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PROFITING FROM WAR

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SYNAGOGUE EXPLOSION SUSPECT

MONEY 10
NEXT ROUND OF INDIA-AUSTRALIA
TRADE PACT TALKS IN NOVEMBER

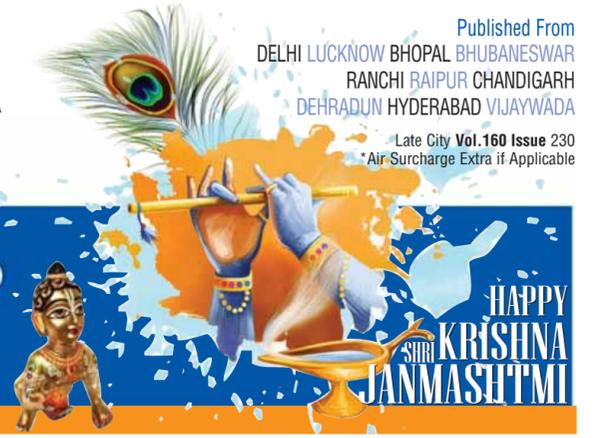
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HAPPY
KRISHNA
JANMASHTMI

WOMAN POWER FINDS VOICE PAN INDIA

Kolkata probe deepens



Security personnel stand guard during a raid on the premises of former principal of RG Kar Medical College Sandip Ghosh by CBI in connection with alleged financial irregularities at the institute during his tenure, in Kolkata, on Sunday

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bahut kuch mila (many things have been found), a senior official of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said on Sunday regarding the searches conducted at RG Kar Medical College Hospital, where a young female doctor was allegedly raped and murdered on the night of August 9, sparking a nationwide outcry over women's safety at workplaces in West Bengal. The brief remark from the investigator came hours after polygraph tests were conducted on the prime accused, Sanjoy Roy, former RG Kar principal Sandip Ghosh, and five other junior

doctors. According to sources, the subjects were asked 17-18 questions, ranging from simple queries about their names and the colour of a tomato or the sky, to more pertinent questions about their possible involvement in the crime. Sources said Ghosh showed no hesitation when submitting himself to the test. "He was confident and cooperative," an official remarked. However, officials declined to comment on whether Ghosh was questioned about the alleged multi-crore corruption scheme that ran through RGMH during his tenure, which some striking doctors at the college believe could be

linked to the brutal rape and murder of the postgraduate trainee doctor earlier this month. The tests were conducted amid allegations that around ten senior doctors, who are reportedly close to influential figures in the State Government, held a long meeting on August 9 inside the seminar hall where the victim's body was later found. "The CCTV footage if they are not destroyed can reveal everything... how 10 doctors of other medical colleges came at the crime scene and conducted a meeting inside the seminar hall... this was well before the family of the victim doctor was informed or they arrived in the

hospital," said Sajal Biswas a doctor raising doubts regarding the fact that whether the crime was committed inside the seminar hall or inside the adjacent doctors' rest room. A parallel theory circulating within the hospital suggests that the doctor's body was moved to the seminar hall after the crime. A protesting resident doctor said "the haste in which the wall separating the two rooms was demolished and the 3-4 hours that separated the time of discovery of the body and the entry of the police... constituting the missing links... can all be explained through the meeting that took place inside the hospital that day... now the question is whether these doctors would be called for interrogation". The polygraph tests were necessitated following CBI allegations that persons being grilled were evading replies regarding the chronology of events and trying to mislead the investigation process. The tests were conducted a day after a CJM Court granted permission to the CBI officials to do so. While Ghosh and others were subjected to the test on Saturday Roy was tested inside the Presidency Jail hospital on Sunday afternoon.

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PM Modi assures action



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an interaction with Lakhpati Didis, in Jalgaon, on Sunday

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

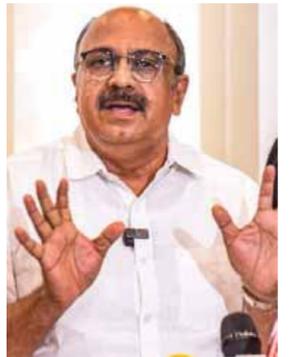
In an indirect message to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee regarding the recent shocking rape and murder of a junior doctor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the safety and empowerment of women are top national priorities. He reminded all State Governments and political parties that atrocities against women are an "unpardonable sin" and that the perpetrators and their accomplices must not be spared. "Every public institution, whether a hospital, school, office, or police system, must be held accountable for ensuring the safety of women working there. Any negligence in this regard is unacceptable. Governments may change, but our foremost responsibility as a society and Government is to protect the life and dignity of women," Modi said. The Prime Minister made these remarks while addressing a "Lakhpati Didi Sammelan" in Jalgaon, North Maharashtra, after distributing certificates to 11 lakh women who recently became "Lakhpatis."

Continued on Page 8

Men run for cover in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Disclosures by two actresses that they were victims of sexual misconduct by higher-ups in the film industry led to the resignation of two industry veterans on Sunday. Filmmaker Ranjith and actor Siddique submitted their resignations as chairman of the Kerala Chalachitra Academy and general secretary of the Association of Malayalam Movie Actors, respectively. An allegation by Bengali film actress Sreelekha Mitra that CPI(M) leader Ranjith had "misbehaved" with her in 2009 has caused an "earthquake" in the State's political and cultural landscape, with many calling for the filmmaker's resignation. Although Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Cultural Minister Saji Cheriaan insisted that no action could be taken based solely on the actress's oral disclosure, some party leaders and industry veterans were firm that the Chalachitra Academy chairman should either step down or be removed from his position. This made Ranjith to resign from the chairmanship of Kerala Chalachitra Academy, the Government-run institution entrusted with holding the State's yearly International Film Festival. Ranjith sent his letter of resignation to Minister for culture Cheriaan on Sunday morning and he told his friends in the film world that he would rather face any probe ordered by the Government against the disclosures made by Mitra than



continuing in the post. While speaking to a TV channel, the Bengali actress had claimed that the movie maker had touched her with ulterior motives when she approached him for a role in the movie to be made by him. Mitra said she just rushed out from the room where Ranjith was staying and was informed by the latter's associates that she has not been selected for the role. On Sunday news surfaced of actor Siddique resigning from the post of general secretary of AMMA (Association of Malayalam Movie Artists), a collective of artists in the Malayalam film industry, following a complaint by a fellow artist. Rohini Sampath, a popular Malayalam actress, had accused Siddique of sexually assaulting and abusing her during a meeting.

Continued on Page 8

Israel flattens Lebanon



A damaged house is seen following an attack from Lebanon, in Acre, north Israel, on Sunday

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel launched a wave of airstrikes across southern Lebanon early Sunday in what it said was a preemptive strike on Hezbollah. The militant group responded that it had launched hundreds of rockets and drones to avenge the killing of one of its top commanders last month. The heavy exchange of fire does not appear to have ignited a long-feared war, but the situation remains tense. Meanwhile, Egypt on Sunday is hosting high-level talks aimed at brokering a cease-fire in the 10-month-old Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, which diplomats hope will tamp down regional tensions. The Israeli military said it struck because Hezbollah was planning to launch a

heavy barrage of rockets and missiles toward Israel. Soon after, Hezbollah announced it had launched an attack on Israeli military positions as an initial response to the killing of Fouad Shukur, one of its founding members, in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut last month. By mid-morning, it appeared that the exchange had ended, with both sides saying they had only aimed at military targets. At least three people were killed in the strikes on Lebanon, while there were no reports of casualties in Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking at the start of a Cabinet meeting, said the military had eliminated "thousands of rockets that were aimed at northern Israel" and urged citizens to adhere to directives from the Home Front Command.

"We are determined to do everything to defend our country, to return the residents of the north securely to their homes and to continue upholding a simple rule: Whoever harms us — we will harm them," he said. Air raid sirens were reported throughout northern Israel, and Israel's Ben-Gurion international airport closed and diverted flights for approximately an hour due to the threat of attack. Israel's Home Front Command raised the alert level across northern Israel before later lifting restrictions in most areas. Lt Col Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said Hezbollah had intended to hit targets in northern and central Israel. He said initial assessments found "very little damage" in Israel, but that the military remained on high alert. He said around 100 Israeli aircraft took part in Sunday's strikes. Lebanon's Health Ministry reported that two people were killed and another two wounded in the strikes in southern Lebanon. Separately, a fighter for the Amal group, which is allied with Hezbollah, was killed in a strike on a car, Amal said. Hezbollah said its attack involved more than 320 Katyusha rockets aimed at multiple sites in Israel and a "large number" of drones.

Continued on Page 8

Raksha Mantri Rajnath in America



Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with others during a visit to the Naval Surface Warfare Centre, in Carderock, Maryland, USA

Parties racing against time in Jammu and Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

The National Conference-Congress alliance stitched only four days ago amidst cordial relations is showing signs of strain in the run-up to the final date of nominations for the first round of polling on August 27. Despite holding several rounds of talks the alliance partners are yet to finalise the seat-sharing formula. The trust deficit between the allies and the absence of consensus on some of the seats going to polls in the first round of polling on September 18, is turning out to be a major roadblock. Inside reports suggested

some of the senior National Conference leaders from the Jammu region expressed their discomfiture over offering seats to the Congress party without making a genuine assessment of the ground realities. Since National Conference leaders threatened to contest the elections as an independent candidate if the decision was not reversed the party's high command decided to put on hold the final list of candidates. Following these reports, the National Conference leaders went into a huddle and also reached out to the Congress leaders to put on hold their final list as well. Efforts were on to pacify the



angry leaders. At the same time, the local unit of the Congress party has already submitted a list of 90 candidates for approval to the Election Screening Committee of the party. The Congress leaders took this

differences over some of the crucial seats in the erstwhile district of Doda in Jammu province and south Kashmir seats from where a senior Congress leader was keen on contesting," a senior Congress leader told *The Pioneer*. "The top brass of both parties may have decided to ally but resistance shown by the foot soldiers over the seat-sharing formula is emerging as the biggest roadblock," the Congress leader said. A team of the Central party leaders was also camping in the valley to hold a fresh round of talks with their counterparts in the National Conference on Monday.

Continued on Page 8

THE PIONEER
WISHES ITS READER A VERY
HAPPY
Janmashtami
the pioneer

The offices of The Pioneer will remain closed on Monday, August 26, 2024 on account of Janmashtami. The next issue of the newspaper will appear on Wednesday, August 28, 2024

Moscow says, Phir Bhi Dil hai Hindustani

GYANESHWAR DAYAL ■ MOSCOW

On August 23, the grand opening of the first Moscow International Film Week took place at the Khudozhestvenny cinema, marking the beginning of a significant event in the world of cinema. The ceremony featured the Russian premiere of the Indian film "Laapataa Ladies". Yesterday, the Moscow International Film Week officially commenced, and it will run in the capital until August 28. The opening ceremony at the Khudozhestvenny cinema was attended by Government officials, prominent figures from the film industry, journalists, and

influencers. Among the distinguished guests were the ambassadors of the Film Week: Actor Milos Bikovic, director and screenwriter Zhora Kryzhovnikov, actor Nikita Volkov, and other celebrity attendees. On the first day of the Film Week, screenings of both foreign and domestic films took place, including the nationwide premieres of the Indian sports drama *Field* and the philosophical-mystical drama *Alzheimer* from Iran. This year it is an Indian-themed week with focus on Indian cinema and celebrating Indian art of storytelling on celluloid. The film



festival is hosting films from more than 40-countries but the flavour of the festival is completely Indian. At the exclusive screening, guests were treated to the premiere of the Indian comedy-drama "Laapataa Ladies", which received enthusiastic reviews from both audiences and international critics. The success of "Laapataa Ladies" and "Kalki" at the Moscow International Film Week highlights the growing appeal of Indian cinema in Russia. These films, while rooted in Indian culture, address universal themes that resonate with audiences across the world. The Russian viewers have found a

connection with the characters and their stories, appreciating the films for their depth, creativity, and the way they tackle complex social issues. On the first day of the Film Week, screenings of both foreign and domestic films took place, including the nationwide premieres of the Indian sports drama *Field* and the philosophical-mystical drama *Alzheimer* from Iran. Interactive journeys were organised for both guests and city residents. On mobile film sets, visitors had the opportunity to engage directly with the art of filmmaking by recording video introductions, attending lectures, and

participating in master classes with well-known actors. These activities will continue throughout the entire Film Week across various locations in the city. During the course of the week the Moscow International Film Week will be held in more than 100 venues, hosting over 200 unique events each day, including film screenings, master classes, and creative meetings. This internationally significant event will welcome delegations from over 40 countries, including Government officials and representatives of the global film industry, who will participate in the business programme.

Janmashtami: Yogi for grand celebration in jails, police lines, stns

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed authorities to ensure celebration of Krishna Janmashtami on a grand note with traditional devotion in all reserve police lines, police stations and prisons of the state. As part of the preparations, the chief minister has emphasised the need for robust security, cleanliness and logistical arrangements during the Krishna Leela events, tableaux and processions. Furthermore, he has ordered the deployment of adequate police forces at crowded locations to ensure public safety.

In line with these directives, Director General (Jail) Rama Shastri of the Uttar Pradesh Prison Administration and Reform Services has issued orders for the traditional celebration of Krishna Janmashtami in all state prisons. The chief minister issued necessary guidelines to the officials on Sunday regarding the Janmashtami festival. He said that Janmashtami was celebrated with great reverence and pomp in Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, in which lakhs of devotees from the country and abroad participate. He highlighted the sensitive nature of the Krishna Janmabhoomi/Shahi Idgah Mosque site, which has been on the radar of ISI and various terrorist organisations. He called for special attention to be given to security arrangements in the area.

