishi cannot hoist the national flag. The Delhi government's annual Independence Day programme is held at Chhatrasal Stadium where the chief minister addresses the gathering. A prior attempt at conveying this request has not gone down well with the

authorities at Tihar Jail, where Kejriwal is currently lodged in connection with an alleged excise policy scam and wrote to the Lieutenant Governor, stating that Delhi minister Atishi would hoist the national flag in his place. The Lieutenant Governor's office, however, had denied receiving any communication from the chief minister. Responding to Kejriwal's

Seven killed in Bihar...

From Page 1 District Magistrate Alankrita Pandey confirmed the fatalities and injuries, stating that the stampede took place at the temple around 11.30 pm on Sunday. She said that security personnel at the temple acted quickly to bring the situation under control and keep the casualties low.

"Seven people, mostly kanwariyas, were killed and 16 others injured in a stampede at Baba Siddheswar Nath temple in Barabar Pahadi area of Jehanabad around 11.30 pm on Sunday. The deceased included six women", she told PTI. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed grief over the incident and announced an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each for the

next of kin the deceased. The Chief Minister also directed the district administration to ensure the best possible medical treatment for the injured.

"The CM has instructed that an ex gratia of Rs 4 lakh each be immediately provided to the next of kin of the deceased. Kumar has also directed the district administration to provide best possible treatment to the injured," a statement by the Chief Minister's Office said. The injured were taken to medical facilities in Mukundapur and nearby areas, with 10 of them discharged after first aid. Six others were undergoing treatment in hospitals till the filing of this report.

Explore...

From Page 1 He said that the VR Experience Centre can serve as a model for other regions and act as a catalyst for further technological innovations in the ecotourism industry, thereby solidifying Sikkim's position as a leader in sustainable nature-based tourism practices.

Sikkim's proposed VR-based Ecotourism Initiative aligns with various global projects in their goal to promote sustainable tourism and conservation. In fact, projects involving Virtual Reality (VR) are catching the attention worldwide as an ecotourism concept. For instance, Google Earth VR allows users to explore various natural wonders and remote locations around the world from their homes. This tool provides a way for people to

experience places they might not be able to visit physically, promoting global awareness and appreciation of different ecosystems. Similarly, the Virtual Reality Gorilla Project (Rwanda) is a great hit among the tourists as an immersive VR experience of trekking with mountain gorillas in the country. It aims to raise awareness about the conservation of these endangered species and the importance of protecting their natural habitats.

Yet another VR project on the "The Great Barrier Reef VR Experience" in Australia allows users to dive into the Great Barrier Reef, experiencing the underwater world and its biodiversity. The initiative aims to educate people about the threats to coral reefs and encourage conservation efforts.

Mamata hints to hand over...

From Page 1 She was allegedly raped and murdered. After initial flip-flop — during which hospital authorities as well as a section of the cops allegedly tried to pass it off as a suicide case — the police swung into action as the news spread and students went into a combative mode and arrested one Sanjoy Roy a civic police personnel.

However referring to the postmortem reports that suggested that the victim had her collar bone, pelvic bone

and fingers broken with other multiple injuries the medical fraternity erupted alleging cover-up by the Government. They said that some highly connected medical intern could be involved in the incident as Roy a lean man could not have done such crime alone. Referring to the incident Banerjee said "I have told the police that if there is any such doubt against anyone - the victim's friends and others - they should be questioned," adding, "Whoever is involved in the case should be punished immediately. We want this case to be fast-tracked because then the judicial process will be quick."

She said that the Government had removed the Head of the Department, Medical Superintendent, Principal and Vice Principal as also the Assistant Commissioner of Police attached to the Hospital. Notwithstanding her assurance, the junior doctors demanded Judicial Inquiry, comprehensive security procedure and arrest of the insiders involved in the dastardly felony. They alleged that a topmost official of the premium medical college was involved in all kind of criminal and corrupt activities including sale in the open market of bio-medical waste generated from the

hospital. This official was very close to the State's topmost political family which was why he was thrice transferred from the college but returned to his post as many times.

"All the medical colleges and other super-specialty hospitals of the State are controlled by syndicates ... these are illegal parking syndicates, bio-medical waste syndicates, black-marketing of hospital equipment and drugs, appointment rackets of the security staff ... all kinds of crime they are involved in and the money ... maybe tens of crores go to the highest echelon," said Opposition BJP leadership.

Terror module busted in...

From Page 1

The members of the module have confirmed that the three terrorists killed at the Gandoh encounter had taken the help of the module in hiding and traveling without being detected till they reached the upper reaches. According to a spokesman of the Jammu and Kashmir police, Mohd Lateef is a resident of Ambe Naal, Kathua. He is the kingpin of the entire network of Overground workers (OGWs) in the area. According to police Mohd Lateef acted as a guide and provided logistics etc for the groups of terrorists passing through the area. He engaged and directed others in their role as guide/food provider in the area. The police spokesman said eight other enemy agents have been identified as Akhter Ali S/o Late Rashid Wo Ambe Naal, Tehsil and District Kathua, Saddam S/o Late Baza R/o Bhaddu Billawar, District Kathua, Kushal S/o Late Baza R/o Bhaddu Billawar, District Kathua, Noorani S/o Late Meer R/o Juthana, P/S Rajbagh, District Kathua, Maqbool S/o Mohd Lateef/R/o Soffain, District Kathua, vii. Liaquat S/o Haji Lateef, Kasim Din S/o Shahin Din, Khadim @ Qazi S/o Baza Wo Kattal, Bhadu, Billawar.

Russians urged to flee Ukraine's cross-border attack

AP ■ KYIV

An official in the Kursk border region of Russia on Monday urged more residents to evacuate due to the "very tense situation" in the area, where Russian forces are still scrambling to respond to a surprise Ukrainian attack after almost a week of fierce fighting. Russia's emergency authorities say more than 76,000 people have fled their homes in areas of Kursk, where Ukrainian troops and armour poured across the border on August 6, reportedly driving as deep as 30 kilometers (19 miles) into Russia and sowing alarm. Ukrainian forces swiftly rolled into the town of Sudzha about 10 kilometers (6 miles) over the border after launching the attack. They reportedly still hold the western part of the town, which is the site of an important natural gas transit station. The Ukrainian operation is taking place under tight secrecy, and its goals — especially whether Kyiv's forces aim to hold territory or are staging a

raid — remain unclear. The stunning maneuver that caught the Kremlin's forces unawares counters Russia's unrelenting effort in recent months to punch through Ukrainian defences at selected points along the front line in eastern Ukraine. Russia has seen previous incursions into its territory during the nearly 2 1/2-year war, but the foray into the Kursk region marked the largest attack on its soil since World War II, embarrasing President Vladimir Putin and constituting a milestone in the hostilities. The advance has delivered a blow to Putin's efforts to pretend that life in Russia has largely remained unaffected by the war. State propaganda has tried to play down the attack, emphasizing the authorities' efforts to help residents of the region and seeking to distract attention from the military's failure to prepare for the attack and quickly repel it. Retired Gen. Andrei Gurulev, a member of the lower house of the Russian parliament, criticised the military for failing to



In this image from a surveillance camera provided by the Ukrainian Presidential Press Office, smoke rises from a cooling tower of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station in a Russia-controlled area in the Enerhodar, Zaporizhzhia region of Ukraine. AP/PTI

properly protect the border. He noted that while the military has set up minefields in the border region, it has failed to deploy enough troops to block enemy raids. "Regrettably, the group of forces protecting the border didn't have its own intelligence assets," he said on his messaging app channel. "No one likes

to see the truth in reports, everybody just wants to hear that all is good." Pasi Paroinen, an analyst with the Finland-based Black Bird Group open-source intelligence agency, which monitors the war, said the toughest phase of Ukraine's incursion is likely to begin now as Russian reserves enter the fray.

He said that "if the Ukrainians are going to advance any further from where they are now, it's going to be a tough battle, unlike the opening moments of this offensive." Ukraine's progress on Russian territory "is challenging the operational and strategic assumptions" of the Kremlin's forces, according to the

Institute for the Study of War. It could compel Russia to deploy more military assets to the long border between the two countries, the Washington-based think tank said in an assessment late Sunday. It described the Russian forces responding to the incursion as "hastily assembled and disparate". The International Atomic Energy Agency said a fire near Ukraine's Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant had "no impact" on the facility's safety. Radiation levels are unchanged at what is one of the 10 biggest nuclear plants in the world, the UN body said. Russia and Ukraine blamed each other for the blaze at a cooling tower outside the plant's perimeter, and the IAEA chief said late Sunday that the war continues to imperil the Zaporizhzhia facility. "These reckless attacks endanger nuclear safety at the plant and increase the risk of a nuclear accident. They must stop now," Rafael Mariano Grossi said.

