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SC takes cognisance of Kolkata rape horror

RAJESH KUMAR/SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has taken suo-motu cognisance of the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The case is set to be heard by a bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud on Tuesday. According to the cause list for August 20, uploaded on the apex court's website, a bench headed by CJI Chandrachud is scheduled to hear a matter titled 'In Re: Alleged rape and murder incident of a trainee doctor in RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Kolkata, and related issues'. The Supreme Court's intervention comes in the wake of mounting public pressure and allegations of mishandling by State authorities. Earlier two lawyers practising in the Supreme Court — Ujjawal Gaur and Rohit Pandey, penned a letter to the CJI on Thursday, urging him to take immediate action in the case. In their letter, the advocates emphasised the urgent need for the highest court in the country to step in, given the gravity and seriousness of the incident. "The nation looks to the judiciary as the ultimate guardian of justice, the last refuge for those whose cries



Members of various Resident Doctors' Associations protest during a candle march against the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, at Connaught Place, in New Delhi, on Sunday. Ranjan Dimri

have been silenced by brutality. "The victim in this case, a young doctor whose life was dedicated to serving others, deserves nothing less than the full measure of justice that our legal system can provide. Her death must not be in vain, it must galvanise us to act, to ensure that no

other woman suffers such a fate," stated the letter. "The time has come for the judiciary to send a clear and resounding message that such heinous crimes will not be tolerated, that the sanctity of life and the dignity of women must be fiercely protected by the full might of the law," it said.

The Calcutta High Court recently transferred the probe from the Kolkata Police to the CBI. The case has raised serious concerns about the safety of medical professionals in India, particularly women, who are often left vulnerable in their workplaces.

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CBI closes in on crucial evidence in murder case

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The call detail records of Sandip Ghosh, the former principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, along with the personal diary of the slain lady doctor, could hold crucial clues to unraveling the mystery behind her rape and murder, according to some Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials. During his interrogation, Ghosh has not been forthcoming about his phone call activities before and after the murder, prompting the CBI to seek the details from service providers, sources said. Ghosh, who has already been grilled by the CBI for more than 28 hours over two consecutive days, also failed to provide explanations for the torn pages from the victim's diary, which were previously recovered by the police. The victim's family members have expressed their suspicions about certain individuals, noting that she had mentioned her

reluctance to perform night shifts at the hospital. "Clearly, she was under pressure for some reason or was privy to something she should not have known," one family member speculated, questioning why the victim would tear out 4-5 pages from her personal diary. On Sunday, the CBI summoned several security staff members and a subaltern police officer for questioning. However, investigators have yet to determine why hospital authorities delayed informing the police by two hours after discovering the body or why students and staff were instructed not to go to the third floor, where the seminar room — and the victim's body — was found early on the morning of August 9. The officials also have asked the former principal of the college as to why the common wall between the bathroom and the seminar hall was pulled down after the incident and why the washbasins and such other things were replaced in a hurry.

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Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren speaks with the media upon his arrival at Delhi airport on Sunday. PTI

All does not seem well with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

All is not well within the Mukti Morcha (JMM) as the state approaches its upcoming Assembly polls. Senior JMM leader and former Chief Minister Champai Soren, popularly known as the "Jharkhand Tiger," has sparked speculation about his possible defection to the BJP. Adding fuel to the rumours, Soren recently removed JMM's name from his X (formerly Twitter) profile and said he is considering three options: retiring from politics, starting a new party, or joining another party. Notably, his X profile now only describes him as the former Chief Minister of Jharkhand, with no reference to the JMM. This development comes less than two months after Soren

handed over the reins of Jharkhand to his successor, Hemant Soren. In a strong indication that he may quit the party, Champai penned an emotional letter on X detailing the "insults and contempt" he has had to bear recently at the hands of his own partymen that eventually forced him to look for an "alternative path." "After so much insult and contempt, I was forced to look for an alternative path," he said. "With a heavy heart, I said in the same meeting of the legislative party that — "A new chapter of my life is going to start from today." I had three options: First, to retire from politics, second, to form my own separate organisation and third, if I find a companion on this path, then to travel further with him," Champai wrote on his social media post.

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10 killed, 27 hurt in UP road tragedy

PNS ■ BULANDSHAHR (UP)

Ten people were killed and 27 injured when a pickup van collided head-on with a private bus in the Salempur area here on Sunday, officials said. The accident occurred on the Budaun-Meerut State highway, around 14 kilometres from the district headquarters. The traffic on the road was briefly affected due to the incident. According to locals, the pickup van was coming from Ghaziabad when it collided with the bus. "Ten people were killed and 27 were injured in the accident. The injured have been sent to different hospitals," District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh told reporters. The deceased were identified as Mukut Singh (45), Deen Nath (45), Brijesh (18), Babu Singh (19), Shishupal (27), Girraj Singh (26), Sugarpal (35) and Omarkar (30). Two of the deceased are yet to be identified, he said. Nine of the injured are undergoing treatment at a private hospital. The condition of four of the injured was serious and they were referred to the Meerut Medical College.

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The offices of The Pioneer will remain closed on Monday, August 19, 2024 on account of Rakshabandhan. The next edition of the newspaper will appear on Wednesday, August 21, 2024.

Bitter Football Foes of Bengal unite against rape horror

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after the Kolkata Police cancelled the highly anticipated Derby Match between Mohun Bagan and East Bengal FC — citing a shortage of manpower and concerns about potential disturbances due to ongoing protests over the doctor's rape and murder — more than 10,000 supporters from the three clubs took to the street of Kolkata to demand justice. This unity was unprecedented, as for years, the fans of Mohun Bagan Club, East Bengal Club, and Mohammedan Sporting Club have been fierce rivals in Kolkata's football scene. These three century-old giants, whose supporters have a long history of street clashes



and even fatalities due to their intense rivalries, found common ground in their shared call for justice for the slain doctor. The fans, defying prohibitory orders under Section 163 (formerly Section 144, CrPC) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, gathered at

the iconic Salt Lake Stadium to voice their outrage over the brutal crime. The victim's semi-nude body had been found inside the hospital on the morning of August 9. Dramatic scenes unfolded in front of the stadium, where police struggled to disperse the

football fans, resorting to lathi charges as the supporters chanted, "Lobster and Hilsa unite at the death of our own sister." The chant symbolised the unlikely unity between Mohun Bagan supporters (represented by Lobster, associated with western Bengal) and East Bengal supporters (represented by Hilsa, symbolising those who migrated from East Bengal), highlighting the cultural divide that the tragedy bridged. Mohun Bagan, known as the National Club of India, was founded on August 15, 1889. Mohammedan Sporting Club followed in 1891, and East Bengal Club was established in 1920.

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Child Rights head red flags radical curriculum of Bihar madrasas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) chairman Priyank Kanoongo on Sunday expressed concerns over the "radical" curriculum being taught in Government-funded madrasas in Bihar and the enrollment of Hindu children in such institutions. Also, he questioned the involvement of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in designing this curriculum, calling it the "height of appeasement" by both UNICEF and the Bihar Madrasa Board. Kanoongo urged the United Nations to investigate these activities and called for the dissolution of the Madrasa Board. In a recent post on the microblogging platform X, he highlighted that textbooks like Talimul Islam used in these madrasas label non-Islamic individuals as "kafir" (infidels). He noted with alarm that Hindu children are reportedly enrolled in these madrasas, though the Bihar Government has yet to provide official figures. Regarding the transfer of



Hindu children from madrasas to regular schools, Kanoongo said the Bihar Madrasa Board claimed the curriculum was prepared by UNICEF India. In his post, Kanoongo criticised UNICEF, stating, "It is not UNICEF's job to create a radical curriculum using money received as donations and grants from governments, under the guise of child protection." A response from UNICEF on this matter is still awaited. Kanoongo also revealed that many of the textbooks used in these madrasas are

published in Pakistan and that research on their content is ongoing. He said, "A madrasa is not a place for basic education of children in any form; children should study in regular schools, and Hindu children should not be in madrasas at all." Kanoongo emphasised that the use of funds for activities beyond the scope of the Right to Education (RTE) Act violates both the Indian Constitution and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). He demanded that the United Nations and its agencies in India conduct a thorough investigation into these activities.

Sriram's IAS coaching centre penalised

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed ₹3 lakh penalty on coaching institute Sriram's IAS for publishing misleading advertisements and violating consumer rights. The misleading advertisement was related to its claims regarding UPSC Civil Service Exam 2022. In a

statement, the CCPA said because of the violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the CCPA, headed by Chief Commissioner, Nidhi Khare, and Commissioner, Anupam Mishra, has issued an order against Sriram's IAS for misleading advertisement regarding UPSC Civil Service Exam 2022. Coaching institutes and online edtech platforms use

pictures and names of some successful candidates to influence prospective aspirants (consumers), without disclosing the courses opted by such candidates and length of the course so attended. According to an official statement, the CCPA has imposed a "penalty of ₹3 lakh for misleading advertisement on Sriram's IAS".