The chief minister also underscored the importance of preventing disputes during worship and processions. He pointed out that conflicts often arise over the decoration of tableaux at disputed sites, disagreements over procession routes, and the organisation of non-traditional events. Additionally, the use of loudspeakers during



An artist preparing a tableau at police lines in Lucknow

processions, particularly when they pass near religious sites of other communities, has previously led to controversies. To avoid such situations, Chief Minister Yogi instructed that all necessary arrangements be made with sensitivity. He also mandated the videography of processions for security purposes, ensuring that all CCTV cameras along the procession routes and at event venues are operational. Furthermore, drone cameras should be deployed to monitor key sensitive areas, he added.

He further instructed that a comprehensive list of Leela sthals, pandals, temples, and shobha yatras be compiled for each district, with a well-coordinated police arrangement in place. Additionally, he emphasised the importance of robust security and traffic management, taking into account the

anticipated number of devotees expected to attend these events. Chief Minister Yogi made it clear that no new traditions should be introduced under any circumstances. He ordered updating of lists containing names of anti-social and communal elements, stressing that strict action be taken against such individuals if necessary. Highlighting the large-scale programmes held at Police lines and ISKCON temples across districts, where a significant number of devotees, including women, children and the elderly participate, he called for effective security measures and traffic management by district officials to ensure the safe conduct of these events. The chief minister also addressed the need for preemptive measures to handle potential disputes. He directed that police and Revenue depart-

Lord Krishna tableaux attract devotees

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The city is all set for grand Janmashtami celebrations on Monday. Temples have been decked up for the occasion and will host several cultural programmes. One of the highlights will be tableaux depicting the life of Lord Krishna. Among the celebrations, a six-day digital tableau exhibition will commence on August 26 in Ganeshganj, an annual event organised by the Mittal family.

Key organiser Anupam Mittal said that this year's main attraction will be a tableau featuring the Ram Lalla idol, which will be on display until August 31. "A 3D selfie point themed around a rover landing on Mars is also being prepared. Additionally, there will be depictions of Radha-Krishna on a swing, a 20-foot-high Shivaling, and Lord Hanuman tearing his chest to reveal Lord Ram. Those who haven't seen Ram Lalla since the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya can visit this tableau," he said.

Mittal added that the creation of the Janmashtami tableaux has been underway for the past ten days, led by sculptor Pawan. A stunning LED image of Shri Krishna at Naka crossing is attracting many visitors.



(Left) Janmashtami preparations in Ganeshganj, and (right) students celebrating at SR International School & Sports Academy in Bakshi Ka Talab

Several LED gates from Naka to the tableau site are ready to welcome the devotees. Anurag Sahu from the temple stated that the temple will be adorned with electronic lights and 5,000 balloons. At the Krishna Temple in Bansmandi, organisers said that the idol's attire would be specially secured from Vrindavan, and a 'Krishna abhishek' would be performed during the celebrations. At the Radha Raman Bihari ISKCON Temple in Sushant Golf City, Lord Krishna will be bathed with water from pilgrimage centres across the country, and several cultural programmes will be live-streamed on Facebook. Meanwhile, Janmashtami was celebrated by students from Rajajipuram, Sitapur Road, and Ruchikhand branches of St

Joseph Group of Institutions. Nursery to UKG students celebrated Krishna's birth. Many children dressed as Lord Krishna, Radha Rani, Maa Yashoda, and Sudama, and presented scenes such as Krishna's birth, his journey from Mathura to Gokul, Kaliya Nag Mardan, and 'makhan chori'. SKD Academy also celebrated Janmashtami with cultural performances. Students dressed as Lord Krishna, Radha, and their friends, and the school was decorated with balloons, flutes, and matkis. Similarly, SR International School & Sports Academy in Bakshi Ka Talab, celebrated with performances by students. Younger students depicted Krishna stealing butter, and there was a pot and flute decoration competition.

ment officers to review any past or current dispute related to the Janmashtami festival, study the situation thoroughly and take necessary action to defuse tension. Chief Minister Yogi stressed on clear communication with subordinate staff, instructing them to proactively investigate all disputes with-

in their assigned areas. He also recommended that senior officers, including the district magistrate, superintendent of police, sub-district magistrate and circle officer personally visit sites with potential disputes to resolve them promptly. The chief minister said that police parties should be sent

out regularly for patrolling and checking in all districts. He emphasised that morning patrol units (poster parties) should conduct thorough checks to ensure that no objectionable posters are displayed in public areas. He reminded the police of its tradition of celebrating this festival with dig-

nity and joy, underscoring the importance of maintaining these values during the festivities. In addition to security measures, Chief Minister Yogi stressed the need for the festival to be celebrated in a traditional and respectful manner. He firmly stated that no inde-

cent dance programme should be allowed during the celebrations. He instructed the police commissioners, district in-charges and commanders to closely monitor all planned programmes in advance and ensure that no indecent or obscene dialogues or dances take place during the festivities.

Carpenter electrocuted while working at school

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 26-year-old carpenter was electrocuted at a school in Sarojininaragar on Saturday, police said. The deceased, identified as Arvind Singh, a resident of Azad Nagar Amausi, was working for a contractor. Arvind was reportedly electrocuted while drinking water from a cooler at the school, the police said. He was rushed to Lok Bandhu Hospital, where he was declared dead. The police got the autopsy conducted and subsequently handed the body over to the deceased's family. According to reports, Arvind was at the school's head office for work with the contractor. At around 5:30 pm, he went to the ground floor to drink water and suffered an electric shock. The contractor took him to the hospital, but he was declared dead upon arrival. Arvind's family has raised con-

Scolded by mom, girl student hangs self

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A girl in Indiranagar reportedly committed suicide after her mother scolded her for not paying enough attention to her studies, police said. The deceased identified as Jyoti, who was a student of Class X, was watching a video on her mobile phone when her mother noticed her and scolded her, the police said. The scolding distressed Jyoti so much that she took her own life at home, they added. The body was sent for autopsy even as no suicide note was found at the scene. According to the police, Jyoti's father is an army officer stationed in Bareilly. Family members said that Jyoti

was found hanging from a window grill. Initial reports indicate that Jyoti's mother had asked her to focus on studies due to her upcoming exams, which upset Jyoti. Following the scolding, Jyoti retreated to her room and bolted the door. Her mother, concerned by Jyoti's prolonged absence, eventually broke open the door only to find Jyoti hanging. The family rushed her to a hospital, where she was pronounced dead upon arrival. Inspector, Indiranagar, Sunil Tiwari stated that no formal complaint had been filed by the family. Further action would be based on the post-mortem report.

LU prof to deliver talk at IGC in Busan

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): Prof Sarajit Sensarma from the department of geology at Lucknow University has been invited to serve as a convener at the 7-day 37th International Geological Congress (IGC), which kicked off in Busan, Republic of Korea, on Sunday (August 25). "Prof Sensarma will act as the lead convener and chair a scientific session titled 'Crust-Mantle Interactions Through Time and the Role of Fluids' on August 27. He will also deliver a talk. In his invitation letter, Prof Daekyo Cheong, Chairman of the IGC 2024 Organising Committee, expressed confidence in Prof Sensarma's expertise and insights. Prof Cheong highlighted that Sensarma's contributions would greatly enrich the discussions and foster a dynamic environment for impactful academic exchanges in geosciences. He noted that this invitation is a personal recognition of Professor Sensarma's distinguished standing in the field, referring to the IGC as the 'Olympic Games of Geoscience' LU spokesperson Durgesh Srivastava said. The International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), representing over a million geoscientists, is one of the largest scientific organisations. It promotes global cooperation and participation in Earth sciences, particularly in relation to human welfare, and is a member of the International Science Council.



A woman making last-minute purchases at a makeshift shop in Lucknow on the eve of Janmashtami

Cop breaks into flat, threatens real estate firm employees

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A representative of a real estate firm in the PGI area has accused a policeman of breaking into and forcibly taking possession of a flat in a residential apartment developed by the company. The representative also alleged that the policeman had previously displayed rowdy behaviour and threatened employees during the construction phase of the project. The PGI police registered an FIR in this regard on Friday. The representative, Ashfaq, a resident of Chinhhat, is associated with the real estate firm currently operating in

Vrindavan Yojana. Ashfaq reported that the residential apartment in question was built as part of the firm's project in Vrindavan Colony, PGI. Ashfaq stated that although a flat in the apartment was allocated to the policeman, the firm had not yet handed over possession due to ongoing litigation with the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA). On August 14, Ashfaq alleged that the policeman and his wife broke the lock of the flat and entered it. When employees on site confronted them, the policeman allegedly threatened to kill them while brandishing his

service revolver. The accused reportedly boasted of his police status, threatening to shut down the entire company if he was displeased. He also allegedly warned, "If anyone from the company comes here, I will kill them." Despite the complainant informing the police about the incident, the accused continued with the housewarming rituals, including performing a puja. The complainant claimed that the police were biased in favour of the cop in question. Inspector, PGI, Brajesh Chandra said that the allegations against the policeman are under investigation.

CM gifts ropeway to people of Braj

PNS ■ MATHURA

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, initiated a new ropeway project for the people of Braj, enhancing accessibility to the Laddi Kishori Radha Rani seated on Brahmachal mountain. The ropeway project is being started on a public-private participation model under Mathura-Vrindavan Development Authority at a cost of Rs 15.89 crore in Barsana. Previously, visitors had to climb 251 stairs to reach the temple dedicated to Radha Rani. With the new ropeway, devotees will reach the temple more conveniently. The ropeway will span up to 210 metres, and have 12 trolleys, each capable of seating six people. Positioned 30 metres above ground level, it will transport visitors from the base to the temple in about five to seven minutes. The system is designed to accommodate 72 visitors per hour. The project includes two stations equipped with ticket counters, along with facilities such as toilet blocks, canteens and waiting halls for tourists. The fare for a round-trip on the ropeway will be Rs 100, while a one-way ticket will cost Rs 60. Children over the age of five will also require tickets to avail the service.

CLASSIFIEDS

सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरे पुत्र चिराग मिश्रा का नाम जन्मप्रमाण पत्र में त्रुटिवश विवान मिश्रा अंकित हो गया है, जो कि गलत है। जबकि अन्य शैक्षिक अभिलेखों में सही नाम चिराग मिश्रा अंकित है। आश्री मिश्रा पुत्र श्री पुनन लाल निवासी मं नं 542/6 न्यू हेदरगंज कैम्पुस रोड लखनऊ

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Abhilasha Singh to Abhilasha, in future known me as Abhilasha w/o Vimal Prakash R/o 138 Eldico Colony Udyan-1, Bangla Bazar, Lucknow

NOTICE

I have changed my name from V.P. Singh to Vimal Prakash . in future known me as Vimal Prakash S/o Sh. Nekram, R/o 138 Eldico Colony Udyan-1, Bangla Bazar, Lucknow

NOTICE

I have changed my name REENA DEVI to Km. Rina.REENA DEVI & Km. Rina W/o LALLAN YADAV R/o NASIRPUR, G A N D H A P A . B A G E N D GHAZIPUR IS SAME PERSON

UP artisans eager to leverage PM Vishwakarma Yojana

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In its mission to improve the living standards of the poor and underprivileged, the Yogi Adityanath government has effectively implemented the PM Vishwakarma Yojana, a Central government scheme, in Uttar Pradesh. Consequently, Uttar Pradesh ranks second only to Madhya Pradesh in the number of applicants seeking to benefit from the scheme. Over 28 lakh people in the state have applied, with more than 23 lakh applications in the tailoring trade alone. The Yogi government will conduct a thorough three-tier ver-

ification for all trades, ensuring eligible applicants are enrolled. Following verification, beneficiaries will receive training and access to loan facilities as needed. To date, Uttar Pradesh has received 28,42,247 applications through the Vishwakarma portal. The tailoring trade leads with 23,53,792 applications. Other notable numbers include 1,33,347 for masonry, 99,027 for carpentry, 41,773 for blacksmithing and 40,848 for barbering. Additional trades with significant applications are hammer and tool kit making (25,590), washermen (24,294), potter (23,059), garland maker

(22,619), traditional toy maker (19,130), mat and basket maker (16,067) and goldsmith (12,733). Applications have also been received for sculpting (9,517), fish net making (8,563), leather working (7,689), lock making (3,594), armory (3,387) and boat making (2,777). Three-tier verification for these online applications is underway and artisan enrollment is progressing. Beneficiaries will receive skills development, toolkit incentives, credit support, digital transaction incentives, marketing support and a PM Vishwakarma certificate and ID card.

Kumar mourns death of Narsingh Patel

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bihar cabinet minister Shrawan Kumar said on Sunday that the demise of Chaudhary Narsingh Patel Agyani was an irreparable loss to society. Shrawan Kumar was speaking at a condolence meeting to mourn the death of late leader Chaudhary Narsingh Patel Agyani at Maniyara in Sant Kabir Nagar district. He paid homage by offering floral tribute to the portrait of the late leader. Kumar, who is also Janata Dal (United) incharge of Uttar Pradesh, said the death of former national general secretary of All India Kurmi Mahasabha, late Chaudhary Narsingh Agyani, always used to talk about the society and was concerned about development. "Agyani was the first one to reach the happiness and sorrow of others. He kept fighting for society throughout his life and always worried for others," he said. On this occasion, many workers of the party, including party's Uttar Pradesh unit leader Sushil Singh Patel, Omprakash Verma, Rajneesh Patel and several others were present.