Putin: Attempt to stop Moscow's offensive

AP ■ KYIV

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Monday that the Ukraine army's incursion into the Kursk region, which has caused more than 100,000 civilians to flee, is an attempt by Kyiv to stop Moscow's offensive in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region. Speaking at a meeting with top security and defense officials, Putin said the attack that began last Tuesday appeared to reflect Kyiv's attempt to gain a better negotiating position in possible future talks to end the war. He argued that Ukraine may have hoped to destabilize the domestic situation in Russia, adding that it has failed to achieve the goal, and claimed that the number of volunteers to join the Russian military has increased. He said the Russian military is driving on with its eastern Ukraine offensive. Russia has seen previous incursions into its territory during the nearly 2 1/2-year war, but

the foray into the Kursk region marked the largest attack on its soil since World War II, embarrasing President Vladimir Putin and constituting a milestone in the hostilities. It is also the first time the Ukrainian army has spearheaded an incursion rather than pro-Ukraine Russian fighters. The combat inside Russia rekindled questions about whether Ukraine was using weaponry supplied by NATO members. Some Western countries have balked at allowing Ukraine to use their military aid to hit Russian soil, fearing it would fuel an escalation that might drag Russia and NATO into war. Though it's not clear what weapons Ukraine is using across the border, Russian media widely reported that US Bradley and German Marder armoured infantry vehicles were there. It was not possible to independently verify that claim. Ukraine has already used US

Pentagon moves submarine to Middle East

AP ■ WASHINGTON

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has ordered a guided missile submarine to the Middle East and is telling the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group to sail more quickly to the area, the Defense Department said Sunday. The moves come as the US and other allies push for Israel and Hamas to achieve a cease-fire agreement that could help calm soaring tensions in the region following the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut. Officials have been on the lookout for retaliatory strikes by both Iran and Hezbollah for the killings, and the US has been beefing up its presence in the region. Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder, Pentagon press secretary, said in a statement that Austin spoke with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant earlier in the day, and reiterated America's commitment "to take every possible step to defend Israel and noted the strengthening of US military force posture and capabilities throughout the Middle

East in light of escalating regional tensions." The Lincoln, which has been in the Asia Pacific, had already been ordered to the region to replace the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier strike group, which is scheduled to begin heading home from the Middle East. Last week, Austin said the Lincoln would arrive in the Central Command area by the end of the month. It wasn't clear Sunday what his latest order means, or how much more quickly the Lincoln will steam to the Middle East. The carrier has F-35 fighter jets aboard, along with the F/A-18 fighter aircraft that are also on carriers. Ryder also did not say how quickly the USS Georgia guided missile submarine would get to the region. He said Austin and Gallant also discussed Israel's military operations in Gaza and the importance of mitigating civilian harm. The call comes a day after an Israeli airstrike hit a school-turned-shelter in Gaza early Saturday, killing at least 80 people and wounding nearly 50 others, Palestinian health authorities said, in one of the deadliest attacks of the 10-month Israel-Hamas war.

Israel widens evacuation orders in southern Gaza

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH

The Israeli military ordered more evacuations in southern Gaza early Sunday, a day after a deadly airstrike on a school-turned-shelter in the north killed at least 80 Palestinians, according to local health authorities. The airstrike was one of the deadliest attacks in the 10-month war. Hamas appeared to push back against resuming negotiations on Thursday on any new cease-fire proposals. In a statement, it urged mediators United States, Egypt and Qatar to submit a plan to implement what was agreed on last month, based on US President Joe Biden's proposal, "instead of going to more rounds of negotiations or new proposals that provide cover for the occupation's aggression." Israel has repeatedly ordered mass evacuations as its troops return to heavily destroyed areas where they previously battled Palestinian militants. The vast majority of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people have been displaced, often multiple times, in the besieged territory 25 miles (40 kilometers) long by about 7 miles (11 kilometers) wide. The latest evacuation orders

apply to areas of Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest city, including part of an Israeli-declared humanitarian zone from which the military said rockets had been fired. Israel accuses Hamas and other militants of hiding among civilians and launching attacks from residential areas. The humanitarian zone has steadily shrunk during the war with the various evacuation orders. Hundreds of thousands of people have crammed into squalid tent camps with few public services or sought shelter in schools, though the United Nations says hundreds of those have been directly hit or damaged. Khan Younis suffered widespread destruction during an air and ground offensive earlier this year. Tens of thousands fled again last week after an evacuation order. The new order came in leaflets dropped from the sky. As smoke rose on the horizon, hundreds of families carrying belongings in their arms left homes and shelters, seeking elusive refuge. One child carried a stuffed Hello Kitty doll as others walked through rubble-filled streets. "We don't know where to go," said Amal Abu Yahia, a moth-

er of three, who had returned to Khan Younis in June to shelter in their severely damaged home. It was the fourth displacement for the 42-year-old widow, whose husband was killed when an Israeli airstrike hit their neighbors' house in March. She said they went to Muwasi, a sprawling tent camp along the coast, but couldn't find space. Ramadan Issa, a father of five in his 50s, fled Khan Younis with 17 members of his extended family, joining hundreds of people walking toward central Gaza. "Every time we settle in one place and build tents for women and children, the occupation comes and bombs the area," he said, referring to Israel. "This situation is unbearable." Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants, says the Palestinian death toll from the war is approaching 40,000. Aid groups have struggled to address the staggering humanitarian crisis, while international experts have warned of famine. The war began when Hamas-led militants burst through Israel's defenses on October 7 and rampaged through farm-

ing communities and army bases near the border, killing around 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting around 250 people. Of the roughly 110 remaining hostages, Israeli authorities believe around a third are dead. The conflict has threatened to trigger a regional war, as Israel has traded fire with Iran and its militant allies across the region. "I hope that they will think this through and won't get to a point where they will force us to cause significant damage and increase the chances of war breaking out on additional fronts," Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Sunday. US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke to Gallant on Sunday, reiterating America's commitment to defend Israel and noting the strengthening of the US military force posture and capabilities in the region, according to the Defense Department. It noted Austin has ordered a guided missile submarine to the Middle East and is telling the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group to sail more quickly to the area. The Lincoln was expected in the region by month's end.

Pro-democracy HK activists fail to get relief in 2019 case

AP ■ HONG KONG

Seven of Hong Kong's most prominent pro-democracy activists lost their final bid to overturn their convictions at the city's top court on Monday over their roles in one of the biggest anti-government protests in 2019. Jimmy Lai, founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily newspaper; Martin Lee, the founding chairman of the city's Democratic Party; and five former pro-democracy lawmakers were found guilty in 2021 of organising and participating in an unauthorised assembly. Their convictions dealt a blow to the city's flagging pro-democracy movement during a political crackdown on dissidents following the protests. Last year, the activists partially won their appeal at a lower court, with their convictions quashed over the charge of organising an unauthorised assembly. But their convictions over taking part in the assembly were upheld and they continued their legal battle at the city's top court. On Monday, judges at the Court of Final Appeal ruled against their appeal over the remaining convictions.

The convictions were linked to their involvement in a rally in August 2019 that drew an estimated 1.7 million people onto Hong Kong's streets to call for greater police accountability and democracy. The march was relatively peaceful compared to other protests that often morphed into violent clashes between police and protesters that year. Hong Kong, a former British colony, returned to China in 1997. Its mini-constitution, the Basic Law, guarantees its people freedom of assembly. When sentencing the seven activists in 2021, a judge at the District Court ruled that the right to such freedom is not absolute and is subject to restrictions ruled constitutional. She ordered Lai, Lee Cheuk-yan, Leung Kwok-hung and Cyd Ho to be jailed between eight and 18 months. Martin Lee, Margaret Ng and Albert Ho were given suspended jail sentences. When the appellate court partially overturned their convictions in 2023, it quashed part of the sentences for the four who were given jail terms on the record. The decision was made after they already served out their sentences.