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This Rakhi, markets to cross all bandhan with record sales

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

As people prepare to celebrate Raksha Bandhan on Monday, sales across the country are expected to surpass ₹12,000 crore, marking a ₹2,000 crore increase from last year. This year, Rakhi sales are expected to generate over ₹12,000 crore in revenue nationwide, with markets experiencing a surge in demand for "Made in India" Rakhis. Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) national general secretary and Chandni Chowk BJP MP, Praveen Khandelwal, said the demand for Rakhis has surged in recent days, with sales setting new records in 2023. "It is expected that this year, the business during the Rakhi festival will reach ₹12,000 crore, compared to last year's trade of approximately

₹10,000 crore. In 2022, the business was around ₹7,000 crore, in 2021 it was ₹6,000 crore, in 2020 it was ₹5,000 crore, in 2019 it was ₹3,500 crore, and in 2018 it was ₹3,000 crore," he said. Buyers who previously purchased cheaper Chinese Rakhis are now turning to local made Rakhis. These include Khadi Rakhis from Nagpur, Sangneri Art Rakhis from Jaipur, Seed Rakhis from Pune, Woolen Rakhis from Satna in Madhya Pradesh, Bamboo Rakhis made from tribal materials, Tea Leaf Rakhis from Assam, Jute Rakhis from Kolkata, Silk Rakhis from Mumbai, Date Rakhis from Kerala, Pearl Rakhis from Kanpur, Madhubani and Maithili Art Rakhis from Bihar, Soft Stone Rakhis from Pondicherry, and Flower Rakhis from Bangalore. CAIT's national president BC



Bhartia said a unique aspect of this year's festival is the wide variety of Rakhis made from famous products of various cities across the country. Additionally, there is a high demand for Rakhis that showcase national pride, such as Tricolour Rakhis, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam Rakhis, and Bharat Mata Rakhis. Designer and silver Rakhis are also selling well in the market. He said from Raksha Bandhan on

August 19 until the festival period concludes with Tuls Vivah on November 15, festive sales in the country's markets are expected to surpass ₹4 lakh crore, predominantly through the sale of Indian-origin goods. This festive series begins with Raksha Bandhan and continues through Janmashtami, the 10-day Ganesh Utsav, Navratri, Durga Puja, Dussehra, Karva Chauth, Dhanteras, Diwali, Govardhan Puja, Bhai Dooj, Chhath Puja, and other festivals, culminating with Tuls Vivah. During this time, the business community is fully prepared to meet consumer demands, with traders across all States stocking up adequately on Indian products. For the past four years, CAIT has successfully promoted a campaign encouraging the purchase of Indian

products and the boycott of Chinese goods, especially during festivals. While Chinese products used to dominate the market due to their lower prices, indigenous Rakhis have been the sole focus for several years. This year, too, there was neither demand for nor presence of Chinese Rakhis in the market. The chairman of CAIT's Vedic Committee and Vedic scholar from Ujjain, Acharya Durgesh Tare, said on August 19, there is a 'Bhadra' period lasting until 1:30 pm, during which no auspicious activities should be performed. As a result, the sacred festival of Raksha Bandhan will be celebrated across the country starting from 1:31 pm onwards. CAIT has issued this advisory to all trader organisations across the country, recommending that all traders celebrate Raksha Bandhan during the auspicious time.

Double-engine govt giving wings to aspirations of youth: Yogi



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a programme in Kumarganj, Ayodhya on Sunday

PNS ■ AYODHYA/LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claimed that the double-engine government is giving wings to the aspirations of the youth, emphasising their role in India's progress and empowerment. Addressing the youth at the Rozgar Mela and Yuva Sammelan held in Kumarganj, Ayodhya, after distributing appointment letters to the youth as well as smartphones and tablets to students, the chief minister reiterated his government's commitment to addressing their needs, ensuring job availability and helping fulfill their aspirations. The chief minister also launched a scathing attack on the opposition parties for "supporting" the recent rape incidents in Kolkata, Ayodhya and Kannauj and spreading fake news on social media to "defame the residents of Ayodhya". Yogi stated, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned that only four groups of people need to be empowered in the country: the poor, the farmers, the youth and women, who represent half the population. The double-engine government is working towards achieving the goal of zero poverty." Efforts are being made to enhance the prosperity of farmers, increase their income, and support them through agricultural and technological universities, agricultural scientists and progressive farmers, he added. For the youth to contribute their talent and energy to nation-building, the government is committed to generating employment opportunities, skill development programmes and new initiatives to make them technically proficient, he further stated. "Continuous efforts are being made for women empowerment. The results of initiatives like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' and efforts started in other areas are showing their results," Chief Minister Yogi added. Yogi Adityanath discussed the changed perception of the state, reflecting on the conditions in Uttar Pradesh seven years ago. He recalled that riots occurred every third day, festivals could not be celebrated peacefully, and both girls and traders faced security threats. Over the past seven years, UP has transformed its perception, he added.

"Today, it (UP) has become a model for security and law enforcement and a dream destination for investment, attracting both domestic and international investors. This influx of investment has successfully created jobs for lakhs of youth in their villages and homes. So far, 1.62 crore youth have secured employment through these investments," he informed. Chief Minister Yogi added that programmes like One District One Product, Vishwakarma Shram Samman, PM Vishwakarma, PM SVANidhi, PM Swarojgar Yojana and the PM Mudra Yojana have paved the way for economic self-reliance. In line with these initiatives, the state government has successfully provided government jobs to 6.5 lakh youth, he added. Regarding police recruitment, Chief Minister Yogi announced that the process for police recruitment exams will continue on August 23, 24, 25, and then August 30 and 31, aiming to recruit 60,000 youths. This is the largest recruitment drive in Uttar Pradesh's history, with 20 per cent of the seats reserved for women. The recruitment of women is intended to ensure that they can effectively address harassment on the streets and intersections, he added. Lashing out at the leaders of Samajwadi Party and other opposition parties for "supporting" the rapists, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath remarked, "While Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi is advancing initiatives like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' and ensuring 33 per cent reservation for women in the country's Parliament and state assemblies through the Nari Shakti Vandan Act, SP leaders are supporting the rapists involved in the gang-rape of a doctor in Kolkata." He recalled that these are the same individuals who once claimed that boys make mistakes and who shamelessly defended the criminals involved in the rape of a poor, marginalised girl in Ayodhya. One of their leaders was also caught in a similar case in Kannauj, and in Lucknow, the party chief stood in support of criminals who threw a daughter into rainwater. Continuing the attack, Yogi said, "It is the character of this party. They have considered it their life's goal to prove every rapist and criminal innocent but such conduct will not be tolerated in

UP." Referring to corruption in job appointments before 2017, the chief minister stated that during the tenure of opposition parties, they similarly exploited the rights of the youth. He recalled that at that time, every appointment was controversial, injustice was prevalent, no appointment could be made without money, and discrimination was rampant in jobs, often requiring court intervention. "Today, with 6.5 lakh youth having been given jobs under a transparent and clean process, there is no question of integrity. Under the double-engine government, no injustice will be done to the youth," Yogi added. He warned that if anyone jeopardises the lives of the youth, their entire property will be seized to build housing for the poor. Uttar Pradesh has changed, and the new UP aims to connect 25 crore people with the mainstream of development and bring transformation to their lives, he added. To advance this campaign of change, leverage the potential and energy of the youth for national development and make Uttar Pradesh a growth engine for the country, the chief minister stated, emphasising the importance of Rozgar Mela in achieving these goals. Chief Minister Yogi announced that the state government has launched the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Yojana. Under this initiative, a major plan is being implemented to establish 10 lakh micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) units. For youth interested in this scheme, the government will provide training and offer an interest-free loan of Rs 5 lakh in the first phase. They will also be connected to digital payments. The scheme aims to set up 10 lakh MSME units and guarantee employment for 50 lakh youth. "Youth pursuing degrees, post-graduate studies, ITI, polytechnic or engineering will be connected to apprenticeships with a fixed stipend. The stipend will be split between the unit and the government. Furthermore, the government has started Abhyuday coaching centres in every district to aid preparation for competitive exams. These centres are providing guidance both virtual

ly and physically, and students who have received coaching from Abhyuday are achieving significant success in job placements," the chief minister said. Yogi stated that the "once-curse-ridden" Ayodhya, due to the actions of previous governments, is now presenting a model of development. What were once narrow lanes have now been connected to four-lane roads. The roads and airports here are attracting global attention. Those who disapprove of Ayodhya's development have begun spreading misinformation on social media. Such individuals raise doubts about their intelligence and judgment. They attempt to put the people of Ayodhya in a negative light by spreading fake news, Yogi pointed out. On Saturday, after distributing appointment letters and tablets in Ambedkar Nagar, the chief minister on Sunday, distributed appointment letters to a large number of youths and tablets and smartphones to students at the district-level Rozgar Mela and Yuva Sammelan. Earlier, he met with representatives of various companies participating in the Rozgar Mela as well as students attending the event. During this visit, Chief Minister Yogi inaugurated development projects worth approximately Rs 30 crore and laid the foundation for projects worth around Rs 48 crore by pressing the button. On this occasion, Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Kapil Dev Agarwal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Sports and Youth Welfare Girish Chandra Yadav, Minister of Medical Health department Mayankeshwar Sharan, Minister of Food and Logistics department Satish Chandra Sharma, District panchayat chairperson Roli Singh, Mayor Girish Pati Tripathi, MLA Ram Chandra Yadav, Ved Prakash Gupta, Amit Singh Chauhan, former MP Lallu Singh, Bharatiya Janata Party district president Sanjeev Singh, metropolitan president Kamlesh Srivastava, former MLA Gorakhnath Baba, Vice-Chancellor of Acharya Narendra Dev Agriculture and Technology University Prof Vijendra Singh, teachers and students of the university were present.