Several initiatives to boost zoo revenue

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Director of Lucknow Zoological Garden Aditi Sharma on Thursday outlined several initiatives aimed at increasing the revenue. She revealed that the zoo earns approximately Rs 10-11 crore annually from ticket sales, which is allocated for staff salaries. However, she noted that the state government grants are designated exclusively for the upkeep of the inmates and cannot be used for salaries or other enhancements. To boost revenue, Sharma emphasised that extensive publicity efforts are being undertaken to attract more visitors to the zoo. "Apart from that, we are creating selfie points for the visitors at many points. We are now going to create an entry plaza at gate number 1 of the zoo. This is important in view of the fact that visitors, after buying the tickets, have to stand on the road to get their tickets checked and be screened for carrying plastics and water bottles. But with the creation of the entry plaza,

they will straightaway get entry into the zoo and into the plaza, which will have lawns, the facility of cool drinking water, and benches. This will provide help to both senior citizens and children. People will be in a comfortable position," she stated. Sharma also mentioned plans to improve the zoo canteen and enhance the butterfly garden. She noted, "We have submitted a proposal to the Tourism department that they should improve our butterfly garden and submit funds for the same, and restore as well as renovate the swings in the play area." Regarding water facilities, Sharma highlighted improvements: "We have repaired the faulty coolers and installed new ones, which are connected to the RO system and are being maintained regularly. This will be a good facility for the visitors." In addition, the director highlighted the ongoing renovations of the 3D hall, saying, "Our auditorium was old and had a rolled-down screen.

14 held as police recruitment exams continue on third day

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The police recruitment examinations conducted at 1,174 centres in 67 districts of Uttar Pradesh ended peacefully on Sunday. As many as 70.67 per cent of the enrolled candidates appeared in the examination on the third day. The exams are being held in two shifts. The five-day exercise, which began on Friday, will conclude on August 31. The examination centres were inspected by senior administrative officials of the districts to make sure that they were being held in a fair manner. Otherwise too, the examinations for recruitment in Uttar Pradesh Police are being held amidst tight security to ensure they are fair, said an official. On Sunday, 14 candidates were arrested from different places and cases were registered against them for impersonation, forgery and other provisions of law, confirmed an official communiqué of the police headquarters. Those arrested included four in Jaunpur, three in Kanpur Nagar, two each in Jhansi and Balrampur, and one each in Aligarh, Mainpuri and Etah. A large number of policemen were deployed outside the examination centres in all the districts, including Noida, Kanpur Nagar, Lucknow, Prayagraj and Agra. Surveillance is being done with drones. On the third day, even the jewelry and hairpins of female



candidates were removed and hair was checked. Even sandals and shoes were removed. Bus and railway stations were jam packed on Sunday as well. More than six lakh candidates have not appeared in the exam in two days while 130 suspects were detected. On Saturday, 20 people were arrested from different districts. The fresh recruitment exercise being conducted by Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board (UPPRPB) to fill over 60,000 posts was necessitated after the exams to be held on February 17 and 18 were cancelled following allegations of a paper leak. The UP State

Road Transport Corporation is providing free bus services to candidates, including complimentary travel on electric buses in several districts. Meanwhile in Bijnor, some candidates, two, according to the police, at the KPS Kanya Inter College exam centre alleged that the question papers they received were unsealed on Sunday. The candidates suspected that the paper might have been leaked. Rajeev Krishna, Chairperson of the Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board (UPPRPB), dismissed the possibility of a paper leak, saying that the cartons, boxes and packets carrying the question papers were found

with their seals intact. "We have electronic and photographic evidence of it," Krishna said, adding that they had gone through the CCTV footage of the entire chain of custody. Krishna said that while the question papers were sealed as per procedure, two of them did not have the stickers that they were supposed to be on them. "This is not a case of any kind of leak, I want to make it clear," Krishna said. Superintendent of Police in Bijnor Abhishek, said that "maybe it was a packaging error" that led to the absence of the stickers on two question paper packets.

Bogies of Ganga Sutlej Exp uncouple, none hurt

PTI ■ BUNJUR

At least 10 bogies of the Aghanbad-bound Ganga Sutlej Express train got uncoupled near Chakraj Mal area here early Sunday, officials said. No passenger was hurt in the incident. Additional

Superintendent of Police (ASP), Dharam Singh Marchal told reporters that "Some bogies of a train headed to Dhanbad separated after decoupling from the engine and other bogies due to some technical problem at around 4 am."

According to railway officials, the incident occurred when the coupling between two sleeper coaches separated. The coupling of the Ferozepur-Dhanbad train was fixed and the train left for its destination, they said.

Over 200 candidates on way to give the Uttar Pradesh Police recruitment exam were travelling in the train and the local police and railway administration made arrangements to send them to exam centres through three buses.

UP leads nation with over 40K INSPIRE award nominations

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The INSPIRE (Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research) Awards-MANAK (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspirations and Knowledge), a flagship initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (of the Government of India, continues to shine as a beacon of innovation and creativity among the nation's youth. This year's edition is seeing an overwhelming participation, with Uttar Pradesh leading the way with over 40,000 nominations, the highest in the country. The INSPIRE awards aim to cultivate a scientific mindset and encourage young minds to explore science and technology. These awards honour and reward exceptional ideas from

students nationwide in classes 6 to 10, aged 10 to 15. Schools can submit up to five ideas or innovations; nominations are open until September 15. Uttar Pradesh has once again demonstrated its commitment to fostering innovation and scientific curiosity among young minds, securing the top position in the country with over 40,000 nominations for the prestigious INSPIRE awards. This remarkable achievement results from the collective efforts of the state government, educational institutions and educators. The Yogi government's proactive approach has encouraged students to explore and excel in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, as evidenced by the overwhelming number of nominations from Uttar Pradesh.

With this impressive participation, Uttar Pradesh leads the nation. It sets a new benchmark for promoting grassroots innovation and scientific inquiry among the youth, aligning with the broader vision of making India a global hub for science and technology. The state's dominance in the INSPIRE awards nominations reflects its strategic focus on empowering students with opportunities to showcase their creativity, problem-solving skills and innovative ideas on a national platform. This further solidifies Uttar Pradesh's role as a key contributor to the nation's scientific and technological advancement. In a significant move to foster creativity and innovation among students, schools across the region are introducing 'Idea Boxes', offering young minds a

platform to submit their innovative ideas for consideration in the prestigious INSPIRE awards. This initiative encourages students to think critically and creatively about real-world challenges, allowing them to have their voices heard and their ideas recognised nationally. The collected ideas will be evaluated and the most promising ones will be developed further, potentially leading to their nomination for the INSPIRE awards, a programme designed to promote innovation in science and technology among youth. Educators hope to ignite a passion for invention and problem-solving by integrating this initiative into the school environment, empowering students to contribute meaningfully to society's progress.

Be cautious of SP-Congress 'double standards': Maya BSP president rules out future alliance

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayaawati, on Sunday, took a dig at the Congress 'Samvidhan Samman Sammelan' and urged people to be cautious of the "double standards" of the grand old party and its ally the Samajwadi Party. She also made it clear that her party would not form any alliance with the likes of the SP and the Congress in any election. In a series of posts on X on Sunday, the BSP chief blasted the Congress for "not honouring" BR Ambedkar with the Bharat Ratna. "The followers of Ambedkar will never forgive the Congress, which organised the 'Samvidhan Samman Sammelan' in Prayagraj, for not conferring the main architect of the Constitution with the Bharat Ratna during his lifetime or after his death," Mayaawati said. She also lashed out at the Congress for not declaring a single day of national mourn-



ing following the death of Kanshi Ram who, according to Mayaawati, gave impetus to Ambedkar's movement. The SP government in Uttar Pradesh at that time also did not declare a state mourning, she said. "Be cautious of their double standards of thinking, behaviour and character," the BSP chief said in Hindi. The former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh also attacked the Congress over its demand for a caste census, asking why it did not undertake the exercise during its tenures in government. "The BSP has always

been in favour of it because it is very important for the benefit of the weaker sections," Mayaawati said. Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Saturday stressed the demand for a nationwide caste census during the Samvidhan Samman Sammelan and said 90 per cent people of the country were sitting out of the system and the step should be taken in their interest. "They have skills and knowledge but they have no connection with this system. This is the reason why we have raised

the demand for caste census," Rahul Gandhi had said. Mayaawati also attacked the Congress, Samajwadi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party over the "ongoing conspiracy to make reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes ineffective and creamy layer." "Is this their love for Dalits? Be careful," she said. Mayaawati further said, "Will it be appropriate in the interest of SCs, STs and OBCs (Other Backward Classes) to form an alliance with these anti-reservation parties such as the SP and the Congress in any election now? This will not happen at all." The BSP had an electoral alliance with the SP for the 1993 assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Mayaawati had on Friday expressed her gratitude to SP president Akhilesh Yadav after the Kannaauj MP demanded that a defamation case be filed against a BJP MLA for his remarks against the BSP chief.

Assembly bypolls: Faizabad MP's son likely to be SP candidate from Milkipur

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Ajit Prasad, the son of Faizabad MP Awadhesh Prasad, is likely to be the Samajwadi Party candidate from Milkipur constituency in the upcoming assembly bypolls, party leaders said on Sunday. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav held a meeting with party leaders and workers of Ayodhya's Milkipur assembly constituency and discussed the name of Ajit Prasad as party candidate for the seat, they said. The SP leaders said that name of Ajit Prasad has been

finalised but its official announcement will be made by the party later. Party MLA RK Singh, when asked about the meeting, said, "The meeting was called to discuss preparations for Milkipur assembly seat. All leaders and office bearers of the constituency was called in the meeting and were given necessary directions." "Name of Ajit Prasad was discussed in the meeting. The way in which common people of Ayodhya ensured victory of Awadhesh Prasad in 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the SP has trust in his family...the party is going to win the bypoll," Singh said.

SP leader Awadhesh Prasad's election to Lok Sabha from Faizabad seat led to his resignation from the Milkipur seat held by him. When asked about the candidate from Milkipur, Awadhesh Prasad, who was present in the meeting, did not give a direct reply. "The one who has to contest knows and those who have to vote also know who will be the candidate. The party will make its official announcement," Awadhesh Prasad said. The Election Commission is yet to announce the schedule for the bypolls to 10 assembly seats in the state.

BJP MLA gets threatening call; one held

Shahjahanpur (PTI): A man was arrested here for allegedly giving a threatening call on WhatsApp to BJP MLA from Meeranpur Katra constituency, police on Sunday said. On August 19, MLA Veer Vikram Singh received a call from a person who threatened to kill him and his family, they said. Police identified the caller as Arjun alias Chhote and took him into custody. Arjun was booked in Section 170 (breach of peace) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Superintendent of Police Ashok Kumar Meena told PTI. An FIR was lodged in the matter at Jaitpur police station.

UP ATS arrests mastermind of gang making forged birth certificates

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The sleuths of the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad (UP ATS) claimed to have arrested the mastermind of a gang involved in issuing fake or forged birth and death certificates. The accused was wanted by the ATS after it registered a case in this regard. The ATS will now seek police custody remand of the accused to further grill him and extract the names of others, including government officials, involved in the racket. According to an official communiqué of the ATS released on Sunday evening, on July 17, 2024 they registered an FIR (No. 327/2024) under Sections 319, 318, 336, 340, 337, 338 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita in Salon police station of Rae Bareilly district in connection with the issuance of a large number of fake birth or death certificates. The documents were issued from the ID pass-

word of the Birth-Death Certificate Portal of the gram vikas officer in the Salon police station. The ATS late in the night of July 18, 2024, arrested the accused Vijay Singh Yadav, Zeeshan Khan, Suhail and Riyaz Khan. Again on August 2, the ATS nabbed Govind Keshari, Akash Kasodhan, Salman Ali alias Salman Guru, Sanjeev Kumar Singh, Vaibhav Upadhyay and Shah Nawaz. A day later, Arif Ali, Shahnawaz, Dheeraj Kumar, Rajan alias Devmani, Neeraj, Armaan and Satish Kumar Soni were arrested by the ATS team and sent to judicial custody by Rae Bareilly police. The above-mentioned accused, during interrogation, had revealed the name of the mastermind of the gang as Ravikesh of Bihar after which the ATS put him on the wanted list and a reward of Rs. 25,000 was also announced on him by the superintendent of police of Rae Bareilly. The ATS sleuths were moni-

toring the movement of Ravikesh through electronic and physical surveillance for his arrest. The ATS team on Sunday learnt that the wanted accused was coming to Lucknow and the sleuths set a trap and arrested the accused. During interrogation, Ravikesh revealed that he created the portal 'www.crsorgov.in' in 2022 and the portal 'www.thedashboard.in' in 2023 to make fake certificates and through his Facebook page, he included many people of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in his fake certificate making gang, which also included many CSC operators. There are about 4,100 users on its portal, out of which 1500 are active users, who are also permanent customers, through whom he used to earn Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,000 per day. He and his users have made about four lakh fake birth certificates and about

five thousand fake death certificates of customers from various districts of many states. In 2022 itself, the accused started receiving different usernames and passwords of the government portal 'www.crsorgov.in' from various members of his gang, on which certificates were prepared after entering the OTP. Through the government portal also, the accused and other members of his gang have made thousands of fake birth and death certificates so far. Interrogation of the arrested accused has also revealed names of other suspects, who have made birth and death certificates by misusing the original ID and password of the gram vikas adhikari. They are on the radar of UP ATS. Further legal action against Ravikesh, a resident of Biuni village under Bahadurpur police station of Darbhanga district in Bihar is being taken by the Rae Bareilly police.