Harris gains ground in key states, continues her fundraising spree

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris has voiced confidence in winning the November 5 general elections against her Republican rival Donald Trump, as she gained ground nationally and in several key battleground states. US Vice President Harris, who is of both Indian and African origin, continues to be on a fundraising spree, taking her campaign coffers to an unprecedented level. The 59-year-old Democratic leader has also been attracting a record crowd in her rallies. "We will win this election," Harris told a fundraiser in San Francisco on Sunday in which she amassed USD 12 million

more for her presidential bid. The fundraiser was attended by around 700 donors, including several prominent Indian-Americans. In less than a month of her being on top of the Democratic Party ticket, after incumbent President Joe Biden decided to withdraw from the race, Harris has nearly wiped out the national lead of her Republican rival and former president Trump. According to Real Clear Politics, which monitors all the major national and state polls, Harris is now leading Trump by 0.5 percentage points in an average of all the national polls. Harris has also surged ahead in two battleground states, Wisconsin and Michigan,

where Biden was trailing earlier, as per Real Clear Politics. The latest poll by The New York Times said that Harris is leading in three key states — Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan — by four percentage points. Harris told the donors in San Francisco that she is not taking any chances. Speaking about the enthusiasm behind her campaign, Harris said she's "never been one to really believe in the polls, whether they're up or they are down." Still, "what we know is the stakes are so high. And we can take nothing for granted at this moment," she said. "It's really been a good couple of weeks, but we have a lot of work to do," Harris said.

"The people are ready to use their power," she said. The energy around the country is "undeniable," she added, arguing, "The press and our opponents like to focus on our crowd size, and, yes, the crowds are large." But even better is that attendees are signing up for volunteer shifts in the thousands, she noted. On Saturday, Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, addressed more than 12,000 Nevadans — one of the largest political rallies in modern Nevada political history. The rally marked the final stop on a weeklong tour of battleground states launched after she picked Walz to be her running mate.

Major wildfire rages out of control on fringes of Greek capital

AP ■ ATHENS

A major forest fire was raging out of control on the northern fringes of the Greek capital Monday, triggering numerous evacuation orders for Athens suburbs and outlying areas as strong winds hampered the efforts of hundreds of firefighters and dozens of water-dropping planes. The blaze that began Sunday afternoon was racing through pine forests left tinder-dry by repeated heat waves this summer. June and July of this year were the hottest months ever recorded in Greece, which also recorded its warmest winter ever. Authorities were faced with "an exceptionally dangerous fire, which we have been fighting for more than 20 hours under dramatic circumstances." Climate

Crisis and Civil Protection Minister Vassilis Kikilias said mid-morning Monday. The fire was burning mainly on two separate fronts, with some parts in particularly difficult to reach areas on a mountain northeast of Athens, Kikilias said. The fire department said 685 firefighters, backed by 27 teams specially trained to tackle wildfires and including more than 80 armed force personnel, were battling the flames. More than 190 vehicles were deployed, while 17 water-dropping planes and 16 helicopters were providing aerial support. A children's hospital, a military hospital, two monasteries and a children's home were evacuated early Monday, while more than two dozen emergency push alerts were sent to cellphones in the area. Several homes were burned, although the

exact number was not immediately clear. More evacuation orders were issued for suburbs of the capital as strong winds continued unabated. Fire Department spokesperson Col. Vassileios Vathrakogiannis said authorities had been faced with more than 40 flareups of the blaze since the early hours of Monday in areas where the flames had somewhat abated. Three Athens hospitals were put on heightened alert to treat any potential injuries. Paramedics and ambulances provided treatment to two firefighters — one for light burns and the other for breathing problems — while 13 civilians were also treated for breathing problems from the thick smoke, Vathrakogiannis said. Greece's coast guard ordered all ferries going to and from the

nearby port of Rafina, which serves mainly the Cycladic islands and Crete, to be diverted to the port of Lavrion due to the fire. Authorities in nearby suburbs opened at least one sports hall and were providing rooms in hotels for evacuees, while yet more suburbs were put on stand-by for potential evacuation. The police department said 380 police officers with 77 vehicles, 36 motorcycles, three buses and four vans were assisting in the evacuations, and by mid-morning had helped move more than 250 people away from the path of the flames. It posted a video on its social media channels showing police officers carrying elderly people in their arms out of houses and to waiting vehicles, against a backdrop of a night sky turned red from the flames and smoke.

Democrats launch first paid ad campaign for the Harris-Walz ticket

AP ■ WASHINGTON

With a solidified presidential ticket stumping across the country and a massive amount of money to spend, the Democratic Party is targeting seven critical battleground states with paid advertising for Vice President Kamala Harris and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz. The Democratic National Committee announced the Harris-Walz advertising push on Monday, which includes more than 70 billboards across the key battleground states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Nevada,



Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. It's the ticket's first paid advertising blitz since Walz joined the campaign — and the first of many to come in areas that are poised to determine the outcome of the presidential election in November. The billboards will be in sever-

al key urban areas across the battleground states, such as Atlanta, Detroit, Charlotte and Philadelphia, according to the DNC. Many are set up along major interstates and highways, including Interstate 95 and Interstate 10. There is also an advertisement

— both in English and Spanish — in the Las Vegas strip, according to the DNC. "The DNC is blanketing the battlegrounds with a clear message: Vice President Harris and Governor Tim Walz are fighting for working people, and Donald Trump and JD

Vance are only out for themselves," DNC spokesperson Abhi Rahman said in a statement. The Harris-Walz campaign boasts significant fundraising numbers, pulling in USD 310 million in July and entering August with USD 377 million on hand. The Trump campaign in comparison raised more than USD 138 million last month and has USD 327 million to spend. The advertising push comes after Harris and Walz completed their battleground state tour last week, attracting exuberant crowds in places such as Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and

Arizona along the way. Their stop in North Carolina was postponed due to inclement weather from Tropical Storm Debby. Donald Trump's running mate JD Vance shadowed the Democratic pair throughout the week by holding news conferences in many of the same cities Harris and Walz visited. Meanwhile, Trump hosted one rally last week in Montana. The Trump campaign also launched its own barrage of advertisements at the end of July, pushing television ads that focus on Harris' record on immigration and call her a "border czar."

Man held in London for stabbing 2 persons

AP ■ LONDON

A man has been arrested after an 11-year-old girl and a 34-year-old woman were stabbed in central London, London's Metropolitan Police said on Monday. The attack occurred in Leicester Square, a magnet for tourists with its shops, theatres and cinemas. The square and surrounding area have an estimated 2.5 million visitors every week. Police said the two victims were taken to a major trauma

centre. The extent of their injuries was not immediately clear. The stabbing occurred as Britain is on edge after violence for the past week as crowds spouting anti-immigrant and Islamophobic slogans clashed with police. The disturbances have been fuelled by right-wing activists who used social media to spread misinformation about a knife attack that killed three girls during a Taylor Swift-themed dance event. It was not immediately clear whether the stabbing had any link to the unrest.

Stock markets close marginally lower

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets closed marginally lower in highly volatile trade on Monday as investors in private banks helped benchmark Sensex recoup some of the early losses inflicted by allegations against Sebi chief Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband by the US short-seller Hindenburg Research. The 30-share Sensex closed lower by 56.99 points or 0.07 per cent at 79,648.92 with 18 of its constituents ending with losses and 12 with gains. The index had declined by 479.78 points or 0.60 per cent to a low of 79,226.13 in morning trade due to losses in Adani group shares and blue-chips like Reliance Industries. The benchmark later staged a sharp recovery climbing around 880 points from the day's lows to hit a high of 80,106.18. But at the day-end, the BSE benchmark slipped into the negative territory and closed lower. The NSE Nifty dipped 20.50 points or 0.08 per cent to 24,347. Intra-day, it hit a low of 24,212.10 and a high of 24,472.80.



"The Indian market concluded relatively flat, with its initial path being eclipsed by the continuation of the Adani-Hindenburg-SEBI saga. However, the market tried to brush away these noises, taking positive cues from global markets," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. From 30 Sensex firms, Adani Ports, NTPC, Power Grid, State Bank of India, Nestle, Mahindra & Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services were the biggest laggards.

Axis Bank, Infosys, JSW Steel, Tata Motors, HDFC Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the gainers from the blue-chip pack. Hindenburg Research on Saturday alleged that SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband had undisclosed investments in obscure offshore funds in Bermuda and Mauritius, the same entities allegedly used by Vinod Adani - the elder brother of group chairman Gautam Adani - to round-trip funds and inflate stock prices. Buch and her husband issued

a statement calling Hindenburg's latest tirade an attack on the credibility of SEBI and attempted "character assassination". Adani Group on Sunday termed Hindenburg Research's latest allegations as malicious and manipulative of select public information, saying it has no commercial relationship with the SEBI chairperson or her husband. All the 10 Adani group stocks declined sharply during the early trade, with Adani Energy Solutions tumbling 17 per cent and Adani Total Gas dropping 13.39 per cent. At close, eight of the group firms ended lower, while two of them bounced back. "The Hindenburg allegations now against a key official of the market regulator weighed on the sentiment in early trade, but indices recovered soon to trade higher only to give away all their gains towards the close to end marginally lower on selective profit taking. In case the row heats up further, it could impact sentiment going ahead and profit-taking could continue, although global cues would

still determine the broader market mood," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.51 per cent and midcap index went up marginally by 0.04 per cent. Among the indices, utilities declined 1.04 per cent, FMCG by 0.67 per cent, power by 0.62 per cent, and services by 0.41 per cent. Consumer Durables, realty, oil & gas, metal and IT were the gainers. A total of 2,126 stocks declined while 1,941 advanced and 118 remained unchanged on the BSE. In Asian markets, Seoul and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Shanghai ended lower. Markets in Tokyo and Bangkok were closed for a holiday. European markets were trading mostly higher. The US markets ended higher on Friday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Friday after days of offloading equities. They bought equities worth Rs 406.72 crore, according to exchange data.