CM discusses HC order on assistant teachers

Lucknow (PNS) : Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, held a meeting to discuss the government's future course of action on the direction of the Allahabad High Court for preparing a fresh selection list within three months regarding the appointment of 69,000 assistant teachers in state-run primary schools. Official sources said the chief minister was apprised of details of the high court order. The chief minister directed the officials of the Basic Education department to ensure compliance with the high court order in letter and spirit. "It is the firm view of the state government that the candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes category must get the benefit of the constitutional provision of reservation and there should be no injustice of any kind with any candidate," the official sources said.

Minister's driver found dead

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Rajveer Singh, the driver for the Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development Minister Dharmapal Singh, was found dead at the PWD Guest House in Bareilly on Sunday. After multiple phone calls to Rajveer Singh went unanswered, the security personnel went at his room and found the door locked from the inside. Upon breaking the door open, Rajveer was found hanging from a noose. His mobile phone was found in his pocket, and he was wearing headphones, suggesting he might have been talking to someone when he committed suicide. According to the Kotwali police, Rajveer Singh was a native of Rasouli in Barabanki and was driving a vehicle provided by Anand Shukla, the operator of a travel agency in Aliganj, Lucknow.

Rule of law lays foundation of good governance: Yogi

Financial aid provided to dependents of 577 deceased advocates



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, stated that parliamentary democracy conveys the message of functioning through coordination and mutual understanding. This coordination prioritises public interest and national interest above all and the foundation of this lies in good governance, which is built upon the rule of law which establishes boundaries for every individual in society, he added. Providing financial assistance to the dependents of 577 deceased advocates from the Advocates' Welfare Fund at Lok Bhavan, the chief minister said, "The festival of Raksha Bandhan is tomorrow. This event on the eve of the festival shows that there can be no greater joy than standing by someone in need and being ready to assist them." Yogi stated that the corpus fund of Advocates' Welfare Fund has been increased from Rs 200 crore to Rs 500 crore, with the possibility of further increase if needed. The interest from this fund will ensure

that advocates do not face any problems. The amount provided from the Advocates' Welfare Fund for the dependents of deceased advocates has been raised from Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, and the age limit has been extended from 60 to 70 years. CM Yogi informed, "From 2017-18 to the present, Rs 134,32,50,000 have been provided to the families of 2,754 deceased advocates. Today, Rs 28.31 crore are being distributed to the dependents of 577 advocates. Out of these, 12 dependents are receiving Rs 50,000 each, while 565 dependents are receiving Rs 5 lakh each. Additionally, 3,758 young advocates have been given funds to purchase books and journals for up to three years." He stated that district courts could not be established in 10 districts. Instructions have been given to set up integrated court complexes as soon as possible in those areas. These complexes will also include chambers for advocates, a canteen, parking facilities, and seating arrangements for litigants. CM Yogi Adityanath mentioned that funds have also been allocated for advocates'

chambers in other districts. Financial assistance has been provided for Jhansi, Sultanpur, Varanasi, Pratapgarh, Sant Kabir Nagar, Siddharthnagar, Deoria, Balrampur and Gorakhpur. Additionally, funds had already been provided earlier for Kasganj, Lucknow, Meerut and Shravasti. In the Allahabad High Court, chambers and multi-level parking for 10,000 advocates are being constructed. The government has allocated Rs 608 crore for this purpose. The National Law University in Prayagraj, named after former President Dr Rajendra Prasad was inaugurated on February 16. The state government has provided Rs 387 crore for this project. On this occasion, Allahabad High Court Chief Justice Arun Bhansali, Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Khanna, Senior Justice AR Masoodi, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh, Advocate General Ajay Kumar Mishra, Bar Council president Shivkishore Gaur, Awadh High Court Bar president RD Shahi and Principal Secretary (Justice) Vinod Singh Rawat were present.

Ayodhya to be hub for edu, health and self-reliance

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

As part of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's commitment to the comprehensive development of Ayodhya, the Uttar Pradesh government is on the one hand implementing projects worth approximately Rs 32,000 crore, and on the other, empowering the local youth through education, healthcare and self-reliance. Ayodhya remains a top priority for the chief minister, as demonstrated by his visits to two districts within the division in just two days to foster youth education and self-sufficiency. Chief Minister Yogi's visit to Ayodhya on Sunday marked his third trip to the city within a fortnight. Under the leadership of Gorakshapethadhiswar Yogi Adityanath, Maharana Pratap Shiksha Parishad in Gorakhpur has successfully connected lakhs of students with education. Similarly, Yogi Adityanath is propelling Ayodhya to new heights in education. On Saturday, the chief minister empowered nearly 7,000 youths in Ambedkar Nagar by giving them appointment letters. Besides, 13,866 youths received tablets through 59 colleges. On Sunday, the chief minister extended another significant gift to the youth of Ayodhya by distributing tablets and smartphones to over 3,415 youths. Chief Minister Yogi's vision is

to connect more than 70,000 youths in Ayodhya and Ambedkar Nagar with job opportunities. To support this, 50,000 vacancies have been created in Ayodhya and 21,000 in Ambedkar Nagar. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is steering the development of Ayodhya, establishing new milestones across various sectors. During health crises, Yogi Adityanath has consistently supported the people of Ayodhya. Since assuming office in 2017, up until August 13, 2024, he has allocated Rs 61,61,84,829 from the Chief Minister's Discretionary Fund for treatment of over 3,611 patients. Additionally, Rs 45,71,16,354 has been provided for the treatment of 2,834 patients in Ambedkar Nagar, part of the Ayodhya division. The chief minister has taken charge of Milkipur in Ayodhya and Katehari assembly seat in Ambedkar Nagar for the upcoming by-elections in Uttar Pradesh. He regularly visits these areas and actively engages with party workers. Since assuming office in 2017, Yogi Adityanath has spearheaded development across all 75 districts, focusing on uplift of backward regions. He has also motivated the workers with the mantra, "Win the booth, win the election". The chief minister is reaching out to the people committed to development that transcends caste, religion and creed.

Direct recruitment to senior posts in Centre unconstitutional: Maya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Sunday attacked the Central government over its recent controversial move to fill senior administrative positions in the Centre through a direct recruitment. Former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati, took to social media platform 'X' and said, "The decision of the Centre to fill 45 senior positions, including joint secretary, director, and under secretary, through a direct recruitment is unconstitutional. This approach will deny promotion opportunities to existing lower-level employees and potentially violate constitutional provisions related to the reservation of positions for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Class categories." She contended that filling these high-ranking posts without established rules amounts to arbitrary and unconstitutional action by the Bharatiya Janata Party government. Mayawati also targeted the BJP government in Rajasthan



and specially attacked the "bulldozer" politics. "In Udaipur, Rajasthan, the state government's handling of a recent incident involving a dispute between two schoolchildren is totally unlawful," Mayawati claimed. "Following the alteration, the government demolished the alleged offender's house with a bulldozer, a move which undermines the rule of law. There are calls for the court to take note of this action, which is a violation of legal principles," she posted. "In BJP-ruled states, concerns are also being raised about political actions perceived as attempts to obscure issues related to poor law and order. Such actions are inappropriate and call for the government to ensure the impartial enforcement of laws and to act as a true guardian of justice," Mayawati advised.

Bypoll: Kori to be BSP candidate from Milkipur

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

For the upcoming by-election to the Milkipur assembly constituency of Ayodhya, the Bahujan Samaj Party has announced its candidate. Ramgopal Kori will contest the by-election on the BSP ticket. BSP state president Vishwanath Pal confirmed that Ramgopal Kori has been appointed as the in-charge of the Milkipur assembly constituency and typically, the person appointed as in-charge is also the party's candidate. Ramgopal Kori previously contested from the Milkipur seat in the 2017 elections. He received 46,000 votes and finished in third place. In that election, Gorakhnath Baba of the Bharatiya Janata Party won the seat. In the 2022 assembly election, Gorakhnath Baba was defeated by Awadhesh Prasad of the Samajwadi Party. Awadhesh Prasad has since been elected as a Member of Parliament from the Faizabad constituency in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. As a result, the Milkipur seat has become vacant and will be contested in the by-election. The Samajwadi Party is expected to nominate Awadhesh Prasad's son, Ajit Prasad, for the seat. The BJP is yet to announce its candidate for the by-election.

'Yogi govt has failed to protect interests of disadvantaged'

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party president

Akhilesh Yadav has asked Bharatiya Janata Party leaders belonging to Schedule Caste and Other Backward Classes to quit the ruling party as the Yogi Adityanath government has failed to protect the interests of the disadvantaged sections of society in recruitment of 69,000 teachers to state-run primary school. Akhilesh Yadav said here on Sunday that the SC, OBCs leaders of the BJP should join the SP and strengthen the PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) social alliance. He alleged that the Yogi government, to hide its failure in ensuring the recruitment of primary schools' teachers in a transparent manner, manipulated the recruitment process. Akhilesh yadav said the chief minister should resign if he was unable to ensure justice to SCs and OBCs in recruitment of 69,000 primary school teachers. The SP chief alleged that the BJP government is discriminating with the poor and disadvantaged sections of society and harming the provision of reservation in the Constitution. Yadav also flayed the Central government over the lateral entry of the joint secretary and director level officers in Union government. He said lateral entry of officers in Union government was being done in flagrant violation of the provisions of reservation for SCs, OBCs in the Constitution. He also targeted the Yogi Adityanath government over the law and order issue saying an executive engineer was killed in Sultanpur as he had stopped the payment

of particular work due to substandard quality of construction. Meanwhile, in an apparent attack on Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya over his remarks on the Allahabad High Court's order on assistant teachers' recruitment, Akhilesh Yadav said that those who give pain shouldn't claim to give medicine. In a post on X in Hindi, the SP chief said the "favoured deputy chief minister" was part of the government which snatched reservation from the youth and when they got justice after a long fight, he came forward to show himself as sympathetic. The Allahabad High Court has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to prepare a fresh selection list for the appointment of 69,000 assistant teachers within three months, setting aside the lists issued in June 2020 and January 2022 which included 6,800 candidates. The bench also revised the earlier order and said the reserved category candidates who qualify for the general category merit list should be migrated to that category. In addition, the benefit of vertical reservation should also be extended to horizontal reservation categories. In a post on X on Saturday, Maurya said, "The decision of the Allahabad High Court in the recruitment of teachers is a welcome step towards social justice. This is the victory of those backward category people and Dalits who fought a long battle for their rights. I welcome them wholeheartedly." Akhilesh Yadav accused Maruya of playing political cards.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Moment of truth