Govt to provide 30,000 jobs through four Rozgar Melas in ten days

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government is set to intensify its efforts for providing employment opportunities by accelerating the organisation of Rozgar Melas across Uttar Pradesh. Following the successful organisation of three such job fairs in August, the government plans to organise employment fairs in four districts over the next 10 days, aiming to offer around 30,000 job opportunities. These employment fairs are scheduled to take place in Mainpuri on August 27, Aligarh on August 28, Mirzapur on September 1 and Moradabad on September 2. In each district, 1,000 appointment letters will be distributed to successful candidates. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is expected to attend these events as the chief guest. Earlier in August, the Yogi government organised employment fairs in Ambedkarnagar on August 17, Ayodhya on August 18 and Muzaffarnagar on August 22, during which more than 17,000 appointment letters were dis-

tributed. Minister of State for Vocational Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship (Independent Charge) Kapil Dev Agarwal emphasised the ongoing efforts to connect skilled youth with employment through the Rozgar Mela initiative. He noted that under the guidance of Chief Minister M Yogi, large-scale employment fairs are being organised in various districts to provide job opportunities to trained individuals. The state government is actively working to ensure that those who receive training under the Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission are successfully linked with employment. As part of this initiative, upcoming Rozgar Melas are scheduled in Mainpuri, Aligarh, Mirzapur and Moradabad, where approximately 30,000 job opportunities will be offered. Additionally, 4,000 appointment letters, including 1,000 in each district, will be handed out to successful candidates. Around 50 reputed companies from across the country will participate in the employment

fair in each district, where they will conduct interviews and offer jobs to the youth. The Yogi government has successfully distributed over 17,000 appointment letters through a series of Rozgar Melas organised in August. In Ayodhya and Ambedkarnagar alone, more than 12,000 appointment letters were handed out, with an additional 5,000 distributed in Muzaffarnagar. These employment fairs, conducted within just six days, saw participation from various companies offering jobs to the youth in sectors such as manufacturing, engineering, telecom, healthcare, construction and information technology. The Yogi government is expanding employment opportunities for the youth, not only in government positions but also in private companies. The government is running various programmes aimed at enhancing the skills of the youth. The plan for 2024 includes employing a large number of young people in private companies through these Rozgar Melas. Over the past seven and a half years, more than six and a half

lakh youth have secured government jobs, and an additional 3.75 lakh have been connected to jobs through contracts. In the private sector and micro, small and medium enterprises, the government has facilitated employment for nearly two crore individuals. The Yogi government is actively working to create employment opportunities for the youth of Uttar Pradesh, with a series of targeted programmes being organised to meet this objective. In line with these efforts, Chief Minister Yogi had said during the Rozgar Mela in Muzaffarnagar on August 22 that the state government plans to provide government jobs to two lakh youth over the next two years. The chief minister urged the youth to grab upcoming government job opportunities across the state. As a testament to the government's commitment, the police recruitment examination is currently being conducted for over 60,000 posts, with plans underway to create additional jobs in various other departments.

Govt provides 'roti, kapda aur makan' to flood-hit people

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Food, clothing and shelter (roti, kapda, maakan) are the necessities for every individual and the Yogi Adityanath government ensured that the flood-hit population of Uttar Pradesh had all three. The government provided approximately Rs 20 lakh to aid those whose household items were destroyed by the disaster. Around Rs 5 crore was allocated to compensate for 2,649 flood-damaged houses. The government also distributed 2,54,735 food grains and 8,54,517 lunch packets to the needy people. Moreover, Rs 2.58 lakh was granted to repair damaged cattle sheds. Notably, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath frequently reassures the public that there is no shortage of funds to assist the underprivileged, and his actions in aiding flood victims across the state stand as a testament to this

promise. Relief Commissioner GS Naveen said, [Uttar Pradesh is highly vulnerable to disasters. In response, the Yogi government has implemented numerous critical measures over the past seven and a half years to mitigate the impact of such calamities." He added, "The government's commitment to supporting disaster victims is evident as it has consistently addressed the smallest needs of those affected by floods." Naveen highlighted that, following Chief Minister Yogi's directives, a total of Rs 10,07,500 was distributed to 403 flood-affected families across nine districts, providing Rs 2,500 per family for essentials. The highest aid was given to 94 families in Lakhimpur Kheri, followed by 82 in Shahjahanpur, 60 in Shravasti, 52 in Ballia, 46 in Kushinagar, 28 in Bahraich and 10 families each in Balrampur and Siddharthnagar. Additionally, Rs 2,58,000 was allocated to repair 86 damaged cattle sheds in the same eight districts. The funds were distributed among 37 cattle sheds in Lakhimpur Kheri, 18 in Hardoi, 17 in Pilibhit, 4 in Balrampur, three each in Bahraich and Shahjahanpur, and two each in Shravasti and Siddharthnagar.

Similarly, Rs 9,55,000 was distributed to 382 families across eight flood-affected districts to compensate for damaged utensils and other household items. Each family received Rs 2,500, ensuring an equitable distribution of relief. The highest assistance was provided to 94 families in Lakhimpur Kheri, followed by 82 in Shahjahanpur, 60 in Shravasti, 52 in Ballia, 46 in Kushinagar, 28 in Bahraich and 10 families each in Balrampur and Siddharthnagar. Additionally, Rs 2,58,000 was allocated to repair 86 damaged cattle sheds in the same eight districts. The funds were distributed among 37 cattle sheds in Lakhimpur Kheri, 18 in Hardoi, 17 in Pilibhit, 4 in Balrampur, three each in Bahraich and Shahjahanpur, and two each in Shravasti and Siddharthnagar.

Man arrested for raping 16-yr-old niece

PTI ■ BALLIA

A man was on Sunday arrested for allegedly raping his 16-year-old niece here, police said. Superintendent of Police (SP) Vikram Veer said the girl, resident of a village under Bansihi police station area, was raped by her uncle Lalji (45) on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday. At the time of the incident, the girl was sleeping at home with her younger siblings, when Lalji entered the house through the roof and raped her, he said. The superintendent of police further said that on the complaint of the girl's aunt, a case was registered against Lalji on Sunday relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. He said the accused has been arrested.

'Mann Ki Baat' a campaign to inspire & awaken countrymen: Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The 113th edition of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat', which is broadcast on the last Sunday of every month, was heard by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers at all 30,286 booths of party's Kashi region, including Varanasi district and city. The PM spoke in detail on space sector, connecting one lakh youth to political ground, 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan' etc. He said citing examples of Rakshabandhan and World Sanskrit Day on August 19 that even today people in the country and abroad show a special attachment towards Sanskrit. He discussed the Fit India campaign and Shri Anna. PM Modi spoke on the Nutrition Month from September 1 and 30 and wished Telugu people on the Telugu Language Day to be celebrated on August 29. The PM congratulated the countrymen on the upcoming festivals Shri Krishna Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi, Onam, Milad-un-Nabi etc. Regional BJP president Dilip Patel listened to 'Mann Ki Baat' programme at Rohania, while district party president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma at Kanchanpur booth number



UP Minister Dr Dayashankar Mishra Dayalu and BJP workers listening to 'Mann Ki Baat' in Varanasi on Sunday.

185 of Kardameshwar Mandal, city chief Vidyasagar Rai at booth number 64 of Cantt Mandal, regional general secretary Ashok Chaurasia at Khojwa Ward, regional media incharge Navratan Rathi at booth number 327 located at Gurudham and co-media incharge Santosh Solapurkar at booth number 257 of Bindu Madhav ward. On the occasion, Mandal president Nalin Nayan Mishra, corporator Kanak Lata Mishra, Vinod Awasthi, Roshan Seth, Suraj Pandey, Ajay Yadav etc were

also present at Rohania. Meanwhile, Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' heard 'Mann Ki Baat' along with the BJP workers at the camp office in Siga. Addressing the workers on this occasion, the minister said that not only BJP workers but also the countrymen eagerly wait for the PM's 'Mann Ki Baat'. He said 'Mann Ki Baat' is not just a programme but a great campaign to inspire and

awaken the countrymen because the citizens get information about new inventions and awards. When the PM discusses citizens doing excellent work, this moment becomes an inspiration for crores of people, Dayalu added. Gaurav Rathi, Hadrat Shukla, Sanjay Mishra, Santosh Saini, Sanjay Chaurasia, Anil Dubey, Saurabh Rai, Sarvesh Verma, Avadh Narayan Rai, Rajesh Verma, Akash Seth, Arun Pandey etc were also present.

Action taken against power staff, meter agencies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (PuVVNL), Discom Headquarters Varanasi, has directed all the testing sections /meter agencies to return the sealing books and meters issued, which have not been returned by many yet and in the apprehension of not being posted in the billing system, 03 TG-2, one junior engineer (Meter) was suspended with immediate effect while taking disciplinary action, FIRs were registered against two meter agencies. Meanwhile on Saturday, Manoj Kumar Singh, Executive Engineer, Electrical Testing Division, Deoria has suspended Amir Ansari and Shailesh Kumar Pandey of Electrical Testing Sub-Division, Gauri Bazar with immediate effect for further investigation and disciplinary action and during the suspension period, Manoj Kumar Gupta will remain attached to the office of Assistant Engineer (Meter), Bhadohi. Executive Engineer, Electrical Testing Division, Chandauli told about Mohd Mehndi, Junior Engineer (Meter), Electrical Testing Sub-Division-II, Mughalsarai about indiscipline, replacement of 1,076 meters which were shown as OK and non-available of 1,059 meters from 14,697 meters received from Electricity Storage Centre in online system, indecent behaviour, negligence in work and possibility of loss of departmental revenue. In this direc-

tion, Manoj Kumar Agarwal, Superintending Engineer, Electricity Distribution Board-Chandauli suspended Mohd Mehndi Junior Engineer, Electrical Testing Sub-Division-II, Mughalsarai with immediate effect for further investigation and disciplinary action. During the suspension period Mohd Mehndi will remain attached to Electricity Distribution Division III Sakaldiha Chandauli. Meter agency M/s Lucky Enterprises, 370 Ranimandi, Prayagraj misused the meters contrary to its contract and installed the correct meters by replacing them in a wrong manner. This act of theirs falls in the category of causing financial loss to the department and tarnishing the image of the department, contrary to the terms and conditions of the contract, hence an FIR was lodged against the firm under relevant sections. Besides, the firm M/s Dhanvi Enterprises Phase-I, Rajpura Colony, Bhadohi was to install meters on 2390 IDF consumers. Till date, the firm has not provided sealing certificate for 157 meters due to which those meters could not be updated in the billing system, causing loss of departmental revenue. An FIR has been lodged against the said firm.

Sugar technologist conferred 'Mangal Singh Memorial Gold Medal'



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Noted sugar technologist Nand former Director, National Sugar Institute (NSI) Prof Nandendra Mohan was conferred prestigious 'Mangal Singh Memorial Gold Medal' by Deccan Sugar Technologist Association at its 68th Convention held at Pune. The award was given by Dr Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, Minister of Revenue, Animal Husbandry & Dairy Development, Government of Maharashtra in the presence of other dignitaries, including President of the Association, SB Bhad. Prof Mohan has been given the award for his outstanding and innovative approach in developing technique for producing refined sugar wherein for removal of the impurities from the system is carried out using carbon dioxide from distillery fermenters. To meet requirement of ethanol for blending in petrol, now when there are more distilleries integrated with the sugar factories, it is the high time to utilise the carbon di-oxide released from the distillery fermenters as clarification aid for purifying sugar melt in such sugar refineries resulting in production of desired quality of sugars at lower cost besides reducing carbon emissions. Prof Mohan thanked his co-worker, Mahendra Yadav, Technical Officer, National Sugar Institute, Kanpur.

Couple commits suicide by jumping before train

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A couple allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a speeding train near Chilibali railway station in Kotwali area of Pratapgrah here on Sunday. The reason for the incident could not be ascertained yet. On getting the information about the matter the police reached the spot. The bodies have been taken into custody and sent for the post-mortem examination. The deceased youth Rajendra

Saroj is said to be from Amethi Sangramgarh. The girl is a resident of Sangipur police station area. Railway police is investigating the matter. After the bodies were identified, the police informed the family members. RPF inspector Manoj Singh said that according to parents of the Rajendra Saroj the youth had left home saying that he was going to take the constable recruitment exam. In another incident, Meanwhile a 45-year-old

woman died in a road accident in Phulpur. Due to a pothole on the road, the bike on which the woman was sitting suddenly went out of control and she fell on the road. On receiving the information, the police reached the spot and took the body into possession and sent it for the post-mortem examination. Reports said that Sangita Devi of Arvasimay Bahadurgarh village under Phulpur Kotwali area, was going to a hospital with a youth on a bike. The accident took place as soon as

she she reached in front of Mathiya village. She died due to serious head injury. Local people immediately informed the police. Phulpur Kotwali in charge, Praveen Patel said on receiving the information, the police took the body into possession and sent it for the post-mortem. On the other hand, on being informed the relatives of the deceased also reached the spot. The family members are in inconsolable due to her sudden and tragic death.