Major domestic appliances market sees 18% value-based growth in first half of 2024, says report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The market of major domestic appliances saw an 18 per cent value-based growth in the first half of 2024, helped by a strong demand for essential household items, according to a report from GfK. The growth in MDA (major domestic appliances) market was led by Key categories such as air-conditioners and refrigerators, which reported a growth of 30 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively. "This growth is 3X of growth in 2023 over the previous year," said the report from GfK, which is now an NIQ Company, a leading global market and consumer intelligence firm. The small domestic appliances market recorded a 29 per cent increase in value, reflecting heightened consumer interest in home convenience products, according to the report. The report also added that customers are now looking for feature-rich and premium

products, which is fuelling the value growth in the appliance segment. Now washing machines with capacities of 9kg or above have recorded an "impressive growth rate of 30 per cent", which is driven by consumers seeking enhanced performance and innovative features. Similarly, the air-conditioner segment is benefiting from similar trends, where demand for energy-efficient and high-performance models has grown by 59 per cent in the split inverter and 5-star segments. "Cooling appliances (refrigerator) have seen an 11 per cent increase in the side-by-side, French door, and 3/4 door segments," it said. The report also suggests that despite such gains, the relatively low penetration of these products presents significant opportunities for industry expansion. The smartphone and mobile phones segment had a 6 per cent reduction in volume, it was offset by a substantial 10 per cent increase in overall value.

Gold rises ₹200, silver rallies ₹1,000 per kilogram

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose by Rs 200 to Rs 72,350 per 10 grams while silver prices rallied by Rs 1,000 per kg in the local market here on Monday amid firm global trends. In the previous session, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed lower at Rs 72,150 per 10 grams on Saturday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver prices jumped by Rs 1,000 to Rs 83,500 per kg from Rs 82,500 per kg in the previous close. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also climbed by Rs 200 to Rs 72,000 per 10 grams. In the previous trade, it had ended at Rs 71,800 per 10 grams on Saturday. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to increased demand from local jewellers and a strong trend in the overseas markets. On the global front, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,481.80 per ounce, up by USD 8.40 per ounce. "Gold prices rose on Monday as persisting geopolitical concerns about Middle Eastern crises boosted the safe-haven demand for precious metal," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. Apart from that, traders also increased their bets on the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) aggressive interest rate cuts this year after recent weak macro data provided further support for the yellow metal, Gandhi added. According to Manav Modi, Senior Analyst of Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, gold prices held steady after a sharp rise in the previous session, bolstered by a dip in US Treasury yields, as investors grew confident that the Fed would lower interest rates in September this year. Silver is up at USD 28.01 per ounce in the international markets. Traders shifted their focus to the US consumer price index data, due next week, for insights into the Fed's likely monetary policy path, Modi said. As per Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, gold prices are largely driven by escalating tensions in the Middle East, particularly concerns over a potential attack by Iran on Israel.

Govt approves 20% premium for gas from new wells for ONGC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has approved a 20 per cent premium over the regulated or APM price for any natural gas that ONGC will produce from new wells, the company said on Monday. Currently, two pricing regimes govern the majority of the domestic production of natural gas, which is used to generate electricity, produce fertiliser, turn into CNG for running automobiles and piped to households for cooking. Gas produced from legacy or fields given to state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd, on nomination basis, is priced at 10 per cent of the prevailing price of crude oil that India imports. This price, subject to a cap price of USD 6.5 per million British thermal units, is called regulated or APM price. So, at the current Indian basket price of USD 77 per barrel, the APM price for gas produced from ONGC's Mumbai High and Bassein fields in the western offshore should come to USD 7.7 per mmBtu, but it is paid the cap



price of USD 6.5. Gas produced from difficult fields, such as those in the deep sea, is governed by a different formula and paid a higher rate because of the higher cost involved in its production. That price for six months starting April 1 is USD 9.87 per mmBtu. When these formulas were adopted last year, it was decided that gas produced from new wells, even in legacy fields, would be paid a premium of 20 per cent over the APM price. Now, that has been notified. "As per guidelines for domestic gas pricing,

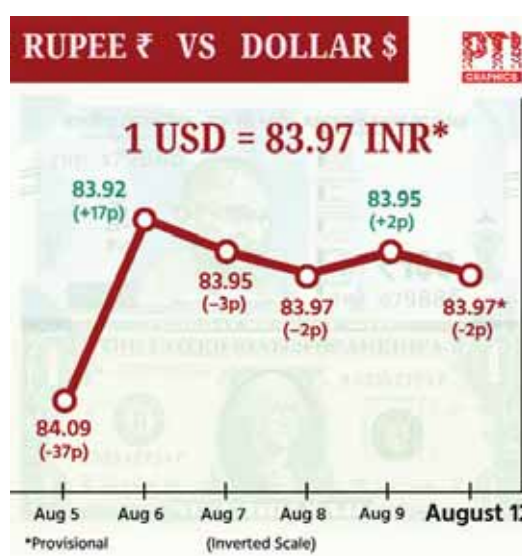
domestic natural gas price (APM price) was fixed at 10 per cent of the Indian crude basket price as announced by Petroleum Planning and Analysis (PPAC) on a monthly basis. It was provided in the guidelines that for the gas produced from new wells or well intervention in the nomination fields of ONGC/Oil India Limited, there would be a premium of 20 per cent over APM prices - a total of 12 per cent of Indian crude basket price for new gas. "The modalities for the same had to be worked out by the

Directorate General of Hydrocarbon (DGH) for approval of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MOPNG)," ONGC said in a statement. The ministry, it said, has now notified the allocation of gas produced from new wells or well interventions from nominated fields of ONGC/OIL at a 20 per cent premium over the APM price. "The enhanced price for new gas will make the new gas development projects viable and help the ONGC to augment the production of natural gas from nominated fields in challenging areas that require higher amounts of capital and technology. "This will enhance the investment capacity in the company to take up development projects, which are otherwise capital intensive and involve a higher degree of risks requiring commensurate prices," it said. ONGC Board has recently approved the Daman Upside Development project in its nominated field of Mumbai High for Rs 7,800 crore for increasing domestic gas production, and the job has already been awarded for execution.

Rupee falls 2 paise to close at 83.97 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 2 paise at 83.97 (provisional) against the American currency on Monday, as market participants remained on the sidelines ahead of the release of key domestic macroeconomic data. Forex traders said the Indian rupee declined on a positive tone in the US dollar and a surge in crude oil prices. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.95 and touched an intraday low of 83.98 and finally settled at 83.97 (provisional) against the American currency, lower by 2 paise from its previous close. The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on August 5.



Forex traders said for the USD/INR pair 84.00 level is acting as a psychological resistance. Market participants are also awaiting cues from the Indian CPI inflation and IIP numbers scheduled to be released later in the day. Moreover, investors may remain cautious ahead of US CPI, retail sales and consumer confidence data from the US this week. "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.75 to Rs 84.25," Choudhary added. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.05 per cent higher at 103.18. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.85 per cent to USD 80.34 per barrel.

Hindenburg claims baseless, misleading: REITs Association

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian REITs Association on Monday said that claims made by the US-based short seller Hindenburg Research suggesting that the REIT framework made by markets regulator Sebi serves the interests of a select few are "baseless and misleading". In fact, the association has commended Sebi and its leadership for crafting a "rigorous regulatory environment" that includes comprehensive periodic reporting requirements,

mandatory independent valuations, and strict governance standards. These measures are designed to enhance transparency and protect investor interests, it added. The statement came after the Hindenburg report on Saturday alleged that recent amendments to Sebi's REIT Regulations 2014 were made to benefit a specific multinational financial conglomerate. In this regard, the markets regulator stated that Sebi (REIT) Regulations, 2014 has been amended from time to time.