Elections to take place in Jammu and Kashmir after 10 years; first time after abrogation of Article 370

For the first time in a decade, elections are set to be held in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. After a long wait the elections have been announced for Jammu and Kashmir; the first since 2014, will take place in three phases on September 18, September 25, and October 1, with the results set to be declared on October 4. The region has been under President's Rule since 2018. This election marks significant progress in meeting the Supreme Court's directive that democracy be reinstated in Jammu and the Kashmir Valley by September 30. Last month in Srinagar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had confirmed the upcoming election. This is particularly significant as it follows the bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two separate union territories — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh — in August 2019, when Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which provided special status to the region, was abrogated by the Indian Government. The last elections in Jammu and Kashmir were held in 2014, before the abrogation of



Article 370 and the dissolution of the state's legislative assembly in 2018. Since the 2019 political reorganization, Jammu and Kashmir has been under central administration. The impending elections will not only address the demand for local governance but will also test the popularity of the government's policies and decision in the region.

With new electoral boundaries drawn post-delimitation, the political map of Jammu and Kashmir has changed. This could impact electoral outcomes, shifting the balance of power between regional parties like the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and national parties like the

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). These elections could set the stage for fresh political alliances and realignments, potentially altering the political dynamics between the Kashmir and Jammu regions. The region's security situation will play a major role in the lead-up to and during the elections. The success of the elections will depend on maintaining peace and ensuring free and fair polling. Indeed, it would be quite a challenge to have peaceful elections, given the recent terrorist attacks in Jammu. Both domestic and international observers will be watching closely to assess the level of participation, especially in the Kashmir Valley. A high voter turnout could bolster the Indian government's stance that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and that democratic processes are functioning. On the other hand, a low turnout, especially in the valley, could suggest a disconnect between the people and the political establishment, complicating efforts to resolve tensions in the region. Elections are likely to impact the region's economy in a positive way. The new government will need to address unemployment, revive the tourism sector, and bring much-needed investments. A successful election could restore a sense of democratic normalcy but the task is daunting. A successful election, no matter who wins, will surely align J&K with the country's mainstream political landscape.

PICTALK



Women devotees carry holy water in the 'Kalash Yatra' in Jaipur

Lessons from the Wayanad tragedy



ATUL SEHGAL

To prevent future catastrophes, we must reassess our approach to urban planning and disaster management, ensuring that development is aligned with sustainable practices

The Wayanad tragedy—serious lessons for the future. The incident and news of the very recent Wayanad landslide tragedy seems to be passé. No one is talking about it now when the media headlines are being hogged by the fresh and more serious episode—of rape, mob violence and anarchy in Kolkata, WB. This does not suggest that we begin taking a lighter look at the long-term serious administrative steps required to forestall incidents of landslides occurring more due to misgovernance than climate change. More of such incidents are waiting to happen if we do not take urgent, timely steps. It is with great shock that we heard the tragic death of more than 400 persons in the landslides in Wayanad, Kerala and of another 250-plus persons who were reportedly injured or missing. The two large landslides that hit Mundakkai and Chooralmala in Wayanad in the early hours of July 30, resulted in wide destruction, several fatalities, and serious injuries to hundreds. While incidents of natural disasters are episodes apparently beyond the control of humans, there is much humans can do to prevent them and minimize the damage wrought by them after they occur. It is remarkable that just about a week before this tragedy the state government in Kerala was warned by the Union Home Ministry about the possibility of a catastrophe based on the feedback provided by an NDRF team deputed to assess the susceptible site. This is a sad and sobering reflection on the ham-fisted administrative machinery of the state government in India. The frequent incidents of collapse of buildings and bridges in our country have a direct and crying connection with unauthorised, faulty building construction in violation of prescribed safety norms of the government. This illegal construction takes place right under the nose of regulatory agencies of the government. Corrupt government officials allow unauthorised construction and things appear normal till some major mishap occurs, capturing news head-



lines all over. The sadder part of the story is that state governments are inadequately equipped for disaster management. Invariably, central assistance is sought and the army has to come to the rescue of the hapless, distressed citizens. The case of landslides and the damage caused by them is not much different from that of buildings and bridges collapsing elsewhere. It would be in the fitness of things to systematically list out the reasons and preventive remedies for such catastrophic landslide events in our country.

Heavy torrential rains: Heavy torrential rains are not the core causal factors. They are only the triggering factors behind such landslides. Further, to say that the intensity and frequency of rainfall in any region or area is purely subject to uncertainties of nature is not quite correct. Our living paradigms do influence rainfall patterns in various geographical areas. Climate change is the result of faulty living paradigms. There are things we can do to prevent interruption of normal rainfall patterns. Ancient scientific literature of India can provide useful guidance in this regard.

Wrong building construction practices: Our building construction and water management practices are not perfect. Our deficient under-



HEAVY TORRENTIAL RAINS ARE NOT THE CORE CAUSAL FACTORS. THEY ARE ONLY THE TRIGGERING FACTORS BEHIND SUCH LANDSLIDES

standing and practices based thereon regarding the earth's geographical interiors puts us in a vulnerable position. Cracking and crumbling mountains are a direct outcome of these practices. In this regard, one has to merely cast a look at medieval time buildings that stand intact after hundreds of years while also maintaining the integrity of their surrounding hilly sites. Ancient and medieval buildings were built with stones. Modern buildings use RCC with heavy foundations that damage the host sites. We need to learn and adopt some of our ancient building techniques which gave stronger, environment friendly and more durable structures.

Unauthorised mining: Unauthorised mining activities in contravention of set safety regulations cause tremendous harm to the terrains, making them vulnerable to landslides. Strong deterrent and punitive legal measures are the need of the hour.

Local violation of established building safety norms: As stated above, corruption in municipalities and local government bodies accounts for many cases of unauthorised building construction in flagrant violation of safety norms. Violation of safety norms should be strictly penalised.

Deforestation: Deforestation

in hilly areas for indiscriminate construction—either of residential buildings or commercial buildings bridges highways or flyovers is a big factor in the wearing of underground natural plates that support hills and mountains. The adverse effects of deforestation may not be evident immediately. But long term, they show themselves in the form of natural disturbances leading to earthquakes and climate change. This phenomenon needs to be studied at the institutional level, and supported by the government. We should not always depend on foreign agency research results. We have the capability and wherewithal to carry out research and devise remedial measures in the form of specific afforestation measures in identified regions.

Inept state government machinery: As indicated above, our state government agencies are neglectful, inefficient, callous and corrupt. What is the reason? Proper systems do not exist that will ensure the identification and penalization of the guilty in such matters. Slow and tardy judicial proceedings in an unsound judicial system only serve to encourage the inefficient and the corrupt. (The author is a management consultant based in New Delhi; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MAMATA SHOULD STEP DOWN

Madam — Barring the emergency cases, number of State hospitals including private institutions have boycotted their OP (Out Patient) services to show their solidarity for the victim on the brutal rape and murder at RG Kar hospital Calcutta. The CM of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee must be crest fallen and should have taken up the moral responsibility and have resigned by now for this gruesome murder and rape of the intern doctor at RG Kar hospital. Who can understand better the pains of a woman other than a woman who's heading the State? Her party in power by taking out a rally when she herself is the Chief Minister, Home Minister and Health Minister is the height of a mockery when she failed in all the three counts even in maintaining the basic law and order in the state. The Calcutta High Court has lost its faith in the West Bengal government while shocked to observe the vandalism played upon post the incident at the hospital premises. Mamata can't have any defence and the enquiry by CBI is not the end of the case to bring real culprits to books. WB needs a disinfectant to clean the hospital as well as the minds of the team Mamata on the whole to ensure safety of the people is causing a greater concern.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

CM SIDDARAMAIAH IN TROUBLE

Madam — The Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is poised to face prosecution in connection with the MUDA land scam case. The approval for legal action has been granted by Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot, following a private complaint. The allegations centre around the Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) and claims of malpractices surrounding land allotments. It is alleged that Parvathi Siddaramaiah, the wife of CM benefited from irregularities when MUDA acquired her 3-

Elections in J&K after 10 years



The Supreme Court's order had been implemented meticulously by the election commission and election had been declared and have been welcomed by all including the radicals which is a momentous moment for citizens of the state and it will pave the way for the return of democracy to the Valley however complex a process it might prove to be.