Process of accommodating students in Int'l Women's Hostel at BHU starts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The process of accommodating international girl students in the newly constructed International Women's Hostel at Banaras Hindu University has been started. In this regard, under the notification issued by the General Administration, the directors of the institutions, faculty deans, department heads and other concerned have been informed

that the girl students should be allotted rooms in the new International Women's Hostel. Necessary orders have been passed by the Vice-Chancellor in this regard. The new International Women's Hostel has a capacity of 200 rooms and can accommodate 400 girl students on the basis of double occupancy. At present, international girl students live in the old International Men's Hostel

building and the old International Women's Hostel. The total capacity of these two hostels is about 240 students. The construction of the new International Women's Hostel is a symbol of the university's commitment to provide better and modern facilities to international students and there has also been an encouraging increase in the capacity of hostels for international students in the university.

Administrative building of UP Bar Council inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Supreme Court Justice Vikram Nath advised the advocates to avoid going on strike on small matters and issues. He expressed these views after inaugurating the administrative building of UP Bar Council on Saturday evening. Justice Vikram Nath, Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court Arun Bhansali and Bar Council of India president Manan Kumar Mishra jointly inaugurated the administrative building by unveiling the plaque.

Campaign against blackmarketing of fertilisers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As per the instructions of the Government, joint teams of fertiliser inspectors and officials of the Industries department were formed by District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam on Sunday to investigate the subsidised urea being used in the manufacture of cattle feed, poultry feed, soap, paint, barn, printing ink, clothing sheets, plywood, laminate board, particle board and to ensure legal action against the firms concerned for using subsidised

urea. This was informed by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal. According to him, the Team-1 comprised District Agriculture Officer Sangam Singh and Assistant Commissioner of Industries Department Vinod Kumar Verma, to look after the areas in Pindra and Rajatalab tehsils while team-2 consisted of Senior Technical Assistant Group-1 Rohit Kumar Singh and Assistant Commissioner of Industries Department Ajay Kumar Gupta to check the areas under Sadar tehsil.

During the raids, a total of 8 industrial units and their godowns were thoroughly inspected. Four samples of technical grade urea were taken for testing. At the time of inspection, no industrial unit was found to be using subsidised urea in the manufacture of any product. All the industrial institutions of the district manufacturing cattle feed, poultry feed, soap paint, printing ink, cloak sheets, plywood, particle board manufacturing proprietors etc are directed that in any product

in which urea is used, they should never use subsidised urea in it. Otherwise, if it is found in inspection/ test that subsidised urea is being used by any of them, then strict action will be taken under the relevant sections of Fertiliser Control Order, 1985, as per rules. This campaign will continue against the sellers who are blackmarketing fertilisers. At present, all fertilizers are available in the district and there is no shortage of fertilisers in any area of the district, the chief development officer added further.

Two meet tragic end

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A tractor-trolley driver and a labourer were killed when the tyre of their vehicle, laden with bricks, suddenly burst in Rampura block area of Orai on Sunday morning. The incident took place around 9 am when the tractor-trolley after

loading bricks was going to Rampura. When it reached near Ninawali village turn, the front side tyre of the tractor-trolley burst. The uncontrolled tractor hit a cemented electricity pole which suddenly fell on the driver Sanjiv Kumar (25) of Subhash Nagar, Rampura, and the labourer Sonu (24) of

Shankaran Mohalla, Rampura, causing them serious injury. They were immediately sent to the CHC where doctors declared them dead. Meanwhile two bike-borne friends were fatally knocked down by an unidentified vehicle near Katighara village on Unnao-Hardoi road in Unnao.

Groundwater declining in Indo-Gangetic basin due to overexploitation of aquifer for irrigation: Research

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Associate professor of Geology Department, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Dr SP Rai, along with his PhD student Abhinav Patel, presented their research work entitled hydrochemical and isotopic characteristics of groundwater in the Ghaggar river basin of Indo-Gangetic Plain and its implications in the identification of suitable zones for artificial recharge at an international seminar 'Goldschmidt' organised in Chicago, USA recently. The presented work defines that the groundwater table is declining at a faster rate in the northwestern part of the Indo-Gangetic basin due to overexploitation of the aquifer for irrigation. The

state governments of Haryana and Punjab have initiated major programmes for water level augmentation through artificial recharge interventions. The variation in vertical movement of isotopic and chemical tracers indicates a faster recharge rate in particular zones that is up to a depth of 80 metres. The farmers are pumping excessive groundwater for irrigation in these recharge zones where recharging is faster and groundwater is of good quality. As a result, the water table declines at a very fast rate in these pockets. In contrast, the downstream side is not being pumped due to its saline nature. However, a dense network of canals has been developed for irrigation, which promotes irrigation and returns flow to join the water

table, causing an increase in the water table. A significant variation in the hydro-chemical and isotopic characteristics of groundwater is the best indicator to identify the most suitable zone in the basin for water level augmentation through artificial recharge interventions. In the downstream zone of the basin, measures are to be adopted for lowering the water table through developed irrigation practices which will help in minimising the groundwater salinity. Dr Kossitse Venyo Akpataku, Laboratory of Applied Hydrology and Environment, Suneel Kumar Joshi, Hydrological Investigations Division and Nijesh Puthiyotttil, PhD scholar, Geology Department, BHU are also associated with the above research work.

Epilepsy treatment camp held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A free epilepsy treatment camp was organised on Sunday in the premises of Aghor Peeth Shri Sarveshwari Group Sansthan Devasthanam, Avdhoot Bhagwan Ram Kusht Seva Ashram, located at Parao. In the camp, the ashram's Vaidya Ranjit Kumar gave Ayurvedic and Fakiri traditional medicines to a total of 256 patients suffering from epilepsy. Along with this, Vaidya also gave

instructions to the patients regarding staying away from intoxication, abstinence and proper diet. Along with this, the head Vaidya of Avdhoot Bhagwan Ram Kusht Seva Ashram Baikunth Nath Pandey also gave Ayurvedic medicine related suggestions to the patients as per the need. Most of the patients had come to the ashram with their parents a day earlier by Saturday evening. The institution made arrangements for the stay and

food of the patients and their associates free of cost. Some local patients also reached the ashram in the early morning on Sunday and received medicines. Apart from various districts of Uttar Pradesh, people suffering from epilepsy from various states of the country such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam and Delhi etc as well as Nepal also came to take medicine. Shri Sarveshwari Group estab-

lished by Aghoreshwar Baba Bhagwan Ram and Baba Bhagwan Ram Trust and Aghor Parishad Trust under the chairmanship and patronage of Gurupad Sambhav Ram, many public welfare programmes are continuously conducted to serve the leprosy people, the afflicted, the neglected and the needy and to inspire them to serve the society. In the same sequence, the organization is also determined to eradicate epilepsy from the society.

Four injured in road accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Four persons, including the bus driver, were injured when their vehicle collided head on with a truck in Vidhnu police area late on Saturday night. Besides, truck driver kept on crying for about half-an-hour after being entangled into its cabin. On the information of passersby, police rushed to spot which, with the help of JCB machine, rescued the truck driver. All the injured were admitted to the district hospital. Manoj Kumar Yadav of Chhibramau, Kannauj, said he was employed as conductor in Mahoba Depot. Late on Saturday evening, he along with driver Mohd Naifs of Mahoba Sadar was going to Mahoba with 72 passengers. A truck coming from opposite direction collided with the bus near Shambhuwa overbridge.



In the incident, four persons, including the bus driver, were injured while screams prevailed among other passengers. Besides, the truck driver Juggilal (35) kept on crying for about half-an-hour after being entangled in his vehicle cabin. Vidhnu Station Officer (SO) Jitendra Pratap Singh said

injured had been sent to a hospital. After the incident, a massive jam on both the sides of the Kanpur-Sagar highway disrupted the traffic for about three hours. Police diverted the traffic through the service lane under the overbridge. Ghatampur ACP Ranjit Kumar Singh said he was aware of the

incident. Manoj Yadav said when he was sitting on his seat, a head-on collision took place between the bus and a truck. Some of the passengers jumped out of the bus through the windows. The bus driver sustained head injury. He said had there not been the road divider on the overbridge, the bus would have been fallen off it. Manoj also sustained injury in his right leg. In another incident, an elderly e-rickshaw operator suddenly died on his vehicle in Bilhaur police area on Sunday morning. Local residents informed the police which rushed to spot and sent the body for autopsy after investigations. Bilhaur Station House Officer (SHO) said the body had been sent for autopsy. On the basis of the autopsy report, further action will be taken in the matter, he said.

Musical concert organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Shalini's School of Cultural Society organised a musical concert 'Krishna: Bhakti Aur Shringaar' here at the United Public School's auditorium on Saturday night. During the concert, the entire auditorium was filled with the devotional atmosphere. MLC Sali Vishnoi along with Chairman Indra Mohan Rohatgi, Dr Ved Prakash and other artistes inaugurated the programme by lighting the ceremonial lamp. It began with the melodious presentation by Dr Reeta Verma depicting the childhood activities of Lord Krishna through his attractive appearance and role as 'Makhan Chor'. It was followed by a number which highlighted the divine power of Lord Shiv. Dr Rochna Vishnoi enthralled the audience with



Dr Shalini Ved performing at the musical concert.

her beautiful devotional songs like 'Biraj Mein Jhoola' and 'Nandu Ji Ko Khana Khilayen'. Society's secretary Dr Shalini Ved presented a series of songs like 'Jhulan De', 'Muraliya Baje Yamuna Ke Tir' and 'Hari Mere Jivan Pran'. Rishi Raj Sharma and Nishant Singh accompanied her on harmonium and tabla. Chief guest and pro-

gramme chairman was all praise for the event. Rupina Mishra compered the programme. Other dignitaries present on the occasion were Kishore Mishra, Yagya Kant Shukla, Shailendra Trivedi, dhruvad maestro Pt Vinod Dwivedi besides large number of music lovers.

PM Modi urges youth to join politics in Mann ki Baat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 'Mann ki Baat' address on Sunday asserted that India is making significant strides in 21st century towards building a 'Viksit Bharat'. In his latest monthly broadcast 'Mann ki Baat', he reflected on his Independence Day appeal for one lakh young people without political experience to join politics, highlighting the positive response it has garnered. PM Modi said just as youth from a cross section of society came together for Independence and contributed to India's freedom struggle, bringing youth from non-political backgrounds into mainstream politics will help pave the way for a developed India. "This year from Red Fort, I have urged one lakh youth who are not from a political background to connect with the political system. This point of mine has garnered tremendous response. We thus come to know that a large number of our youth are eagerly ready to enter politics," Modi said. All they are looking for is the right opportunity and apt guidance, he added. "I have also received letters from youth across the country on this subject. Enormous response is being received on social media as well. People

have sent me many kinds of suggestions. Some youth have written in their letters that it is truly inconceivable for them. On account of the absence of a political legacy on part of their grandfather or parents they could not enter politics despite wanting to," the Prime Minister said. Some youth have written that they possess a good experience of working at the ground level and hence they can be helpful in solving people's problems, he said. "Some youth have also written that dynastic politics crushes new talent. Some youth have mentioned that such efforts will lend more strength to our democracy. I thank each and everyone for sending in suggestions on the subject," PM Modi said. He hoped that with collective efforts, youth who do not possess a political background, will also be able to come forward in politics. Their experience and their fervour will prove useful for the country, PM Modi said. "Even during the freedom struggle, many such people had come forward, who did not have any political background. They took the plunge for the sake of India's freedom. Once more, we require the same spirit to attain the goal of Viksit Bharat," he said. He urged the



youth to positively join this campaign. "This step of yours will be transformative in terms of your future and the country's future," PM Modi said. During the programme, Modi also spoke to young entrepreneurs, who were IIT-Madras alumni and helping space start-up GalaxEye, as they highlighted their work. They praised the growing vibrant space ecosystem in the country. The Prime Minister said the youth of the country has benefited a lot from various reforms in the space sector. On the occasion, he noted that India celebrated its first National Space Day on August 23 to mark the first anniversary of the successful landing of its spacecraft on the Moon. The Prime Minister also noted

that the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' and 'Poora Desh Tiranga' campaign was a resounding success. "We saw the Tricolour fluttering atop houses, as well as at schools, colleges and Universities. Some people had the Tricolour adorn their shops, offices... People also did the same on their desktops, mobiles and vehicles. When people join hands to express a sentiment, it thus lends unparalleled glory to any campaign," he said. A Tiranga rally, bearing a 750 metre-long flag was also taken out on the Chenab Railway Bridge, the tallest in the world, he pointed out. "We all saw captivating pictures of the Tiranga Yatra on the Dal Lake in Srinagar. A yatra with a 600-foot-long Tiranga was carried out in East Kameng District in Arunachal

Pradesh. On similar lines, in other States of the country as well, people of all ages participated in such Tiranga Yatras," PM Modi said. This campaign wove the entire country into a thread of togetherness and this is exactly what 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' is, he said. In his radio broadcast, PM Modi also cited the example of Berekuri village in Assam where people of Moran community have a deep bond with Hoolock Gibbons. "When they realised that Gibbons love bananas a lot, they started growing bananas on their farms. Besides, they decided that they would perform rituals connected with the birth and death of Gibbons, exactly as they would have performed for their near and dear ones. They have also named the Gibbons," he said. "Recently, the Gibbons were facing hardships on account of electric wires passing through, in the vicinity. In this scenario, the villagers put forth the problem to the government and a quick solution was found out too," he said. He also cited another example of human-animal bond, saying young people in Arunachal Pradesh have started using 3-D printing technology to protect wild animals from being hunted for their horns and tusks. The Prime Minister

also lauded the efforts of people behind a park in Madhya Pradesh's Jhabua where wonderful artworks out of waste have been created. The Prime Minister also batted for toy recycling, saying this is another such field where "we can work together". "You too are aware of the fact that whereas many children get bored of their toys within no time, there are children as well for whom such toys are a pipedream. Toys that your children no longer play with... You can give them away to spaces, where they continue being useful," he said. PM Modi also urged people to connect with campaigns pertaining to awareness about nutrition. "A tiny effort on your part, will help a lot in the fight against malnutrition," he said. He also noted that August 29 is Telugu Bhasha Diwas. "It's truly an amazing language. I extend good wishes to Telugu speakers across the world on Telugu Bhasha Diwas," PM Modi said. Modi also urged people to be a part of the Catch the Rain Movement. "Paralympics are about to begin in Paris. Our divyang brothers and sisters have reached there. 140 crore Indians are cheering for our athletes and players. You too also encourage our players with #Cheer4Bharat," he said.