In a statement, the association said that since the introduction of REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) regulations in 2014, India has established a strong and transparent regulatory framework that aligns with global best practices. "Developed in consultation with all market participants, this framework ensures the highest levels of investor protection for both - domestic and international institutional investors, as well as retail investors," it said. Hindenburg Research on

Saturday launched a broadside against market regulator Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, alleging she and her husband had stakes in obscure offshore funds used in the alleged Adani money siphoning scandal. Sebi chairperson Buch and her husband Dhaval denied the allegations as baseless and asserted their finances are an open book. Her husband Dhaval Buch is a senior advisor with Blackstone. The Adani Group termed the latest allegations malicious and based on manipulation of

select public information. The company said it has no commercial relationship with the Sebi chairperson or her husband. Indian REITs Association, which counts Brookfield India Real Estate Trust, Embassy Office Parks REIT, Mindspace Business Parks REIT, and Nexus Select Trust -- as their founding members, said that the sector's growth has drawn significant interest and participation from prominent global institutional investors. These investors' participation not only strengthens the trust

and credibility of India's financial system but also provides investors with a dependable and transparent avenue to engage in the country's expanding real estate market. Currently, there are four listed REITs on the Indian stock exchanges, collectively managing assets worth over Rs 1.4 lakh crore and serving over 2.4 lakh crore unitholders. These REITs have distributed over Rs 18,000 crore, with the market capitalisation of the asset class reaching about Rs 80,000 crore.

Automation Expo to showcase use of AI in manufacturing sectors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



India's largest exhibition for the automation industry, Automation Expo 2024, slated from August 21 to 24 is all set to be a pivotal event in showcasing how Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics are driving transformative changes across manufacturing and production sectors. The integration of AI with traditional robotics is revolutionising the industry by advancing predictive maintenance, reducing material waste, and improving demand forecasting. Attendees will experience a comprehensive display of the latest technologies and solutions, featuring both innovative startups and established industry leaders, said Dr M Arokiaswamy, Founder & Chairman of IED Communications. The exhibition to be held at the Bombay Exhibition Center (BEC), Nesco, Mumbai is supported by various associations including the Technology Development Board, National Small Industry Corporation (NSIC), All India Manufacturers' Organization (AIMO), among others. Dr BR Mehta, Director Projects at Waaree Group, emphasised the expo's importance in exploring

technologies that can revolutionise manufacturing processes and foster industry collaboration while Dr. Kartik Fojdar, Head - CoE Engineering Instrumentation at Reliance Industries Ltd., spoke about the expo's potential to provide innovative solutions that drive operational excellence. Dr Keyur Vora, Advisor and HOD (C&I) at Adani-Petrochemical Business, underscored the opportunity for discovering new technologies and forging strategic partnerships to enhance operational efficiency. At the same time Dr VP Raman, Engineering Consultant, noted that the expo will offer a unique platform for engaging with leading vendors and system integrators to explore solutions that boost operational efficiency. India's industrial automation sector is on a significant growth trajectory, with projections indicating a rise from over USD 15 billion to USD 29.5 billion by 2029.

Naveen appointed Director (Operations) POWERGRID

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Naveen Srivastava has been appointed as Director (Operations) of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna CPSE under Ministry of Power, Government of India. Prior to his joining as Director (Operations), he worked as Executive Director (NR-III) handling challenging and flagship works & delivered results consistently in dynamic business environment. "He brings a wealth of expertise to the table. He is an accomplished electrical engineer, having graduated in Electrical Engineering (Hons) from the prestigious National Institute of Technology-Durgapur, and has honed his leadership skills through a



General Management Programme at the Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, and the Harvard Manage Mentor program at Harvard Business School," said a statement issued by the firm. With over two decades of experience in operations,

Srivastava has consistently driven success across multiple facets, including Operations and Maintenance (O&M), Testing and Commissioning (T&C), and cutting-edge SCADA and communication technologies, it said. His leadership was instrumental in completing the renowned underground cabling project in Old Kashi (Varanasi), which garnered accolades from the Chief Minister and international dignitaries, it said. Further, he played a pivotal role towards commissioning of 765kV Pooling Substation at Bilaspur along with adaptation of new Technologies such as Remote Operation of HVDC Rihand-Dadri Link and others, said the company in a statement.

IIP growth slows to 5-month low of 4.2% in June: Govt data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's industrial production slowed to a five-month low of 4.2 per cent in June 2024, mainly due to poor performance of the manufacturing sector, though power and mining sectors continue to perform well, as per official data released on Monday. The factory output growth, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), was 6.2 per cent in May, 5 per cent in April, 5.5 per cent in March, 5.6 per cent in February and 4.2 per cent in January 2024. During the April-June period this fiscal, the IIP growth was 5.2 per cent against 4.7 per cent in the same period of the

preceding financial year. India's Index of Industrial Production grew by 4 per cent in June 2023, according to a statement by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. As per the data, the mining output growth accelerated to 10.3 per cent in June against a 7.6 per cent expansion in the year-ago month. The manufacturing sector's growth decelerated to 2.6 per cent in June compared to 3.5 per cent a year ago. The power generation increased by 8.6 per cent in June against a growth of 4.2 per cent in the same month of the last year. As per base-classification, the capital goods segment growth fell to 2.4 per cent in

June 2024 from 2.9 per cent in the year-ago period. In June this year, consumer durables output expanded 8.6 per cent compared to a 6.8 per cent contraction in June 2023. Consumer non-durable goods production contracted 1.4 per cent during the reporting month against a growth of 0.5 per cent in May 2023. According to the data, infrastructure/construction goods reported a growth of 4.4 per cent in June 2024, down from a 13.3 per cent expansion in the year-ago period. The data also showed that the output of primary goods logged a 6.3 per cent growth in June this year, up from 5.3 per cent a year earlier.

US WOMEN'S BASKETBALL FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

AP ■ PARIS

The USA women's basketball players have been saying for years that winning in the Olympics isn't easy and France showed at the Paris Games that their comments are more than just rhetoric to keep fans interested. The rest of the world is catching up to the U.S., though Olympic gold should continue to run through America. The future for USA Basketball looks bright with Aja Wilson and Breanna Stewart in their prime. Then there also is a extremely talented young group of players who say they want to be in the pipeline, led by Caitlin Clark, Angel Reese, Paige Bueckers and Juju Watkins. They could help anchor the national team, which is in a bit of a transition with the retirement of Diana Taurasi, who finished her career with a record six gold medals. The Americans captured their record eighth Olympic gold medal Sunday by the narrowest of margins with a 67-66 victory over France. The

U.S. won its six games in the tournament by an average of 15.7 points - the lowest during its streak. "The parity of women's basketball is just only continuing to grow," Stewart said. "So I think you know, we know it's not easy." France became the first team to come within a hair of beating the U.S. in the Olympics during its record 61-game winning streak that dates back to the 1992 Barcelona Games. Only two other teams had come within single digits of the Americans in those 32 years. "Maybe they won't say it's just easy and we walk in and just win gold," said U.S. Center Brittney Griner. Who broke down in tears when she was presented her third gold medal. "Maybe they'll stop saying that, because, like I said, we see everybody's best shot. And we saw the shot that France gave us." The U.S. will get homecourt during the 2028 Olympics, which will be held in Los Angeles. The Americans had played the last two gold medal games against teams from the host nation.



Griner said "we'll see" when asked if she'll be playing in the Los Angeles Games. Even if she doesn't decide to play - she'll be 37 at that point - the U.S. should return its top two stars Stewart and Wilson, who are only 29 and 28 years old respectively. The pair could potentially play in a few more Olympics. With the exception of Taurasi, no one on this year's Olympic team would be older than 37 by the time the 2028 Olympics happen. "I think being able to learn from a lot of the veteran players here, knowing it's kind of my time and a lot of our times that, this younger generation is able to kind of take this legacy and continue to push forward and go for nine," said Sabrina Ionescu, who earned her first Olympic gold medal. "This is a program that has always sort of made it look easy. But I always said it's not." The major question potentially is who will be coaching the team in Los Angeles. Cheryl Reeve could come back to coach the team, although it's

extremely rare that a coach does a second stint. Only Geno Auriemma, who coached in 2012 and 2016, has done that. If the U.S. goes another direction, there's a few potential candidates. Assistant Kara Lawson, who won gold as a player in 2008 and also guided the inaugural 3x3 U.S. Team in 2021 to first place could be on the list. A trio of WNBA coaches have experience with USA Basketball: Curt Miller, Stephanie White and Tanisha Wright also could be considered. A dark horse could be Las Vegas Aces coach Becky Hammon. She hasn't been involved with USA Basketball at all yet and played for Russia in the 2008 Olympics. Yet no WNBA coach has been more successful the last few years than Hammon, who has led the Aces to back-to-back WNBA championships. With the Aces' core of Wilson, Kelsey Plum, Chelsea Gray and Jackie Young potentially back in 2028, Hammon would certainly have their endorsement.