Due to the elections in the state people will get the chance to elect the popular government in the state and people will have direct say in the government which is the representative way and the Indian way of upholding democratic values. It is the right step forward irrespective of what the changed status has meant in the last five years after

The arguments can be endless over the propriety of going back on a historical commitment, but there is no denying that democracy is now slated to return to a more egalitarian region, even if it has been divided into two UTs of J&K and Ladakh. Long-term stability and prosperity of the region can be assured if a popular government is in charge and works for the development of the people.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

PARIS PARALYMPICS

Madam — In a warm send off ceremony of the athletes for Paris Paralympics 2024. India is sending its largest-ever contingent for the Paris Paralympic Games as 84 athletes will look to leave no stone unturned in their quest for glory in the French capital.

Those 84 athletes will be taking part in 12 sports archery, athletics, badminton, canoeing, cycling, blind judo and powerlifting among others. The para-athletes have a remarkable ability to overcome obstacles and turn challenges into opportunities. They have shown remarkable determination and perseverance in their preparation and hopes were made of getting the highest ever medal in the game. We wish them the very best and are sure they will inspire millions back home with their performances and medal tally. Hope this time, each and every athlete will perform well.

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Tackling the water management crisis amidst rapid development

India needs to build a resilient water ecosystem that supports our growing urban needs and contributes towards the holistic vision of Viksit Bharat

India's urban landscape has undergone a tremendous transformation since independence, evolving from traditional townships into thriving metropolises that drive the nation's economic and cultural growth. The Government of India's ambition for a Viksit Bharat by 2047 and their efforts have provided the necessary impetus for this sector. The Union Budget 2024-25 reflects this commitment with an allocation of Rs 11.11 lakh crore in capital expenditure and an emphasis on water supply, sewage treatment, and solid waste management projects in collaboration with state governments, multilateral development banks, and research institutions. Our cities, bustling with life and opportunities, stand as testaments to our collective aspirations and endeavours. Yet, beneath this vibrant facade lies a critical challenge that demands urgent attention and innovative solutions: water and wastewater management. **The Past & the Present Status of Wastewater Management in India:** India's rapid urbanisation has



brought with it significant challenges in managing water resources. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) (data for 2020-21), India's urban centres generate around 72,368 million litres of sewage per day, but the treatment capacity is only 31,841 million litres per day. This gap leads to untreated wastewater being discharged into our rivers and lakes, contributing to pollution and posing severe health risks. The Government has initiated several programs like the Namami Gange Programme, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), and the Smart Cities Mission to address these issues. These initiatives aim to enhance the sewage treatment infrastructure, promote sustainable urban development, and ensure clean

water availability. However, over the years, the path to achieving these goals has encountered numerous challenges, from inadequate infrastructure to the absence of innovation, funding constraints and lack of relevant stakeholder partnership. The gloom has taken a shift in the recent past with relevant stakeholders like youth from the communities, government, and private players all stepping up, discussing viable solutions, promoting innovation and emphasising the need to present sustainable solutions against water & wastewater challenges.

Sustainable Management of Water in India: In India, the future of water hinges on our ability to adopt the circular model, offering a holistic and integrated approach towards water management. Unlike the traditional linear approach, a circular economy emphasises reducing waste, reusing resources, and recycling materials to create a closed-loop system. In the context of water management, this means treating wastewater to high standards and reusing it for various purposes, such as industrial

processes, agricultural irrigation, and landscape maintenance. Thus, significantly reducing the demand for freshwater resources and ensuring treated water gets reintegrated into the supply cycle.

A Blend of Factors to Achieve Water Management The nation's urban development cannot be chalked down and implemented by a single entity especially for a country like ours with a huge geographic scale. **Learnings and the Road Ahead:** Despite the global threat that water presents, every nation adapts to an approach more suited to its people and developmental needs. The urban development has picked up momentum in recent decades. We need to balance development ambitions and ensure the essentials. A practical way to fix that is by building a resilient water ecosystem that supports our growing urban needs and contributes towards the holistic vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

(The writer is the CEO of Suez India; views are personal)



RASMI RANJAN RAY



FIRST COLUMN

THE ART OF OFFICE FRIENDSHIP

Be clear about where to draw the line, respect others' time, workload and personal space



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

In today's fast-paced corporate climate, the line that traditionally defines coworker and friend is becoming increasingly blurred. With the amount of time spent at work nowadays, professional connections are no longer optional, but rather required. At the same time, these interactions necessitate skill, awareness, and a healthy dosage of emotional intelligence. Imagine this: You're out for coffee with your work BFF, laughing about last night's reality TV drama, when your boss walks in. Do you switch to shop chat or keep the banter going? It's a circumstance that demonstrates the narrow line that must be walked in business friendships. What's the key? Mastering the art of context change.

Professionalism does not need you to transform into a robot from 9 to 5. It's knowing when and how to crack a joke, as well as when to go serious. For lunch breaks, a friendship's dimmer switch is extremely bright and vivid, slightly dim for group projects, and extremely professional during business meetings. Remember the phrase "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas"? Consider that in your workplace friendships. All those meaningful chats over after-work drinks? Not a water cooler material. Closed-door conversations and revelations made outside of the office should be treated as classified material. That's because your ability to maintain secrets may make or destroy your working relationships, and even your career.

Effective communication is crucial in all relationships, but business connections have a unique twist. As much as you want to keep communication open, you must also respect privacy. It's a difficult balance of being



there for the work friend without intruding into areas they're not ready to discuss. The benefits of working friendships include the ability to accept and provide honest feedback. However, if constructive criticism is not handled correctly, it may quickly turn into a friendship minefield. Wrap that severe love with genuine support. Remember that your goal is for both of you to succeed, not to win a point-scoring contest. Arguments will inevitably occur, even among the best of colleagues. Your adept handling of these hiccups in the path is an undeniable sign of friendship. Address disagreements directly on, but with sensitivity and professionalism; see it as a means to strengthen your partnership, not a friendship-ending disaster.

It's acceptable to get along better with some people than others, but try to avoid forming restricted groups. Instead, be the friend who draws everyone together. Organise inclusive team activities to help break down departmental barriers. Who knows, you might meet your next work bestie in accounting! We all have terrible days, but repeatedly unloading personal problems to your coworkers will put even the strongest relationships under strain. Consider the emotional strain you're putting on others. Sometimes a simple "I'm having a rough day" may suffice—save the deep dives for proper times and locations. The key to a working friendship is setting clear boundaries. Some suggestions include being clear about where to draw the line regarding each other's time, workload, space, or personal difficulties. Consider setting boundaries to be like a guardrail, keeping your friendship on track but not a wall. Finally, be sure to appreciate your victories, big and small. That fast high-five you received for acing that presentation, or the team lunch for sealing a major deal? Those boost office morale. These moments of shared joy are the glue that holds workplace friendships together. Lastly, success in business friendships requires establishing a balance between professionalism and personal connection. Hit the sweet spot, and you may find enthusiasm in your professional life while also developing potential lasting relationships outside of the confines of your current position. Go ahead, take the first step towards making your cubicle neighbour a true friend!

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

Responsible tourism: Our promise to future generations



DIVYA BHATIA

The future of tourism hinges on responsible travel, where both travelers and industry stakeholders play a crucial role in preserving our heritage for future generations

Visit Agra, and you'll witness a heart-wrenching sight: graffiti marring the walls of its iconic monuments. Lovers etching their names into the Taj Mahal—a monument of love—are tarnishing the legacy of love with their reckless behavior. This is just one example of irresponsible tourism. From defacing historic sites to littering, damaging environments, and polluting water bodies, such behavior is widespread.

To counteract these issues, embracing responsible tourism is now essential. The tourism industry, one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors globally, holds vast potential for economic growth. Yet, this rapid expansion often brings environmental and social challenges. Over-tourism can damage natural habitats, exhaust local resources, and erode cultural traditions. Sustainable tourism aims to address these challenges by promoting responsible travel that supports local communities and preserves the environment.

Tourism's environmental footprint is broad, affecting ecosystems, biodiversity, pollution, and resource use. Popular destinations often see spikes in waste, water shortages, and habitat destruction due to tourist influxes. The Great Barrier Reef in Australia, for instance, is under threat from both climate change and tourism, highlighting the need for immediate conservation efforts. This underscores the significance of sustainable tourism practices that emphasise environmental care.

Governments are key players in driving sustainable tourism, establishing policies and frameworks that encourage eco-friendly practices. Australia, known for its diverse landscapes and rich biodiversity, has long understood this necessity. Nishant Kashikar, Country Manager for India & Gulf at Tourism Australia, explains the country's dedication to sustainable tourism: "Australia's culture, landscape, and wildlife form the heart of our tourism industry. We have a duty to manage them wisely." Through collaborations with tourism operators, Australia focuses on restorative and regenerative travel, especially at renowned sites like the Great Barrier Reef. Despite progress, challenges persist in conveying the importance of sustainable travel to markets prioritizing value and experience.

Kashikar further states the steps taken to protect natural treasures: "Our operators provide eco-friendly accommodations and low-impact activities that complement conservation efforts at the reef. Initiatives such as carbon-neutral menus and zero-waste hotels are raising the bar in hospitality." He acknowledges ongoing challenges, stating, "Effectively communicating the value of sustainable tourism to markets like India, which are driven by value and experience, requires a tailored approach."

Moscow, a city famous for its historical and cultural richness, is also leading the way in sustainable tourism efforts. Evgeny Kozlov, Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, highlights the city's environmental transformation: "Around 50% of Moscow is made up of green zones. Over the past decade, we have rejuvenated 900 parks and green spaces, as well as revitalized 40 embankments. This transformation not only beautifies the city but also offers unique opportunities for eco-friendly tourism."

Kozlov stresses the importance of building an urban ecosystem accessible to everyone, with incentives for investors in sustainable tourism infrastructure.