India, Indonesia condemn use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Indonesia have condemned the use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism amid Pakistan's support to terror groups carrying out terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir. The issue of cross-border terrorism figured at the sixth meeting of the India-Indonesia joint working group on counter-terrorism that was held in Jakarta on Friday. The two sides focused on ways to effectively combat terrorism, including how to stop the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "India and Indonesia strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and emphasised the need for strengthening international cooperation to combat terrorism in a comprehensive and sustained manner," it said in a statement on Sunday. The MEA said the two sides also condemned the "use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism." "The two sides exchanged views on the



domestic, regional and global terrorism threat assessment," it said. "They discussed counter-terrorism challenges related to the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists, misuse of internet for terrorist purposes, terror financing, and the nexus between organised crime and terrorism," the MEA said. It said the two sides also exchanged views on cooperation in regional, global and multilateral fora such as the UN, ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) to combat global terrorism. The Indian delegation at the meeting was led by K D Deval, Joint Secretary (Counter-Terrorism) in the MEA. The Indonesian team was headed by Andhika Chrisnuyudhanto, Deputy for International Cooperation at the National Counter Terrorism Agency.



Rajnath Singh tours US Naval Surface Warfare Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, as a part of his ongoing tour to the US, visited the William B Morgan Large Cavitation Channel (LCC) in the Naval Surface Warfare Centre (NSWC) at Memphis, Tennessee, Defence Ministry said here on Sunday. Giving details, officials said the LCC is one of the world's largest and most technically-advanced water tunnel facility for testing submarines, torpedoes, naval surface ships and propellers. The Defence Minister was briefed at the facility and he witnessed an actual tunnel experiment. He was accompanied by Ambassador of India to US, Director General, Naval Operations from the Indian Navy and DRDO Defence Technology Counsellor, among others. He was received by the US Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy for Policy, and briefed by Commander and Technical Director of the NSWC. The discussions also intend to support the ongoing proposal for establishment of similar facility for indigenous design and development in India. Earlier, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh interacted with the senior leadership of US defence companies in Washington DC in an industry round-table organised by US India Strategic Partnership Forum. He outlined the various

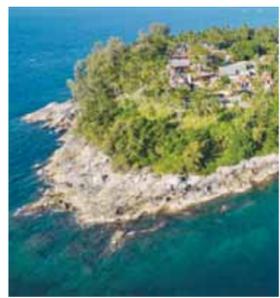
emerging co-development and co-production opportunities in the defence sector in India. The progressive reforms undertaken by the Government of India have encouraged many foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers, including from the US, to set up manufacturing units in India, develop Joint Ventures, and also to make India their alternate export base. The planned co-production of GE 414 aero-engines in India shall be a significant milestone in India-US bilateral relations. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh highlighted that 'Partnership' and 'Joint Efforts' are the two keywords that differentiate India's defence industry partnership with other nations. The event saw the attendance of senior leadership from prominent US defence and technology companies such as Boeing, GE, General Atomics, General Dynamics Land Systems, L3 Harris, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon Technologies, Rolls Royce, and ThayerMahan. In addition, few Indian companies such as ideaForge, Tata Sons and Tsecond, along with senior leaders from The Cohen Group attended the interaction with him. During the interaction, the business leaders briefly outlined their ongoing projects and future plans for India, and provided valuable feedback.

Great Nicobar Project will not displace indigenous tribe, says Environment Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Environment Minister Bhopendra Yadav on Sunday stated that the Great Nicobar Project will not displace the Shompen, an indigenous tribe of the Nicobar Islands and, instead, it would counter expansionist action by China in the region, curb the stealing of marine resources by Myanmar poachers, bridge infrastructural gaps, and promote global trade. Amid criticism from the Opposition regarding the Rs 72,000 crore mega project, Yadav was responding to an August 10 letter from Rajya Sabha MP and former Minister Jairam Ramesh, who requested the suspension of all clearances granted to the project and a review by a

parliamentary panel. The project involves construction of a transhipment port, a power plant, a township and allied infrastructure in the Greater Nicobar island. It was given nod by the Environment Ministry two years ago. The move invited criticism from the Opposition that said the mega project posed grave threat to indigenous tribal groups and flora and fauna. "It is only after due deliberations and after incorporating exemplary mitigation measures that the decision on the project was taken by the Central Government keeping the strategic, national and defence interests in mind and without compromising with the environmental and social aspects,"



Yadav stated in a detailed seven-page response on Sunday. Ramesh had raised concerns that the project would divert 13,075 hectares of forest land, about 15 per cent of

the island's area, and encroach on prohibited coastal zones. He also alleged that the project proceeded without proper consent from the Shompen and Nicobarese tribes and violated laws intended to gauge tribal consent. Ramesh further noted that the project is located in an earthquake-prone area that experienced significant ground shifts during the 2004 tsunami and criticised the opaque findings of a high-powered committee established by the Government to address these concerns. In response, Yadav stated that the committee's reports were not made public due to the project's strategic and defence importance. Addressing Ramesh's concerns about forest diversion, Yadav explained that despite the project's impact, 82%

of the Great Nicobar area remains protected as forests, eco-sensitive zones, and biosphere reserves, exceeding the required two-thirds forest cover. He also noted that consultations with tribal councils had been conducted through the Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti, and the Chairman of the Tribal Council had participated in these meetings. Regarding compensatory afforestation, Yadav acknowledged that while local plantation options were limited, planting native species in non-notified forest land outside the island and urban areas would provide significant ecological value. He added that the Haryana government had already notified 24,353.72 hectares as protected forest for the p565 project.

PM Modi's plane flew over Pakistan airspace on way back from Poland

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reportedly utilised Pakistan's airspace, while coming back from India to Poland, according to media reports of Pakistan. Citing sources from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the report of news.com.pk revealed, that the plane entered Pakistani airspace at 10:15 am and remained there for about 46 minutes. Further, the flight passed over Chitral and traversed the air control zones of Islamabad and Lahore before exiting into India at 11:01 am via Amritsar. Speaking to The News, an official from the CAA clarified that the flight was allowed under the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of international civil aviation. "International laws dictate that in such circumstances, no No-Objection Certificate (NOC) is required. The country's CAA concerned only needs to be informed in



advance," the official explained. The newspapers said, quoting sources, that Indian PM Narendra Modi has crossed Pakistan's airspace four times after becoming the Prime Minister of India for the third time. On August 21, Modi entered Pakistan's airspace at a height of 36,000 feet near Kasur at 10 am on his way to Poland's capital Warsaw in his special India One plane from Delhi. His plane remained in Pakistan's airspace for 48 minutes. He entered the Afghan airspace from Chitral. On July 8, on his way from

Delhi to Moscow, the Indian Prime Minister's plane India One flew at a height of 36,000 feet and entered Pakistan's airspace near Chitral at 11:26 am. It entered the airspace of Afghanistan at 12:10 pm.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Poland from August 21-22. This marked the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Poland in 45 years. Pakistan fully closed its airspace to India in February 2019 after Indian fighter jets violated its international boundary. Although the airspace was partially reopened in March of that year, it remained closed to Indian flights. Notably, Pakistan denied Modi's request to use its airspace for a flight to Germany later that year amid heightened tensions over the Kashmir issue. However, in 2021, Pakistan granted permission for Modi's non-stop flight to the US to pass through its airspace.

SC to hear Vijay Nair's bail plea in excise policy scam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on August 27 the bail plea of former Aam Aadmi Party communication in-charge Vijay Nair in a money laundering case related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. A bench of justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bhatti issued a notice to the Enforcement Directorate on August 12 on the plea of Nair while noting that he has been in custody for two years. Appearing for Nair, senior advocates Abhishek Singhvi and Vikram Chaudhary submitted before the Court on August 12 that he was arrested on November 13, 2022, and he has challenged the trial Court's July 29 order dismissing his default bail plea. Earlier, on July 3 last year, the High Court refused to grant bail to Nair and other co-accused in the money laundering case. The money laundering case stems from a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) FIR lodged after Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena recommended a probe into the excise policy 2021-22 which was later scrapped. The CBI has alleged that Nair met some other co-accused, liquor manufacturers and distributors at various hotels in Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi for arranging 'ill-gotten money through hawala operators' that was given to the AAP as a kickback in return for favours. It was also claimed that businessman and co-accused Abhishek Boinpally was part of the meetings and was involved in the conspiracy to launder money along with another accused liquor businessman Sameer Mahendru.

Slow wage growth, inflation cause decline in real wages: Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday claimed that a combination of slow wage growth and "back-breaking" inflation has caused an unprecedented decline in real wages and said that like the "proverbial ostrich", the Government continues to remain blind to the most fundamental challenge faced by the Indian economy. Congress General Secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said a new report by a noted brokerage firm has once again shed light on the truth that the Union Government has consistently denied — real household incomes in India are facing a persistent decline. "A combination of slow wage growth and back-breaking inflation has caused an unprecedented decline in real wages (wages adjusted for price rise) and therefore incomes," he said in a statement. Ramesh pointed out that several surveys and data sets — including the Annual Survey of Unregistered Enterprises (ASUSE), the Reserve Bank of India's KLEMS data, and the Household Consumer Expenditure Survey (HCES) — have demonstrated financial distress among working class Indians. Multiple data sources, including the Government's own official statistics, have even shown clear evidence that workers can buy less today than they could 10 years ago, he said. "Labour Bureau's Wage Rate Index (Government Data): Real wages for labourers stagnated between 2014-2023, and in fact declined between 2019-2024. Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Statistics at a Glance (Government Data): Under Dr Manmohan Singh, real wages for agricultural labourers grew at 6.8% each year. Under Mr. Modi, real wages for agricultural labourers declined by minus 1.3% each year," he



said. Citing periodic labour force survey series, Ramesh said average real earnings over time have stagnated between 2017 and 2022 across all employment types — salaried workers, casual workers, and self-employed workers. Citing Centre for Labour Research and Action data, he said real wages of brick kiln workers have stagnated or declined between 2014 and 2022. Brick kilns involve intensive labour and are a low-paying work of last resort for India's poorest, he added. "In my intervention on the Finance Bill in the Rajya Sabha on August 8, 2024, I had asked four straight questions on the state of the economy," he said. "The non-biological PM hasn't yet broken his silence on them, so they are worth repeating: Why does private investment continue to be sluggish? Why has the private sector's share in overall investment declined to its lowest level in four years?" Ramesh said. "Why is consumption growth so weak and why did private final consumption expenditure — the largest component of the GDP — grew at only around 4% in FY24," he asked. Why are real wages and incomes stagnant or falling, Ramesh further asked. "Why has manufacturing as percentage of GDP fallen from 16.5% in UPA to 14.5%? Why has this decline been particularly sharp in manufacturing like textiles? Why have India's garment exports fallen from USD 15 billion in 2013-14 to USD 14.5 billion in 2023-2024?" the Congress leader said.

Opp slams Govt's new unified pension scheme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Union Cabinet approved a new Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for Central Government employees, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge hit out at the move, saying 'U' in UPS stands for the "U-turns" that the Narendra Modi-led Government takes on various issues. Fulfilling long pending demands of Government employees ahead of Assembly elections in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra and Jharkhand, the Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), which assures

guaranteed pension. The dissatisfaction among some Government employees was noticeable during the Lok Sabha polls, although it was less pronounced than in state elections. Observers suggested that this discontent could be influential in upcoming election battles. Taking a dig at the Government, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said, "The 'U' in UPS stands for Modi Govt's U turns! Just June 4, the power of the people has prevailed over the arrogance of power of the Prime Minister." "Rollback in the budget regarding Long Term Capital Gain/Indexation. Sending Waqf Bill to JPC. Rollback of Broadcast Bill. Rollback of Lateral Entry," Kharge said.