Indian shuttlers sign off Paris Games on dismal note

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India became so used to a badminton medal from the Olympics in the last 12 years that Paris 2024 seems nothing short of a disaster. Lakshya Sen emerged as a notable bright spot with a fourth-place finish, but the Indian badminton team, including medal contenders such as PV Sindhu and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, returned empty-handed from the Olympics for the first time in over a decade. The hopes of a medal were not misplaced, Sindhu was there again eyeing a hat-trick of medals, the ever-tenacious HS Prannoy (men's singles) had finally made it to his debut Olympics, and Ashwini Ponnappa and Tanisha Crasto (women's doubles) seemed in decent form. As for Lakshya and Satwik-Chirag, they were seen as potential podium finishers even before the first match was held. During the Paris cycle, badminton received considerable support too, including 13 national camps and 81 foreign exposure trips, funded under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS). The Sports Authority of India's (SAI) Mission Olympic Cell allocated Rs 72.03 crore, the second-largest funding among the nearly Rs 470 crore spent on India's Olympic preparations across 16 disciplines. Despite the significant investment, the results in Paris fell short of expectations, highlighting the unpredictable nature of Olympic competition

and also the mental aspect of playing at such an event. Nothing demonstrated it more than Lakshya's implosion first in the semifinals against Viktor Axelsen and then in the bronze play-off against Lee Zii Jia of Chinese Taipei. Sindhu, who had received Rs 3.13 crore in support, was unable to progress beyond the pre-quarterfinals, missing the chance to become the first Indian to win three Olympic medals. "I am a little disappointed as he could not finish it. I am disappointed that we could not even win one medal in badminton. The government, SAI, and TOPS have done their bit. It is high time some of the players also need to take some responsibility," Lakshya's coach and former All England champion Prakash Padukone. The unexpected defeat of former world number one Satwik and Chirag was the most shocking of all and added to the dismay, as they were considered gold-medal contenders. The government had backed the players extensively, including Rs 26.60 lakh and Rs 9.33 lakh sanctioned for Sindhu and Lakshya's training in Germany and France, respectively. Sindhu, a silver and bronze winner from the past two editions, had a 12-member support team in Saarbrücken during her training ahead of the Games but she failed to overcome He Bingjiao of China. Satwik and Chirag had won two titles in four BWF World Tour finals this year and numerous medals in major events such as 2023 Asian Games, 2022 Commonwealth

Games and the 2023 Asia Championships. The government spent a total of Rs 5.62 crores on the celebrated Indian duo for the Paris cycle but they were upset by Malaysia's Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in the quarterfinals, prompting their Danish coach Mathias Boe to quit coaching. Prannoy, a bronze-medallist at the 2023 World Championships and Asian Games, received Rs 1.8 crore for training but was hindered by Chikungunya ahead of the Games, leading to a loss in the pre-quarterfinals. Ashwini and Tanisha, who received Rs 1.5 crore each in support, exited the tournament after failing to win any match in the group stage. Despite the setbacks, Lakshya demonstrated resilience and skill, finishing fourth -- a notable achievement for an Indian male shuttler. His victories over Indonesia's Jonatan Christie and Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen were commendable, though his losses to eventual champion Axelsen and Zii Jia from comfortable positions exposed some major frailties. As one looks ahead to the Los Angeles Games in 2028, it remains to be seen whether the 29-year-old Sindhu can maintain her fitness. However, there is optimism that Satwik-Chirag and Lakshya will leverage their Paris experience. With emerging talents like Priyanshu Rajawat and Treesa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand poised to make an impact, India's badminton prospects remain promising for the next four years.

From Paris to Los Angeles: How city preparing for 2028 Olympics

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

It's Los Angeles' turn for the torch. Mayor Karen Bass accepted the Olympic flag at the Paris closing ceremony Sunday, before handing it off to a key representative of LA's local business - Tom Cruise - who in a pre-recorded trek via motorcycle, plane and parachute kicked off the countdown to 2028. The city will become the third in the world to host the games three times as it adds to the storied years of 1932 and 1984. Here's a look forward and back in time at the Olympics in LA. **LA'S OLYMPIC TRILOGY:** Los Angeles got the 2028 games as a consolation prize when Paris was picked for 2024. Back in 1932, LA hosted its first Olympics. The city was the only bidder for the games at a time marred by the Great Depression and the absence of several nations. Yet memorable sport moments came from athletes including American athlete Babe Didrikson Zaharias, who won golds in the new women's events of javelin and hurdles. Financial and cultural success gave 1984 a reputation as the "good" Olympics" which made seemingly every major world city want their own. Emphasizing both the modern and the classical with a hand from Hollywood,

the games opened with decathlon champion Rafer Johnson lighting the torch, a guy in a jetpack descending into the Memorial Coliseum and theme music by "Star Wars" maestro John Williams. With Eastern Bloc countries boycotting, the U.S. Dominated. Carl Lewis and Mary Lou Retton are among the athletes who became household names. A young Michael Jordan led the men's basketball team to gold. The games renewed, for a while, the global reputation of a city that had been perceived to be in decline. "We want our games to be a modern games, youthful, full of the optimism that Southern California brings to the world and the globe," Janet Evans, four-time Olympic gold medalist in swimming and chief athlete officer for the LA 2028 organizing committee, told The Associated Press in Paris. **PASSING THE TORCH:** Bass, who arrives back in LA Monday, spent these games in Paris along with organizers and city officials, learning what it takes to host the world's largest sporting event. Joining her were LA28 Chairperson Casey Wasserman, an entertainment executive, and LA councilmember Traci Park, chair of the city Olympic committee.



IOC President Thomas Bach hands the Olympic flag to Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass during the 2024 Summer Olympics closing ceremony at the Stade de France

"As we've seen here in Paris, the Olympics are an opportunity to make transformative change," Bass said at a press conference ahead of the closing ceremony. **VENUES OLD AND NEW, PLUS A SWIMMING STADIUM:** Amid a stadium-and-arena boom, LA will

polish existing structures rather than erect new ones. "It's a no-build games," Evans said. After Paris' innovative opening ceremony on the Seine River, LA plans to open with a traditional, stadium-based approach at SoFi Stadium in neighboring Inglewood that also incorporates the century-old Memorial Coliseum in Los Angeles itself. Home to two NFL teams, SoFi has hosted a Super Bowl and several Taylor Swift concerts since opening in 2020. It will become what organizers say is the largest Olympic swimming venue ever. Its opening ceremony role means swimming will come after track and field for the first time since 1972. Intuit Dome, the soon-to-open Inglewood home of the NBA's Clippers, would be the games' newest major venue and is the planned home for Olympic basketball. The Lakers' downtown Crypto.Com Arena will host gymnastics. The toxicity of swimming in the Seine became a serious issue in Paris. That could put renewed focus on the Long Beach area waterfront when it hosts marathon swimming and triathlon races. Its cleanliness history is mixed but its ocean waters got consistently high marks in a 2023 analysis by nonprofit Heal the Bay. The Long Beach shore was home to the pre-recorded performances during Sunday's ceremony of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Billie Eilish, Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre, though it was easy to mistake for LA's Venice Beach, where the journey of the flag begun by Cruise was shown ending moments earlier.

AP ■ PARIS

The contest for most gold medals at the Paris Olympics ended in a 40-40 tie between China and the United States. But the U.S. topped the medals table with a whopping 126 overall, compared to 91 for China. At the Tokyo Games, the U.S. also edged China in the medal count, finishing with 113 overall and 39 golds, compared to 89 medals with 38 gold for China. Who was supposed to lead the medal count at the Paris Games? According to Nielsen's Gracenote virtual medal-table forecast, which collected results data from big competitions since the Tokyo Games, the top five for overall medals in Paris was going to be as follows: The U.S. (112 overall medals); China (86); Britain (63); France (60) and Australia (54). The U.S. Did top the medals table. However, the U.S. and China both upped their gold and overall medal counts. Japan proved the virtual

US again beats China in Olympic medals table after they tie for gold



predictors wrong by sneaking into third place with 20 golds among its 45 medals. France and Australia were in the top five as predicted, but the other way around. Skateboard star Keegan Palmer helped Australia go fourth with 18 golds among 53 medals, while fifth-place France tallied 16 golds among its 64 medals. Britain got more medals than in Tokyo - 65 to 64 - but had

less golds and was seventh overall behind the Netherlands. **Here's a closer look at the some of the nations: GREAT HAUL OF CHINA, AS TEAM DOMINATES DIVING:** When Cao Yuan defended his title in the men's 10-meter platform on Saturday, it gave his nation an unprecedented sweep of the diving gold medals.