THE ECO-FRIENDLY TOURISM IS NOT JUST A TREND BUT A NECESSITY. THEIR INITIATIVES ARE PAVING THE WAY FOR A FUTURE WHERE RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL IS THE NORM, AND TRAVELERS PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PRESERVING THE PLANET

Madhya Pradesh is becoming a leader in responsible tourism by blending community development with environmental preservation. Sheo Shekhar Shukla, Principal Secretary of Tourism and Culture, outlines the state's dual focus: "Madhya Pradesh is dedicated to both its people and its landscapes. Our Responsible Tourism initiative seeks to uplift local communities while preserving the state's natural beauty and cultural history." The promotion of rural homestays and support for local artisans drive economic development with minimal environmental impact.

He adds, "By promoting local craftsmanship and sustainable building practices, we ensure tourism development benefits both communities and the environment. Programs like Safe Tourism Destinations for Women and Responsible Souvenirs further strengthen this mission." Airlines and hotels are at the forefront of sustainable tourism efforts, addressing their significant environmental impact. As air travel continues to grow, the aviation sector's role in global greenhouse gas emissions has come under scrutiny. The hospitality industry is also increasingly adopting eco-friendly practices that aim to balance guest experiences with environmental responsibility.

Akash Garg, CMD of Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort, acknowledges that transitioning to sustainable practices requires an upfront investment. However, he emphasizes that these costs are outweighed by long-term savings. "Initially, there are costs that a property has to bear when implementing sustainable practices. However, these investments often lead to long-term benefits and savings," says Garg. The resort's efforts include reducing single-use plastics and creating an onsite bottling plant, reinforcing its commitment to sustainability. Moreover, the resort engages with the local community, with 80% of its workforce from Himachal Pradesh, and promotes regional cultural experiences for guests.

At the Sheraton Kosgoda Turtle Beach Resort, Mano Gunasekera,

General Manager, speaks about the broader impact of sustainability within Marriott International. The company is deeply committed to global best practices. "Marriott International, is focused strongly on best sustainability practices. At times such initiatives come with a cost, however with the proposition of there being a greater impact on the environment," says Gunasekera. The resort supports responsible tourism through projects like turtle conservation and encouraging guests to adopt eco-friendly habits, such as reusing linens and reducing water consumption. These initiatives align with Marriott's Serve360 program, which aims to lower energy usage and promote environmentally conscious products.

Anirban Sarkar, General Manager of Radisson Blu Greater Noida, underscores the importance of sustainability in shaping the hotel's long-term vision. Radisson Blu has set an ambitious target to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, far ahead of many global initiatives. Sarkar believes that promoting sustainability and responsible business practices strengthens the brand's reputation and builds local support. "Focus towards Sustainability and Responsible Business practices actually strengthens the brand and shows the brand in a positive light," he explains. Vietnam's leading carrier Vietjet is also making strides toward sustainability. The airline's efforts have earned it recognition in categories like "Outstanding Sustainable Transport." By investing in a modern fleet that reduces fuel consumption by up to 20%, Vietjet is helping lower emissions. Additionally, the airline has transitioned to using eco-friendly materials, such as recyclable packaging, and is researching sustainable aviation fuel with a goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

Sri Lankan Airlines is also taking a more gradual approach, integrating sustainability into its services through eco-friendly amenities in Business Class. The airline has introduced pillow and headrest covers made from recycled PET plastic, reducing its plastic footprint.

These efforts are part of broader initiatives, including the use of sustainable carpets onboard.

In the online travel space, Rikant Pittie, Co-Founder of Ease My Trip, highlights the company's role in promoting sustainability by working with local authorities to improve eco-friendly facilities. Ease My Trip has also launched educational campaigns to encourage travelers to choose green accommodations and reduce waste. "We tackle the lack of sufficient infrastructure by collaborating with local authorities to enhance eco-friendly facilities," says Pittie. For Manoj Kumar Tiwari, General Manager of Regency Holidays, promoting sustainable tourism is less of a challenge and more of an opportunity to educate guests. "Educating the guests to align them with our brand ethos to promote luxury sustainably is the key," Tiwari explains.

Daniel D'Souza, President and Country Head of Holidays at SOTC Travel, notes the increasing demand for sustainable travel, particularly after the pandemic. He observes a shift in travelers' preferences toward authentic, eco-friendly experiences. "Sustainable travel has gained momentum, with MICE groups increasingly emphasizing sustainable practices and unconventional accommodations," he says.

Trishal Rao, Chief Sales Officer at SKIL Travel, sees the challenges of promoting sustainable tourism as opportunities for innovation. SKIL Travel has incorporated electric vehicles into its fleet and is implementing eco-friendly technologies throughout its services. The eco-friendly tourism is not just a trend but a necessity. Their initiatives are paving the way for a future where responsible travel is the norm, and travelers play an active role in preserving the planet. As Evgeny Kozlov succinctly states, "We must build a tourism industry based on sustainable development principles to ensure that future generations can enjoy our world responsibly."

(The author is a travel writer and influences, she works with travel industry as a mentor; views are personal)

Protecting our healers: Urgent action needed to end violence against healthcare providers

The recent assault on medics underscores the urgent need for legal protections and enhanced security measures to ensure their safety

The recent barbaric act of violence, rape, and murder against a resident lady doctor in Kolkata has sent shockwaves across the nation. This incident, coupled with the growing number of attacks on medical professionals, calls for an urgent need for a safe operating environment for those who dedicate their lives to saving others.



B K JHA

The entire country is deeply saddened by these events, and there is a collective call for the government and law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety and security of healthcare workers. This is not just about protecting individuals; it is about safeguarding the sanctity of a profession that stands at the forefront of human survival. Healthcare professionals work tirelessly, often under immense pressure, to deliver care and save lives. Yet, reports of doctors being manhandled, threatened, and even killed are, unfortunately, not uncommon.

Doctors are taught to prioritize the ABCs—Airway, Breathing, and Circulation—when a patient is in their care. Their primary focus is always on saving lives, regardless of the circumstances. However, when medical professionals are themselves under threat, their ability to perform these critical tasks is compromised. The environment in which they operate must be one of safety and respect, allowing them to carry out their duties without fear of violence.

The issue of violence against healthcare workers is not unique to India; it is a global problem. However, many countries have implemented robust measures to protect their medical professionals, setting examples that India could follow. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the National Health Service (NHS) has a zero-tolerance policy towards violence against its staff. This policy is supported by a dedicated

security team that works closely with law enforcement to ensure that any incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Additionally, the NHS has implemented a comprehensive reporting system that allows healthcare workers to report any form of abuse or violence, ensuring that these incidents are documented and addressed. In the United States, several states have enacted laws that classify assaults on healthcare workers as felonies, carrying heavier penalties than those for assaults on other individuals. This legal framework acts as a strong deterrent against violence, sending a clear message that attacks on medical professionals will not be tolerated. In Australia, hospitals



have introduced a range of safety measures, including the use of security personnel, panic buttons in consultation rooms, and mandatory training for staff on how to de-escalate potentially violent situations. India must urgently adopt similar measures to protect its healthcare workers. The government and relevant

authorities need to implement stringent actions that will create a safer environment for doctors and other medical professionals. First and foremost, the government should enact laws that classify any form of violence against healthcare professionals as a serious criminal offence, with severe

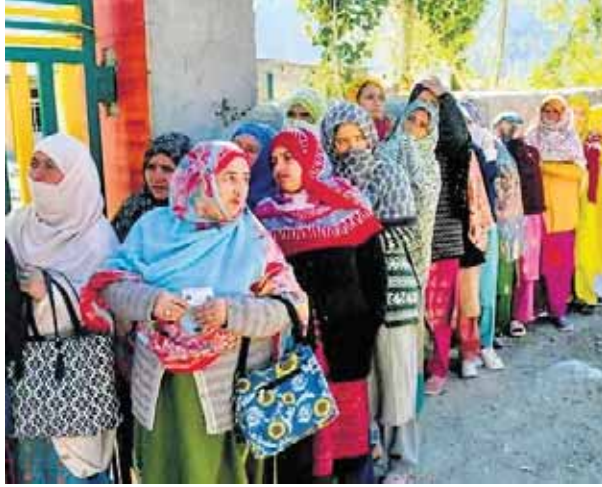
penalties for those found guilty. This legal framework should be supported by swift and decisive action from law enforcement agencies to ensure that justice is served promptly. In addition to legal protections, hospitals, especially those in high-risk areas, should be equipped with comprehensive security measures. These could include the deployment of trained security personnel, the installation of panic buttons, surveillance cameras, and secure entry points to prevent unauthorized access. Such measures would go a long way in deterring potential threats and ensuring that medical professionals can work without fear. Moreover, healthcare workers should receive mandatory training on how

to handle violent situations. This training should cover de-escalation techniques, self-defence, and the proper use of security measures available to them. The safety and security of healthcare professionals are non-negotiable. Those who dedicate their lives to saving others deserve to work in an environment free from fear and violence. The government, law enforcement agencies, and society at large must come together to ensure that the medical fraternity is protected and respected. It is time to take decisive action to safeguard those who save lives, ensuring that healthcare professionals can continue their noble work without fear. *(The author is a senior journalist. Views expressed are personal)*

J&K polls: Parties gearing up to woo voters

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

By proposing to move a resolution immediately after the Constitution of the new Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly...