"We will keep ensuring accountability and protect 140 crore Indians from this despotic Government!" the Congress chief said in his post on X. The new pension scheme also guarantees an assured minimum pension of Rs 10,000 per month on

superannuation after a minimum of 10 years of service. This option scheme will benefit 23 lakh central Government employees, he said, adding that the number would rise to 90 lakh if state Governments want to join the scheme. Announcing other features of UPS, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw had said an assured family pension will be provided to the spouse of a deceased employee. In addition, there would be inflation indexation on assured pension, assured family pension, and assured minimum pension. With the addition of all these features, it marks the transformation of the National Pension System (NPS), which promised

pensions based on the contribution made by employees and the Government. The announcement came against the backdrop of several non-BJP states deciding to revert to the DA-linked Old Pension Scheme (OPS) and employee organisations in some other States raising demand for the same. Although the Government asserts that the announcement is not politically motivated, political experts suggest that its timing, just weeks before multiple state Assembly elections, is not a mere coincidence. Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir will all go to the polls in the coming weeks.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Peace mission

Prime Minister Modi's Visit to Ukraine is as much about peace as it is to establish India as a neutral country

On August 20, 2024, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a historic visit to Ukraine, marking a significant moment in the diplomatic relations between the two nations. This visit came amid ongoing conflict in the region. India and Ukraine have historically maintained cordial relations, with ties largely focused on economic cooperation, technical assistance, and cultural exchange. However, the backdrop of Modi's visit is the prolonged conflict between Ukraine and Russia, which has led to a significant humanitarian and geopolitical crisis. India has traditionally adhered to a neutral stance, emphasising dialogue and diplomacy. Modi's visit underscores a nuanced shift in India's approach, highlighting a deeper engagement with Ukraine amidst the ongoing conflict. Only a month before PM Modi had visited Russia much to the chargin of Kyiv. But his Ukraine visit in a way establishes India's neutral stance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has offered to help bring peace to Ukraine



in a meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. He also asked the Ukrainian President to sit down and talk to end the conflict. This is first ever visit of an Indian prime minister to Ukraine after two countries established diplomatic relations in 1992.

The primary objectives of Modi's visit were multifaceted. Modi aimed to bolster economic and strategic ties with Ukraine. Both countries have been exploring opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as technology, defense, and infrastructure. India has expressed support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Modi's visit included discussions on increasing humanitarian aid and rebuilding efforts in conflict-affected areas. Modi's presence in Ukraine served as a diplomatic gesture, reinforcing India's commitment to supporting peace and stability in Eastern Europe. This visit was also seen as a way to engage more actively in global diplomatic forums concerning the Ukraine crisis. During his visit, discussions focused on several key areas. Agreements were reached to enhance trade and investment, with India offering to share expertise in technology and infrastructure development. India pledged additional support for humanitarian efforts, including medical aid and assistance for displaced persons. Both nations agreed to increase strategic dialogues to address mutual concerns and foster closer cooperation in various international platforms. Modi's visit to Ukraine is a clear indicator of India's evolving foreign policy strategy. While maintaining its traditional stance of non-interference, India is positioning itself as a more proactive player in global diplomacy, particularly in regions affected by conflict. This visit also reflects India's broader ambition to balance its relations between major global powers and regional conflicts. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit reflects a deeper engagement of India in global affairs, an attempt to counter China's growing influence.

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PICTALK



Workers load heaps of straw on an autorickshaw, in Bardhaman, PTI

The US military inc: Profiting from war



SANTHOSH MATHEW

The American military-industrial complex, coined by President Eisenhower in 1961, has shaped US foreign policy and military strategy while perpetuating global conflicts

The American military-industrial complex, a term popularized by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his farewell address in 1961, refers to the synergistic relationship between a nation's armed forces, its defence industry, and its political establishment. This complex has played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy and military strategy, leading to extensive global influence and numerous conflicts over the past century. While wars undoubtedly bring immense destruction and suffering, they have also generated substantial profits for certain American entities, fueling a cycle of conflict and economic gain. The roots of the American military-industrial complex can be traced back to World War II. The massive mobilization of resources for the war effort transformed the U.S. into a leading military power, with a robust defence industry emerging to meet the demands of the global conflict. Companies like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and General Dynamics became integral to the war effort, producing aircraft, ships, and weapons on an unprecedented scale. Post-World War II, the geopolitical landscape underwent significant changes. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union necessitated a perpetual state of military readiness, leading to sustained government investment in defence. This period saw the establishment of a permanent arms industry and the proliferation of defence contractors, further entrenching the military-industrial complex in the American economy and politics. The U.S. emerged as a superpower with global responsibilities and interests, often justified by the need to contain communism. This new role required maintaining and expanding military bases worldwide, ensuring a constant state of preparedness. The Korean War (1950-1953) was one of the first significant conflicts of the Cold War era, where the U.S. engaged militarily to curb the spread of communism in Asia. This war marked the beginning



of a pattern where military engagements, often initiated under the guise of ideological battles, served to bolster the defence industry. The Vietnam War (1955-1975) further exemplified this, as it became one of the most prolonged and controversial conflicts in American history. The war generated vast profits for defence contractors but at the cost of immense human suffering and domestic turmoil. **The Cold War Era:** Sustained Conflict and Profiteering. Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. participated in numerous proxy wars and military interventions, from Latin America to the Middle East. The Cuban Missile Crisis, the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the support for anti-communist regimes across the globe underscored America's commitment to combating Soviet influence. Each conflict provided a pretext for increased military spending and innovation in weapons technology, ensuring continued profits for the defence industry. One of the most significant developments during this period was the arms race, characterized by the rapid development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. The doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD) necessitated a continuous enhancement of the U.S. nuclear arsenal,



THE GULF WAR (1990-1991) SHOWCASED AMERICA'S TECHNOLOGICAL MILITARY PROWESS AND REAFFIRMED THE COUNTRY'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING ITS INTERESTS IN THE OIL-RICH MIDDLE EAST

benefiting companies involved in nuclear weapons production. This period also saw advancements in missile technology, stealth aircraft, and other sophisticated weaponry, all funded by the American taxpayer. The end of the Cold War did not diminish the influence of the military-industrial complex. Instead, new threats emerged, and the complex adapted accordingly. The Gulf War (1990-1991) showcased America's technological military prowess and reaffirmed the country's commitment to protecting its interests in the oil-rich Middle East. Defence contractors reaped substantial profits from the war, supplying everything from precision-guided munitions to advanced combat systems. The attacks on September 11, 2001, marked the beginning of the War on Terror, a prolonged conflict that further solidified the military-industrial complex's grip on American foreign policy. The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq resulted in a dramatic surge in defence spending, with companies like Halliburton and Blackwater (now Academi) securing lucrative contracts for reconstruction and security services. In recent years, the military-industrial complex has contin-

ued to thrive, driven by ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, rising tensions with Russia and China, and the global war on terrorism. The U.S. defence budget remains the largest in the world, with substantial funds allocated to developing next-generation weapons systems and maintaining a vast network of military bases. The recent assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, former Prime Minister of Palestine and head of Hamas, by Israel in Iran, with American support, underscores the enduring influence of the military-industrial complex. This act, and the subsequent American military buildup in the region, exemplifies how geopolitical manoeuvres often serve dual purposes: advancing strategic interests and ensuring continued profits for the defence industry. As Eisenhower warned, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex." This cautionary message remains as relevant today as it was over six decades ago, reminding us of the intricate and often perilous relationship between war, politics, and profit. (The writer is an assistant professor at Pondicherry University; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DON'T MAKE PATIENTS SUFFER

Madam — I support the movement against the criminal or criminals who killed the trainee doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, but I cannot support the cease-work by the doctors. I fail to understand why innocent patients are made to suffer to the extreme. The pictures of untreated patients in pain have raised many questions. Why should they bear the burnt of the strike? What is their fault?

Earlier, while passing directions to the CBI and the State of West Bengal, the Supreme Court only appealed to the striking doctors to resume work. But it cut no ice. On Thursday, the apex court again nudged the striking doctors to resume work for the sake of the patients. But the status quo is still being maintained. Are the poor patients simply pawns in the tussle?

The doctors can continue their protests even after resuming work. The Supreme Court says that no coercive action shall be taken against the doctors as long as the protests are peaceful. Given the patients are made to suffer from violence within, the protests can no longer be termed as peaceful.

Sujit De | Kolkata

START PREPARING FOR NEXT OLYMPICS

Madam — All other nations have started preparation for the next Olympics, international sports events with renewed vigour. India is still in blame-game, scapegoat, harm, negative network, interference, discouraging, devilish activities. Issuing discouraging statements in the media on how many crores spent on Paris Olympics-2024 preparation for months. Sports win depends on "luck of the day" is well known.

First and foremost, India must shed its third world mind set. Replace negative devilish qualities - discouraging - harmful tendencies with encouragement, scientific happy development management and latest technology usage (for

Urban flooding must be checked



propos article, 'Monsoon mayhem: Tackling urban flooding', published on August 23, this is my response. The global surge in urban flooding has brought a daunting challenge for cities worldwide, necessitating urgent attention to tackle this issue through meticulous urban planning and innovative infrastructure design. It is not only the event of flooding, but the secondary effects of exposure to infection that have a toll on human life, livelihood, and property. The impact of urban flooding is wide-

spread, including temporary relocation of people, damage to civic amenities, deterioration of water quality, and risk of epidemics. It was mostly stated that the areas lying in the flood plains are prone to floods, but urban floods have changed this notion.

Urban flooding disrupts the normal working of the city by damaging water supply, sewerage, power transmission lines, communication, transportation and infrastructure. Sustainable solutions, such as green infrastructure, geospatial technology, flood governance, stormwater management, and collaboration and awareness, are needed to tackle the menace of urban flooding. A thorough knowledge and understanding of the causes and effects of flood impacts and the adoption and development of measures to mitigate these impacts must be part of a comprehensive urban development plan.

Ranganathan sivakumar | Chennai

sports coaching and preparation). Also, focus on many sports, not just cricket. Will it help to give more comfort to athletes - players by having more (%) of women coaches - staff - administrators - boards for women players and men - staff coaches etc. for male players? Medical and sports experts must decide so.

Last but not the least, there must be no political interference in the sports. This is one reason Indian sportspersons are unable to perform their best. Besides biased selection of sportspersons for mega events is often controversial which hampers the growth of healthy competition amongst the sportspersons and inculcates a wrong culture of nepotism and favouritism. If we can manage that, India can shine in Olympics

PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

THE IMPORTANCE OF STAMPING

Madam — The Indian Stamp Act, 1899 deals with stamping of various agreements/ documents in India. Stamping of agreements and documents is desir-

able as it ensures legality and validity, enforceability and admissibility in court since such agreements can be registered under the Indian Registration Act, 1908. Now the question is, what is effect on enforceability of a document in the court, if it is either unstamped or is under-stamped. This involves three Act viz. Indian Contract Act, Indian Stamp Act and Indian Registration Act. As per Indian Contract Act, while making an agreement on a non-stamp paper, there are certain legal aspects that need to be complied with. Section 10 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, outlines the essential elements that make an agreement a legally enforceable contract. It is to be remembered that proper stamping ensures the validity and enforceability of documents in legal proceedings. The correct information regarding this must be given to the public so everyone can comply.

Jayanthi Subramanian | Mumbai

Uniform Civil Code: A step towards a secular legal system



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

PM Modi, reignites the debate on the Uniform Civil Code calling for a law that would apply equally to all citizens, regardless of religion

The BJP-led NDA government, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, did not implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) during its previous tenure. The UCC is a proposed law that would apply uniformly to all religious communities on personal matters like marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption.



that communal and discriminatory laws have no place in the country. From the outset, party and government sources have indicated that the BJP aimed to keep the UCC in public discourse. This sentiment was echoed during a Bhopal rally on June 23, 2023, where PM Modi suggested that the implementation of the UCC might be on the horizon. Top officials, however, emphasized that the law would require extensive research and consultation. The Sangh Parivar believes that states can take the initiative to implement the UCC. Several BJP-ruled states, including Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat, have begun exploring this. Assam's Chief

Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, confirmed plans to introduce laws targeting child marriage and polygamy. He added that Assam would adopt and modify the Uttarakhand model according to local needs. The political landscape surrounding the UCC has been contentious, and it has already been implemented in Uttarakhand as of March this year, likely influencing subsequent elections. Nevertheless, BJP sources acknowledge the complexities surrounding the UCC. Tribal marital practices, diverse inheritance laws, and regional variations are significant hurdles. Modi reiterated from the Red Fort that the Supreme Court has repeatedly discussed the need for a UCC, which many believe would address the communal nature of the current civil code. According to government sources, however, the UCC presents far greater challenges than issues like Article 370 or triple talaq, as it affects various social and cultural groups across India. The process of drafting the UCC would require far-reaching consultations and deep research.

One BJP functionary noted that codifying the UCC, unlike the Indian Penal Code, would be difficult due to the cultural diversity among tribal groups across regions. The UCC debate is viewed as a positive step toward creating a more uniform legal system, especially concerning women's rights. The Sangh Parivar, too, has expressed concerns, with the RSS-affiliated Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram advocating for the exclusion of tribal groups from the UCC. Meanwhile, the BJP has encouraged these communities to submit their concerns to the Law Commission, urging them not to be swayed by social media debates. The essence of the UCC, as explained by PM Modi, is to have a single law applicable to all citizens of India, regardless of religion, caste, or gender, in matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. This is outlined in Article 44 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution, which tasks the government with the responsibility of implementing such a code. (The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

LIVE IN THE PRESENT
MOMENT, IT MATTERS MOST

Understanding and managing stress effectively is essential for a healthier life



RADHANATH SWAMI MAHARAJ

God is often perceived as invisible, impartial & incomprehensible. Some imagine Him as a distant figure, high in the clouds, old & angry, hurling thunderbolts at us for our oversight in following His commandments. While many view God merely as a cosmic order supplier, providing for our sustenance & working out our desires behind the screens. Cultural understandings about God create a vivid but confused picture, leading many in the current generation to turn to spirituality without engaging in traditional religion.