China won all eight golds handed out at the Olympic Aquatics Centre. China won five golds in each of shooting, table tennis and weightlifting, with China's victory in the team event in table tennis giving the country its 300th gold in Olympic history. **GOLDS GALORE FOR USA ON TRACK, BUT NO MEDAL IN WOMEN'S WATER POLO:** Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone broke her own world record in the 400-meter hurdles as the U.S. Won 14 golds in track and field. Noah Lyles won a historically close men's 100-meter race, and Gabrielle Thomas took the women's 200. Quincy Hall won the men's 400 at a Stade de France, which grew accustomed to hearing the American national anthem. Gymnastics star Simone Biles

added to her growing fame with four more medals, and the swimmers, led by another Olympic great in Katie Ledecky, grabbed eight golds. The men's and women's basketball teams won their tournaments, both beating France in the finals. The U.S. Women survived the biggest challenge of their unprecedented run to eight straight Olympic gold medals with a 67-66 win to close out competition at the Paris Games. But the U.S. Women's water polo team went home empty handed after high expectations. **EXCEED EXPECTATIONS:** Led by the brilliant performances of Léon Marchand, who finished with five medals overall, Les Bleus won one more gold than Atlanta in 1996 and nearly doubled their 33 medals overall from the Tokyo Games three years ago. Rugby star Antoine Dupont got the ball bouncing by leading France to gold in the rugby sevens, then Marchand took over.

Lyles feared bronchitis after positive COVID test, but now pushes through with new career goals

AP ■ PARIS

Asthma didn't stop Noah Lyles from taking on the 200 meter at the Paris Olympics, even after testing positive for COVID-19. Despite fears of bronchitis and conflicting reports about his fever, Lyles won a bronze medal just two days after his positive test. He was concerned more about the virus' severe symptoms than his temperature, which his coach Lance Brauman claimed rose to 102 degrees. "Anytime I've had COVID, it's never been about the temperatures. It's always been about the body aches, the chills, the headaches and the cold," Lyles told The Associated Press on Sunday. He spoke during an interview about his new Visa campaign involving his mother,

Keisha Caine Bishop, who narrated a 30-second reel with her son. Lyles said his temperature reached no higher than 99 degrees. The only reason he would have pulled out is if the symptoms of bronchitis had become worse. "Then asthma joining in on that and making it even worse, that was our worst fear," he said. "We were back in the medical bay underneath the track. Their biggest concern was me getting bronchitis because we didn't want something to get infected and the asthma really starts to take form. We really had to jump on top of that." Lyles added: "If that was the case, I probably would have had to get a trip to the hospital, for sure." During the Paris Olympics, the 27-year-old Lyles has had a whirlwind experience. He became the world's

fastest man in the 100 meters before his decision to race in the 200. He faced some criticism about his participating in the race and possibly infecting others, but the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee had no issues with Lyles competing. Lyle has embraced becoming somewhat of an anti-hero. He's used to hearing the criticism about him being overly confident, but he notes that many don't understand his journey toward improving his self worth. Along with asthma, Lyles said he dealt with dyslexia, anxiety, depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. "Those are all prime bullying targets right there," he said. "I was getting bullied in school. It was very hard, and I was already not



doing well because I'm not a traditional learner. It was very hard going through that. Going through the school system, it made me feel

like I was stupid. I felt like none of my gifts I have now were worth anything." Lyles pushed through the skeptics,

building himself up with the help of his family - particularly his mother. Even before her son's Olympic medals, she was proud of him. "It's not the critic who counts because it's always easy to be a critic," she said. "I know people see his confidence as cockiness, but what do you want people to do? It makes me feel sad for those people who feel like they have to criticize somebody who has big goals and puts those goals out there." His mother said, "It's better to have goals and put them out there and not achieve them, than to sit there all your life and wonder, What if?" Lyles often leans on his mother's advice when skeptics are speaking his name. "You're still going to count on me to win the day, aren't you?" he

asked. "As my mom used to say, the higher you go up the ladder, the more your underwear shows. People are going to have opinions. ... But everybody who has ever met me comes away saying Oh my gosh, I feel so inspired." Lyles has since tested negative for COVID-19 and now he's looking to make a bigger name for himself. He'll still be preparing hard for the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo in September, but he'll look to branch out in the next year into other opportunities such as fashion, music, buying a new house and enjoying his relationship with track athlete Junelle Bromfield. "I'm excited to see where the road takes me," he said. "And to be honest, I'm also excited to see what plans God has, because I can only think so far."

New Zealand pick 5 spin options for Tests against Afghanistan, Lanka

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand on Monday named a strong squad, which includes five spin bowling options, for next month's one-off Test against Afghanistan and the ensuing two-match rubber against Sri Lanka.

While the one-off Test against Afghanistan will be played in Greater Noida, India, from September 9-13, the Black Caps will fly to Sri Lanka for the two ICC World Test Championship matches, starting September 18 and 26, respectively.

Veteran pacer Tim Southee will lead the side which includes the likes of Kane Williamson, Devon Conway, Glenn Phillips and Rachin Ravindra, while Tom Latham continues to be the vice-captain.

However, head coach Gary Stead hinted that if conditions call for a different balance, the skipper too may have to sit out for a game or two.

"Test tours to the sub-continent can ask some really tough questions of pace bowlers due to the nature of the pitches and the heat and humidity," Stead said.

"While we're going over with an open mind around conditions, there is an understanding that all our bowling options may be needed across the different Tests."

"Tim and I have discussed this, and the need during these overseas tours to balance the work-loads of the pace



bowlers, including himself, to ensure the team is best served," he added. Spin bowling all-rounder

Michael Bracewell returned to the squad for the first time in 18 months after an Achilles injury, which was followed by a

broken finger in February, had kept him out of action. Bracewell will shoulder the spin duties alongside left-

armers Mitchell Santner, Ajaz Patel and part-timers Glenn Phillips and Ravindra. "Michael had to show plenty of

resilience to rehabilitate from his injuries and force his way back into the BLACKCAPS across all three formats," Stead

said. "His all-round skills, and ability to take the ball away from the left-hander make him

a great asset, especially on what we expect will be turning wickets in India and Sri Lanka," he added.

Pacers Will O'Rourke and Ben Sears have been rewarded with maiden overseas Test call-ups. The 23-year-old O'Rourke claimed 11 wickets in his first two Test outings, including the best match-figures by a New Zealander on Test debut (nine for 93 v South Africa in February) before a groin injury ruled him out of the second Test against Australia.

Sears, on the other hand, debuted in the second Test against Australia in March, claiming four for 90 in the second innings.

New Zealand currently occupy the third spot in the ICC WTC points table behind last edition's finalists, Australia and India.

"We know how important the points in Sri Lanka will be to our chances of pushing for a final spot in England next year. "We managed one win from the two Test series in challenging conditions in Bangladesh last December and are keen to build on that. "The whole squad is looking forward to test their skills in the longest form of the game in the sub-continent," he said.

SQUAD:

Tim Southee (captain), Tom Blundell, Michael Bracewell, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ben Sears, Kane Williamson, Will Young.

Duleep Trophy first round match shifted to Bengaluru; stars barring Ashwin, Bumrah to play



PTI ■ BENGALURU

With some of the India regulars, except pacer Jasprit Bumrah and senior spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, likely to appear in the first round of the Duleep Trophy, the BCCI has decided to shift one of the opening matches from Anantapur to Bengaluru. Senior batters Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma also might get an exemption, and the choice of appearing in the tournament is entirely on them.

The Duleep Trophy was earlier scheduled to kick-off with two sets of first round matches at Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh from September 5, but now one of those games has been shifted to the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here to reduce the

logistical inconveniences. Anantapur is approximately 230 kms away from Bengaluru and the city is not connected via flight.

"The decision has been made to accommodate some of the top players, so that they get a feel of the red-ball cricket ahead of the (Test) series against Bangladesh," a source close to the development told PTI. India are slated to play two Test matches against Bangladesh - from September 19 at Chennai and from September 27 at Kanpur.