Chief Minister for the first time on the hot seat. BJP unit President Ravinder Raina Sunday that the party will not form any alliance with any political party for the Assembly elections...

overwhelmingly for BJP and we will form the Government". The party's high command is also in the process of finalising the list of star campaigners scheduled to launch the aggressive poll campaign in the region...

political parties have also started the process of short-listing the aspirants from the different Assembly segments going to polls in phase 1 on September 18. Fence-sitters and 'turnouts' from different political parties are also looking for like-minded parties to consolidate their voter base...

Secretary Tarun Chugh, and J&K State President Ravinder Raina. The party is expected to release the first list of candidates ahead of the first phase of polling on August 20-21. On the other hand, the spokesperson of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) Sunday clarified that the party Chairman and senior leader, Ghulam Nabi Azad, is not rejoining the Congress Party...

Act promptly in Kolkata horror case: Harbhajan to WB Gov, CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Former cricketer and AAP Rajya Sabha MP Harbhajan Singh has written to West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, urging them to "act swiftly and decisively" in the rape-murder case of a Kolkata doctor.



woman feels safe and protected. We must ask ourselves 'if not now, when? I feel the time for action is now,' he said in the letter. The former India cricketer also shared a copy of the letter, which he addressed "to the Government of West Bengal, CBI and Citizens of India" on X.

are reported from different parts of the country and have become regular columns on newspapers and TV programmes," Singh wrote. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took over the investigation into the alleged rape and murder of the woman doctor at the State-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in the West Bengal Capital. Singh said the Governments must implement comprehensive measures to prevent such occurrences in the future.

AIIMS neurosurgeon commits suicide in South Delhi house

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 34-year-old neurosurgeon at All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) allegedly committed suicide in his south Delhi house on Sunday.



South Ankit Chauhan said, adding that he was taken to AIIMS hospital where he was declared dead. A suicide note was also recovered from the spot, however, Ghoniya did not blame anyone in it, they added.

deceased had written that it's his own will and he blamed no one. Some used Vials of medicines and syringes were also found at the place," the DCP added. However, no reason was cited by him for committing suicide and further investigation in the matter is underway.

NGO proposes offer to rebuild Wayanad but CPI(M) is cold

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

While Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wants the Centre to fully meet the financial commitments for rebuilding new houses in place of the hundreds of houses washed away or destroyed in the 30 July 2024 landslide in Wayanad district, a non-governmental organisation specialised in the rehabilitation of tribal communities has come forward with a proposal which no sincere person could reject.



Minister. He also says that the Centre should release Rs 2,000 crore as the first instalment of the disaster relief fund so that the State Government could begin the rehabilitation operations. The Rs 2,000 crore demanded by Vijayan is only a fraction of the amount he may require as the team deputed by him to study the impact of the landslide.

have a self contained guest room, which the owners could rent out to the tourists coming to Wayanad. "This will serve many purposes. The number of resorts could be brought down while the owners will benefit by a minimum Rs 3,000 per day as rent collected for these home stay system," said Aji Krishnan.

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Meerut South RRTS station opened for passengers



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Meerut South RRTS station was opened for passenger operations on Sunday, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) said. With the addition of this eight-km section, 42 km of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor is now operational, covering nine stations from Sahibabad in Ghaziabad to Meerut South in Meerut, the NCRTC said in a statement.

wheelers and two-wheelers, the statement said. Additionally, dedicated parking for auto-rickshaws is available. The station has been designed to facilitate easy pick-up and drop-off for vehicles arriving from both Meerut and Delhi, with direct access from the main road, it stated.

SC takes cognisance of...

From Page 1 Doctors and other medical staff have been protesting in different parts of the country affecting the functioning of health facilities. They are pressing for a central law to check violence against healthcare personnel, declaring hospitals safe zones with mandatory security entitlements among other demands.

including at Centre-run AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital and RML Hospital, are hit since Monday. Many patients who were turned away by hospitals expressed their frustration even as they claimed to sympathise with the cause. Inconvenience of patients further increased as personnel of private institutions such as Sir Ganga Ram, Fortis, and Apollo also joined protests on Sunday following a call by apex doctors' body Indian Medical Association (IMA) for a 24-hour nationwide withdrawal of non-emergency services.

All does not seem well with Jharkhand Mukti...

From Page 1 Champai triggered speculation about his impending crossover to the BJP when he landed in Delhi on Sunday afternoon accompanied by his personal staff, a day after making a trip to Kolkata. This political development is crucial as the Assembly election is due in Jharkhand this year.

emerged within the party after it denied Champai's request to make his son its candidate from the Ghatshila seat in the upcoming Assembly polls. The JMM leader recalled the events right from the moment he took over as the chief minister of the state on February 2 to him being replaced by Hemant Soren, in whose absence he had led the government.

Jharkhand. From the first day of my tenure to the last day (July 3), I discharged my duties towards the state with full devotion and dedication. During this period, we took many decisions in public interest and, as always, was always available for everyone. The people of the state will evaluate the decisions we took keeping in mind the elders, women, youth, students and every section of the society and every person of the state," Champai wrote on the X post.

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CBI closes in on crucial...

From Page 1 Ghosh who is also an orthopedic surgeon is known to have told his interrogators that the wall was pulled down because a decision was taken to construct a rest room for the house staff and postgraduate doctors. Meanwhile, even as the police clamped prohibitive orders outside the gates of the RGKMCH till August 23 a galaxy of Tollywood actors on Sunday took out a long procession demanding justice for the victim.

afraid ... who will you believe at your work place ... now should the ladies stop going outside to work ... and here the police are trying to shield the accused ... it is clear that several persons could be involved in the rape and murder whereas evidence is being destroyed and only one scapegoat getting arrested ... this is not done ... we the women want a secure work place for which justice for the lady doctor is a necessity ... hang the accused persons ... hand this system where women are raped at will," said Sudipta a television actress.

Bitter Football Foes of...

From Page 1 The football fans of the three clubs said that they converged to protest against the cancellation by the Kolkata Police the Sunday's Durand Cup match between Mohan Bagan and East Bengal clubs. The Police administration had refused to provide force citing shortage of manpower on account of other deployments. Apparently the police had decided to spike the important Derby Match after reports went round that the supporters of the two clubs had decided to jointly raise slogans and show placards

condemning the RGKMCH rape and murder of the lady doctor. "What have the supporters of football done ... the game itself is a symbol of justice and so we thought to bring some posters and banners but the police administration got the Derby Match cancelled altogether ... and you know Football rests in Bengalis' hearts ... so we decided to jointly converge near the stadium and protest," one of the fans shouted raising slogans of Justice for the RG Kar victim while rest others sang the National Anthem.

Sriram's IAS coaching centre...

From Page 1 The decision was taken to protect and promote the rights of consumers as a class, the CCPA said. Sriram's IAS in its advertisement made the following claims- "200 plus selections in UPSC Civil Service Exam 2022" "We are India's No.1 Prestigious UPSC/IAS Coaching Institute" CCPA found out that Sriram's IAS advertised various types of courses but the information with respect to the course opted by the

successful candidates in above-mentioned UPSC Civil Service exams results was deliberately concealed in the advertisement. This has the effect of consumers falsely believing that all the successful candidates so claimed by the Institute had opted for the paid courses advertised by the Institute on its website. CCPA found out that Sriram's IAS advertised various types of courses but the information with respect to

the course opted by the advertised successful candidates in the UPSC Civil Service exams results was deliberately concealed in the advertisement. "This has the effect of consumers falsely believing that all the successful candidates so claimed by the institute had opted for the paid courses advertised by the institute on its website," the CCPA said. Sriram's IAS in its response submitted the details of only 171 successful candidates against its claim of 200 plus

selections in UPSC CSE 2022, the statement said. Out of these 171 candidates, 102 were from Free Interview Guidance Programme (IGP), 55 were from Free Test Series, 9 were from GS Classroom course and 5 candidates were from different states under the MoU signed between the state government and the institute to provide free coaching. "This fact was not disclosed in their advertisement, thereby deceiving consumers," the CCPA asserted.



GOITRE TREATMENT KEY INDICATIONS AND OPTIONS



DR SUNIL CHUMBER
Professor and Head

In this concluding part of the series on Multinodular Goitre (MNG), ARCHANA JYOTI speaks with DR SUNIL CHUMBER and his team from the Department of Surgical Discipline at AIIMS, Delhi about critical factors for intervention and available management strategies

TREATMENT INDICATIONS AND OPTIONS

MNG is essentially a non-cancerous enlargement of the thyroid. Not all people with this condition will need treatment and your doctor will advise you with a treatment plan based on certain indications which are described below.

INDICATIONS

● **Patients with hyperthyroidism:** All MNG patients who also have hyperthyroidism (increased thyroid hormones) on blood tests will need some form of treatment.

● **Patients without hyperthyroidism:** Goitre causing compressive symptoms such as difficulty in breathing, difficulty in swallowing, cough, difficulty sleeping, etc. needs to be treated. Also, if your doctor suspects thyroid cancer based on size/rate of growth/ scans or needle test, he will advise urgent treatment. Lastly, patients may choose to receive treatment for MNG due to cosmetic reasons.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

● **Surgical treatment:** The surgeon removes the whole or a part of the thyroid gland. This is the treatment of choice in patients with compressive symptoms, a suspicion of thyroid cancer, and large goitre. A lifelong hormone



DR REVA SHANKAR SAHU
(Senior Resident)

supplementation is needed when the entire thyroid gland is removed.

● **Medical treatment:** All patients with hyperthyroidism are started on "antithyroid medications" like carbimazole, and methimazole till hormone levels become normal, after which surgery can be done. However, if patients who do not want surgery or are not fit to undergo surgery, they can be kept on these medicines for a long time as an alternative but is not very effective in decreasing the size of the goitre.

● **Radioiodine treatment:** "Radioactive iodine" is a solution containing I131 which is given to patients either as an oral liquid to drink or as a capsule. It gets taken up by the thyroid alone and destroys it from within in a few weeks. It is recommended by doctors as an alternative to surgery in



DR AMOL SOOD
(Junior Resident)

patients who are unfit or unwilling to undergo surgery. Pregnant ladies and lactating mothers have to be very careful and inform your doctor immediately as this method is not safe for them.

● **Ablative procedures:** These are ultrasound-guided procedures that involve injection of medical alcohol or the use of radiofrequency (RFA) or laser to destroy diseased thyroid tissue. These procedures are relatively new and not readily available.

● **Annual surveillance:** For people with goitre but no other symptoms, not having hyperthyroidism, and not being suspicious of cancer, annual surveillance is an option. For this, the doctor conducts a yearly checkup, checks thyroid function test, and neck ultrasound. If an indication for treatment arises or the patient desires, appropriate treatment is provided.

Indications for surgery in MNG are local compressive symptoms (difficulty in swallowing and shortness of breath), suspicious malignancy features on imaging, large substernal development, drug-resistant hyperthyroidism, and cosmetic concerns.

If MNG is limited to one lobe of the thyroid, the standard surgical procedure is a hemithyroidectomy where only the lobe with nodule(s) is removed and the other half thyroid is left intact.

In these cases, it is crucial to assess the other lobe not being removed, for any involvement through an ultrasound scan before surgery, and feeling with hands during the surgery that it does not have any nodules.

Two main categories of surgeries can be performed for MNG cases involving both lobes. First category is more limited and includes "bilateral subtotal thyroidectomy" where both lobes of the thyroid are removed but small pieces of normal thyroid from both are left behind. This method will be performed by your surgeon

MNG is a widely occurring disease of thyroid gland where small nodules form inside the thyroid causing it to become bigger and produce problems of cosmesis, difficulty in

OPERATIONS IN MNG



DR YASHWANT RATHORE
(Associate Professor)

to decrease the risks associated with the other procedures, such as injury to nerve and parathyroid gland.

The second type includes total and near-total thyroidectomy, which tends to be a more aggressive approach. In these again both the lobes of thyroid are removed, but minimal-to-no thyroid is left behind. This group of surgery is recommended to reduce the need for repeat operation which might be required to remove the left-behind thyroid if the disease appears again or if carcinoma is found in the removed thyroid. As these procedures are known to have higher risks of injury, only



DR NEELAM
(Senior Resident)

specialized doctors in these procedures perform them at adequately equipped centers.

All surgeries on the thyroid have some degree of risk of damage to important structures in the neck like the nerve that controls our voice, the parathyroid gland which controls calcium levels in the body, or even the food pipe and the airway especially if the thyroid has become very large and both side surgeries have to be done. Also if both thyroid lobes are removed you will require taking thyroxine hormone supplements lifelong and based on Thyroid Function Tests reports doses will be adjusted by your doctor.

CONCLUSION

breathing, eating, and sleeping. Not having enough Iodine in food is an important cause of this problem, but due to government efforts of iodisation of salt, the large

goitres seen before the 90s have largely come down. The nodules are mostly non-cancerous but anytime any such enlargement is seen in front of your neck, you should contact a nearby doctor.

Ayurvedic Medicines Accelerate Bone Fracture Healing

Rich in essential nutrients, many ayurvedic medicines like Hadjod, Aama haldi, and Lakshadhi guggul can significantly speed up bone fracture recovery and improve bone quality, offering an effective complement to conventional treatments, says DR RP PARASHAR

The healing process of bone fractures is crucial for effective treatment and rehabilitation. It is a complex, highly regulated series of events that involves a variety of cellular activities, molecular signals, and mechanical factors. Fractures may be Simple (closed) when the bone breaks but does not penetrate the skin or Compound (open) when the bone breaks and penetrates through the skin, increasing the risk of infection.

Comminuted fractures occur when the bone is shattered into multiple pieces. Greenstick fractures occur mostly in children when the bone bends and cracks. Stress fractures are small cracks in the bone caused by repetitive forces or overuse. Bone healing is a dynamic process that typically occurs in four overlapping stages: hematoma formation, inflammatory phase, reparative phase, and remodeling phase. Hematoma formation starts

immediately after a fracture occurs, blood vessels within the bone and surrounding tissues are damaged, leading to the formation of a hematoma (a localized collection of blood). This hematoma serves as a scaffold for the influx of inflammatory cells and provides a provisional matrix for the next stages of healing. Inflammatory phase begins within hours of the fracture and can last for several days. During this phase, the body's immune response is activated, and various inflammatory cells such as macrophages, neutrophils, and lymphocytes migrate to the fracture site. These cells help remove debris and release cytokines and growth factors that promote healing. The inflammatory phase is essential for initiating the healing process and setting the stage for the formation of new bone tissue.

Reparative phase is characterized by the formation of a soft callus, which eventually transitions



DR RP PARASHAR

into a hard callus. Within a few days to weeks after the fracture, fibroblasts, chondroblasts, and osteoblasts migrate to the fracture site. These cells produce collagen and other extracellular matrix components, forming a soft callus made of fibrous tissue and cartilage. This soft callus bridges the fracture gap and provides initial stability. Over the next few weeks to months, the soft callus is gradually replaced by a hard callus composed of woven bone. Osteoblasts play a key role in this process by laying

down new bone tissue. The hard callus increases the mechanical stability of the fracture site and is a crucial step toward complete bone healing.

The final phase of bone healing is the remodeling phase, which can last for several months to years. During this phase, the hard callus is remodeled into mature lamellar bone, restoring the bone's original structure and mechanical properties. The bone gradually regains its normal shape, strength, and function.

Several factors can influence the rate and quality of bone healing. These factors can be broadly categorized into biological, mechanical, and systemic factors. Biological Factors are age, blood supply to the fractured bone delivering oxygen, nutrients, and cells to the fracture site. The intrinsic quality of the bone, influenced by factors such as bone density and microarchitecture, affects



healing. Conditions like osteoporosis can compromise bone healing. Mechanical factors include the mechanical stability of the fracture, proper



alignment and stabilization of the fracture through immobilization or surgical fixation promote callus formation and bone repair. Systemic factors include adequate intake of nutrients, particularly calcium, vitamin D, proteins, etc. Hormones such as parathyroid hormone, growth hormone, and sex hormones play a significant role in bone metabolism and healing. There are a number of Ayurvedic medicines which are quite effective in each and every phase of bone healing.

Mediterranean diet and nature's healing power are key to lower stress and better mental health. THE PIONEER reports on two insightful studies

Mediterranean Diet Linked to Lower Stress Levels

Feeling stressed? Adopting a Mediterranean diet could be beneficial, according to recent research. A study by Binghamton University, State University of New York, compared the Mediterranean diet to the traditional Western diet to explore their effects on stress levels.

The Mediterranean diet, known for its emphasis on fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and healthy fats like extra virgin olive oil, may help reduce stress and mental distress. Lina Begdache, Associate Professor of Health and Wellness Studies, noted that the study, published in Nutrition and Health, found that this diet lowers mental distress and improves perceptions of stress.

In contrast, the Western diet, which is high in processed foods and low-quality carbohydrates, is linked to increased stress and mental distress. Research has shown it to contribute to the globally rising risk of non-communicable diseases like obesity, diabetes, hypertension and cancers. The research, involving over

1,500 participants, used machine learning to analyze survey data and found that the Mediterranean diet is associated with lower levels of stress and mental distress.

In addition to mental health benefits, the Mediterranean diet has been shown to support overall health. A recent study published in Heart highlighted its benefits in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and death, especially among women, by nearly 25%.

The findings suggest that incorporating more Mediterranean diet components could be a simple yet effective way to manage stress and improve overall health.

A recent study, published in the journal Heart, too showed the association between a Mediterranean diet and incident risk of cardiovascular disease CVD and death. Focusing especially on women, the study showed that a Mediterranean diet can boost your heart health and lower the risk of heart disease and death by nearly 25 percent.



Spending 10 Min in Nature can Boost Mental Health

We recognize that nature plays a crucial role in human health, yet behavioral health and healthcare providers frequently overlook its potential as an intervention. But now a new study published in the peer-reviewed journal Ecopsychology, has revealed that spending time in nature—even as little as 10 minutes—can yield short-term benefits for adults with mental illness.

"We know nature plays an important role in human health, but behavioral health and health care providers often neglect to think about it as an intervention," said Joanna Bettmann, a professor at the University of Utah College of Social Work and lead author of the study. "We set out to distill some evidence-based guidance for those providers."

The amount of time study participants spent in nature varied from study to study; some participants spent as little as 10 minutes in a city park, while others spent multiple days in immersive wilderness experiences. We



found that "ten minutes in urban nature is far less intimidating, expensive, and time-consuming for people who do not have the time, resources, interest, community support or equipment to venture into the wilderness for days or weeks," wrote the authors. The analysis also indicated that water-based outdoor spaces—rivers, lakes, oceans—and camping, farming, and gardening activities had the greatest positive effect. Urban nature, mountains, and forests also offered significant effects. "All of these different types of outdoor spaces delivered positive results, which underscores the importance of preserving green spaces in our natural and built environments," said Bettmann.

We

(The author is Chief Medical Officer (Ayurveda), Municipal Corporation of Delhi)