While it is up to Rohit and Kohli to play in the event, some other prominent players such as Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, KL Rahul, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Kuldeep Yadav etc are expected to be available for this tournament fully or

partially. However, Bumrah and Ashwin are unlikely to take part in the tournament at any stage as they are expected to join the India squad directly ahead of the Bangladesh series.

The selectors are also deciding on giving a go to Rishabh Pant in the Duleep Trophy, and if it happens then this will be his first red-ball assignment after coming back from that horrific car accident in 2022.

Since his return, Pant has been a part of India's white-ball set-up and the wicketkeeper batter also donned the national jersey in the T20 World Cup. Mohammed Shami, who has been recuperating from a surgery, will not feature in the tournament.

However, the availability of the top players will also be subject to the dates of the preparatory camp that the team management is mulling to hold in Chennai ahead of the Tests against Bangladesh.

But the decision to shift the match also aligns with the shared vision of the BCCI and the team management that the top players should feature in domestic cricket competitions whenever they are free from national duty.

It may be recalled that India's T20I skipper Suryakumar Yadav (Mumbai) and out-of-form wicketkeeper batsman Ishan Kishan (Jharkhand) have made themselves available to play the Buchi Babu Trophy, starting from August 15.

Graham Thorpe took his own life after battling with depression and anxiety, reveals wife

PTI ■ LONDON

Former England cricketer Graham Thorpe took his own life after a struggle with depression and anxiety fuelled by his failing health in the last two years, his wife Amanda has revealed.

The 55-year-old passed away on August 5. Thorpe's demise was announced by the England and Wales Cricket Board and now his wife has revealed in an interview to former England captain Michael Atherton that he had a long mental and physical battle with himself before he took his own life.

"Despite having a wife and two daughters whom he loved and who loved him, he did not get better," Thorpe's wife was quoted as saying by "The Times". "He was so unwell in recent times and he really did believe that we would be better off without him and we are devastated that he acted on that and took his own life."

A ceremony was held before the start of a match between the Farnham Cricket Club and the Chipstead Cricket Club last Saturday in memory of Thorpe, which was attended by his wife and their daughters Kitty (22) and Emma (19).

"For the past couple of years, Graham had been suffering from major depression and anxiety. This led him to make a serious attempt on his life in May 2022, which resulted in a prolonged stay in an intensive care



unit," she said. His wife revealed that despite his work assignments, Thorpe continued to suffer.

"Despite glimpses of hope and of the old Graham, he continued to suffer from depression and anxiety, which at times got very severe. We supported him as a family and he tried many, many treatments but unfortunately none of them really seemed to work," she said.

The report added that the family is now considering starting a foundation in his name. Thorpe's daughter Kitty said he was "not the same person" after a point and that he "could not see a way out".

"He had loved life and he loved us but he just couldn't see a way out. It was heartbreaking to see how withdrawn he had become," she said.

"It was strange to see this person trapped in the body of Dad. That's why we've been so happy that the many reflections have been about his life before this illness took over. "I am glad that's how everyone does remember him, rightly so, as the complete character he was," Kitty added.



South Africa and West Indies settle for a draw in rain-hit 1st test

AP ■ PORT OF SPAIN (TRINIDAD)

Both South Africa and West Indies had hopes of winning the rain-hit first Test before having to settle for a draw.

South Africa set West Indies a target of 298 runs on the fifth and final day at Queen's Park Oval, with Alick Athanaze leading the hosts' chase with 92.

West Indies finished on 201-5 in its second innings as each team started to run out of overs to get the required runs or wickets amid light checks in the evening session.

South Africa had earlier resumed on 30-0 from five overs in its second innings - an overall lead of 154 - and declared at 173-3 from 29

overs. Tristan Stubbs hit 68 and was bowled by Kumar Roach on the last ball before the declaration, which came in the morning session.

Rain had affected every day so far - only 15 overs were bowled on the first day - and lunch was called five minutes early Sunday with West Indies 11-1. The start of the afternoon session was also delayed and, despite Athanaze reaching his half-century, a draw still seemed the likeliest result with West Indies 121-3 at tea. The hosts needed 177 more runs in a maximum of 34 overs remaining.

West Indies quickly lost Kavem Hodge, caught behind for 29 in a wicket maiden for left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj.

Jason Holder came out to join Athanaze at 127-4 and the pair shared a 65-run partnership before Maharaj effectively ended the chase having Athanaze caught for 92 after top-edging to Ryan Rickelton. With no more than 10 overs left and West Indies at 192-5, still 106 runs from victory, the hosts proceeded to score only three runs in the next three overs.

The draw was agreed after Holder (31 not out) smashed a six to lift the West Indies to 201-5.

Maharaj took 4-88 in 26.2 overs. South Africa scored 357 in its first innings and West Indies 233.

The second and final Test starts on Thursday at Providence, Guyana.

High hopes, disappointing show: Indian boxers come a cropper at Paris

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian boxing contingent, that featured two reigning world champions in Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain, entered the Olympics hoping for an unprecedented medal haul, only to crumble under pressure, leaving behind a trail of disappointment in a medal-less campaign.

Boxing became a medal hope for India after Vijender Singh's historic bronze at the 2008 Beijing Games. MC Mary Kom added a women's bronze to it in 2012.

Although the 2016 Rio Games saw the boxers return without a medal, Borgohain clinched a bronze at the Tokyo Olympics to revitalise the sport. Expectations were high from Paris and observers of the

game felt at least one, if not two medals, could be expected from the six boxers who qualified.

Two-time world champion Zareen (50kg), Borgohain (75kg), and 2023 world champion bronze-medallist Nishant Dev (71kg) were all seen as strong podium contenders.

POOR SHOW: But when it came to actual competition, the Indians never seemed to have the momentum needed to go deep into the tournament.

With the exception of Nishant, who was denied a podium finish after a contentious result in his quarterfinal, the rest struggled with Borgohain and Zareen unable to overcome formidable opponents, and Amit Panghal (51kg) failing to match his previous form. Borgohain, Panghal and

Nishant needed just two wins to secure medals.

Although Borgohain and Zareen were handed challenging draws, with both encountering formidable opponents in their second rounds. However, given that they entered as reigning world champions, the two were expected to overcome such challenges or, at the very least, put up a resilient fight.

However, they succumbed rather meekly to their Chinese counterparts. Zareen, who was considered a potential gold medallist, was markedly off-colour in the second round and later revealed that she had been taking some extreme measures to stay inside the prescribed weight limit, that left her exhausted for actual competition.



She opened her campaign with a scrappy win and then lost to Wu Yu in the second round. Borgohain once again fell to old foe Li Qian, who seems to have the Indian's number, having defeated her in three of their four meetings. Among the men, Panghal looked a pale shadow of his

sharp and aggressive self against Zambia's Patrick Chinyemba, who lost in the very next round. Jaismine Lamboria, who came in after dropping down to 57kg weight class from her more comfortable 60kg division, expectedly lost to Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist

Nesthy Petecio. Nevertheless, Preeti Pawar (54kg) delivered a commendable performance in her bout against reigning world silver-medallist Yeni Marcela Arias.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING: A total of 17 national camps and 23 foreign exposure trips were conducted in the build-up to the Paris Olympics for nine core TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) boxers and 20 development pugilists. Sports Ministry spent Rs 60.93 crore on this.

Significant funds were also allocated to individual athletes, most notably Rs 91.71 lakh for Zareen, Rs 81.76 lakh for Borgohain, Rs 65.90 lakh for Panghal, and Rs 65.86 lakh for Nishant.

COACHING INSTABILITY AND SELECTION POLICY:

The Boxing Federation of India's inability to provide a stable environment was a key issue in the build-up to the Games. Since the Tokyo Games, coaches have come and gone, denying the boxers the stability that is crucial to an Olympic campaign.

Women's High Performance Director Raffaele Bergamasco was the first to depart right after Tokyo followed by men's HPD Santiago Nieva in May 2022.

Narendra Rana succeeded CA Kuttapa as the men's head coach, only for Kuttapa to be reinstated later.

Bhaskar Bhatt was briefly appointed as the women's head coach before he quit the position in June 2023 while HPD Bernard Dunne, who was appointed in October 2022, stepped down from his

post four months before the Olympics, leaving Indian boxing in a lurch.

Foreign coach Dmitriy Dmitruk was the last coach appointed in February last year.

The new selection policy that replaced the trial system was also a talking point.

Panghal remained out of the national team until the last qualifier with Deepak Bhoria getting the nod based on the assessment system that relied on camp performance as well as competitive results to evaluate the boxers.

However, Panghal was sent to the final qualifier, and while he secured a quota, the Haryana boxer struggled to shake off the rustiness after being away from international competition for an extended period.

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