The term "religion" itself, derived from the Latin "re-ligare," means reconnection with the Supreme Lord. However, common conceptions of God—as an empty vacuum, an outburst of floodlight, or an angry old man—do not suggest any possibility of a relationship with God.

The ancient wisdom of yoga forms the basis of spiritual science—the Bhagavad Gita as recorded 120 million years back imparted by the Supreme Lord Krsna to the sun deity—Vivasvan (BG 4.01). Therein Lord emphatically states his position ("aham sarvaysa prabhava") He is omnipresent, ("mayadyaksena prakriti") the entire universe functions under his supervision, ("Upadrsta anumanta ca") He is manifest as the guardian spirit in everyone's heart—as the Paramatma, ("brmhano hi pratistaham") He is the source of the spiritual fulfillment, ("tani aham veda sarvani") He is omniscient, as he reiterates the same message to Arjuna 5000 years back, that he imparted to Vivasvan 120 million years ago. Furthermore, Krsna informs Arjuna about the secret of his appearance ("janma karma ca me divyam") from the spiritual world to reclaim



the seekers & whoever learns about it & strives to perfect their lives. Such profound wisdom makes us aware of God's greatness not merely as a concept or an infirm old man retired from the scene of creation. Rather a God who works diligently in the background & also frequently tours to his creation beaconding every individual to rekindle spiritual wisdom. To instil faith in his devotees, Lord Krishna descended on Janmashtami in the prison cell of His uncle Kamsa. Kamsa imprisoned his sister Devaki & brother-in-law Vasudeva due to an ominous mystical prediction that declared that the 8th son of Devaki would end his evil attitude. Thus fearful of his death, Kamsa instantly arrested his newlywed sister & brother-in-law. Kamsa represents the atheistic mindset that abuses power to dominate & replace Godliness in society. One of the central purposes of Krsna's descent is to discipline such atheists who have removed God from the equation (BG 4.07). He disciplined Kamsa and subsequently helped Arjuna neutralize the egomaniac prince Duryodhan, who had usurped the kingdom from the righteous Pandavas. Lord Krishna's greatness is revealed in His purpose to bring order to society by establishing the virtues of Godliness. The ancient 'yoga of bhakti' reveals the sweetest & most refined means to connect with God i.e. through love.

Virindavan is where He manifests His eternal pastimes—beckoning every seeker—an invitation to the spiritual world. The same Lord Krsna who revealed his Virat-rupa the gigantic universal form to Arjuna enacted as a helpless child (in Virindavan) tearful & fearful when mother Yasoda chased & bound him by the rope due to His childhood mischief. The same Lord Krsna who lifted Govardhan hill with the tip of His finger, (in Virindavan) failed to defeat his friends in the tug-of-war games. By Celebrating Janmashtami, devotees reaffirm their faith, deepen their spiritual connection, and draw inspiration from the life and teachings of Lord Krishna. It is a reminder of the presence of divinity in our lives and the eternal principles of dharma that guide us towards righteousness and spiritual fulfillment. Let us celebrate Janmashtami not just as a ritual, but as an opportunity to connect to the supreme Lord Krishna spiritually.

(The author is the Spiritual Guru of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness; views expressed are personal)

Securing the women
dignitiy on the internet

RENNIE JOYY

With threats ranging from deepfake exploitation to harassment on gaming platforms there is urgent need to safeguard women's rights online



Protecting Women's Rights in the Digital Age—Dr Rennie Joyy, Founder of Aalekh Foundation In the digital age, the internet has become an indispensable tool for communication, education, and empowerment. However, for many women, it has also become a dangerous space with cyber harassment and online abuse rife. In India, the proliferation of digital platforms has led to a worrying increase in gender-based violence online, with recent trends revealing more insidious forms of harassment that demand urgent attention. India's legal system has made some progress in addressing cyber harassment, but there is still a long way to go.

The Information Technology Act, of 2000, alongside the Indian Penal Code (IPC), provides the legal foundation for prosecuting cybercrimes, including harassment. However, the enforcement of these laws is often inconsistent, and the existing provisions do not fully address the nuances of newer forms of cyber harassment, such as deepfakes and abuse on gaming platforms. Moreover, the process of reporting and prosecuting these crimes remains cumbersome. Victims often face significant hurdles, including a lack of awareness about their rights, societal stigma, and unresponsive law enforcement agencies. The borderless nature of the internet further complicates matters, as perpetrators can easily evade legal consequences by operating from different jurisdictions.

The expanding tentacles of cyber harassment: Cyber harassment in India has taken on new dimensions, with perpetrators using increasingly sophisticated methods to target women. Traditional forms of online abuse—such as stalking, trolling, and doxing—remain prevalent. However, the advent of new technologies has introduced more dangerous threats, including the use of deepfake technology. Deepfakes are hyper-realistic, digitally manipulated videos or images that can make it appear as though a person is saying or doing something they never did. In recent times, this technology has been weaponised against women, with perpetrators creating and sharing deepfake

pornography without the victims' consent. This form of cyber harassment is particularly devastating, as it not only violates the victim's privacy but also damages their reputation, leading to severe emotional and psychological trauma. In 2020, India saw a surge in deepfake-related crimes, with several women finding themselves targeted by fake explicit videos circulated on social media. The difficulty in proving the falsity of these videos adds another layer of complexity, leaving victims with limited avenues for legal recourse. Although Sections 66E and 67A of the Information Technology Act, of 2000 cover the transmission of obscene material and violations of privacy, the law is still catching up with the rapid advancements in deepfake technology, and enforcement remains a significant challenge.

Harassment on online gaming platforms: Another concerning trend is the rise of cyber harassment on online gaming platforms. These platforms, often perceived as spaces for entertainment and community, have increasingly become hotbeds for toxic behaviour and online abuse. In many instances, female gamers are subjected to sexual harassment, including rape threats and abusive language, often from anonymous players. In India, while the gaming community is growing rapidly, there is a lack of specific laws addressing online harassment within these platforms. This gap in regulation means that many women are left vulnerable to abuse, with little recourse for protection or justice.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has acknowledged the issue, but more comprehensive policies and industry standards are needed to tackle this emerging threat. Role of tech companies and gaming platforms Tech

companies, including social media platforms and gaming companies, bear a significant responsibility in protecting users from online abuse. While major social media platforms have implemented policies against harassment, their enforcement is often inconsistent, allowing harmful content to proliferate. The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, introduced by the Indian government, aims to hold these platforms more accountable by urging them to remove unlawful content and safeguard user privacy. However, the efficacy of these guidelines is still in question, as the sheer volume of content and the evolving nature of cyber threats present significant challenges. Online gaming platforms, in particular, need to adopt stricter community guidelines and reporting mechanisms to prevent harassment and abuse. Developers and platform operators must prioritise user safety, implementing robust systems to detect and respond to incidents of online harassment effectively.

Empowering women digitally: Empowering women to protect themselves online is crucial in combating cyber harassment. Digital literacy programs that teach women how to safeguard their privacy, recognise and report abuse, and navigate online spaces safely are essential. **Initiatives like Cyber Saathi and She:** The People are making strides in this area, providing resources and education to women across India. Support networks and helplines also play a critical role. The National Commission for Women (NCW) has launched several initiatives, including a 24/7 helpline, to assist women facing online abuse. However, ensuring these resources are accessible to all women, including those in rural

and remote areas, remains a challenge.

Global collaboration and community initiatives: Addressing cyber harassment requires international collaboration, as online abuse often transcends national borders. India's participation in global dialogues on cybercrime is crucial, but more robust cooperation with other countries and international organisations is needed to effectively combat cross-border cyber harassment.

Community-based initiatives are also vital. Movements like #MeToo and #GirlsAtDhabas have demonstrated the power of collective action in raising awareness and advocating for change. Localised efforts, such as workshops, community discussions, and advocacy campaigns, can help create safer digital spaces for women.

Looking ahead: The digital age offers immense opportunities for women, but it also presents significant risks. Protecting women's rights online requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders—governments, tech companies, civil society, and individuals.

By addressing the evolving threats of cyber harassment, including deepfakes and online abuse on gaming platforms, we can create a safer, more inclusive digital environment that empowers women to fully participate in all aspects of society. Balancing the protection of women's rights with the preservation of free speech will be a key challenge in the years to come. However, by taking a comprehensive approach that includes legal reforms, tech accountability, education, and community support, we can make significant strides in protecting women's rights in the digital age.

(The writer is Founder Aalekh Foundation; views expressed are personal)



THE DIGITAL AGE OFFERS IMMENSE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN, BUT IT ALSO PRESENTS SIGNIFICANT RISKS. PROTECTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS ONLINE REQUIRES A CONCERTED EFFORT FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

Space-tech to improve logistics and supply chain management in indian scenario

As the country makes strides in space exploration, these technologies will play a critical role in economic growth writes Prof Manoj K Tiwari and Dr Rofin T M

Logistics and supply chain management are crucial foundations of the Indian economy, guaranteeing the effective movement of products, services, and individuals throughout the nation. The Indian government has effectively reduced the logistics GDP from 14% to around 7.8% to 8.9% through the implementation of programs such as Bharat Mala, Sagarmala, and PM Gati Shakti schemes.

The recent triumph of Chandrayan-3 holds the potential to greatly augment the capabilities of Indian space technology. The successful mission has enhanced the existing capabilities of space technology, such as satellite navigation systems, remote

sensing, satellite communication, and web geographic information systems (GIS). The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based radio navigation system used to communicate worldwide geographic location data. The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) has created its own regional satellite navigation system called NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation). NavIC is designed to offer accurate location data for both domestic and regional purposes. The constellation of seven satellites provides dependable positioning services not just within India but also to a substantial area spanning 1500 km outside its borders. GPS technology can be used to

trace recent wars between global countries or state boundaries that involve rivers, mountain ranges, and oceans. Surveyors employ the accuracy of absolute positions to create maps and establish property borders. It is possible to determine the optimal locations for facilities, allocate resources, establish warehouses, and identify suitable sites for multi-modal logistic parks and special economic zones. Telematics is a technology that combines GPS technology with computers and mobile communications networks to provide improved automobile navigation systems. The Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS) can be utilized to monitor the movement of ves-

sels and containers, providing information on their velocity, speed, direction, and position. This technology will significantly benefit the port and logistics industries. The subject of focus for worldwide governments in recent years is intelligent transportation systems for urban traffic management. The extensive utilization of GPS technology in automobiles presents a tremendous prospect to transform traffic management. Thousands of vehicles are sending real-time data from urban roads, including latitude, longitude, speed, and other pertinent metrics. The dynamic information can be utilized to facilitate various research and applications in Intelligent Transportation Systems, resulting in improved



traffic flow, reduced congestion, and strengthened safety procedures. Satellite-derived data can be used to exchange information between airport planners and managers and their counterparts at other agencies to expedite infrastructure development and urban planning activities in their respective regions. Remote sensing can be applied to evaluate the impact of landscape patterns, land use types, and increasing urban temper-

atures on urban thermal environments.

This technology can assist army and police departments in tracking and tracing activities. Incorporate Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) into satellite systems for operations that go beyond the visual line of sight (BVLOS), such as covering terrestrial range and providing assistance in areas affected by natural disasters or prone to interruptions. Space Internet is a telecommunications service that utilizes satellites positioned in geostationary orbit, namely at a height of 35,786 kilometers above the Earth's surface.

Unlike the constraints imposed by fiber-optic cables or wireless networks, these satellites in space possess the

capacity to surmount obstacles. Developed nations are utilizing space-based internet to acquire airborne laser scanning (ALS) data for the purpose of reconstructing railway overhead lines, hence providing reliable and secure transportation services. The implementation of satellite-based internet is essential for providing connectivity to remote places characterized by difficult topography, such as the Himalayas and isolated regions in the north-east. The integration of space technology into logistics and supply chain management offers India a pathway to achieving its vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. By leveraging advancements in satellite navigation, remote sensing, satellite communica-

tion, and space internet, India can increase the efficiency, reliability, and resilience of its logistics networks. Space technology, including satellite communication, GPS and remote sensing, revolutionizes logistics by enhancing real-time tracking, optimizing routes, forecasting the weather to mitigate risks, and improving inventory management. Additionally, space tech enables global communication networks for seamless coordination and facilitates advanced geospatial analysis for supply chain management, enhancing adeptness and reducing costs across industries.

(Prof Tiwari is Director, IIM Mumbai and Dr Rofin is faculty IIM Mumbai, views are personal)

BJP hails PM for Unified Pension Scheme for Central Government employees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the decision to bring a unified pension scheme for Central Government employees and hit out at the Congress, asking why it has not implemented its promise of bringing back the old pension scheme in Himachal Pradesh and other States where it is in power. Addressing a press conference at BJP headquarters here, senior party Leader Ravi Shankar Prasad slammed Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for his U-turn jibe at the Centre and said Prime Minister Modi is "sensitive" to public issues and takes decisions in public interest after careful consideration. The Modi Government does not take "ad-hoc decisions", the former Union Minister said and asked Kharge to tell the nation why his party has taken a "U-turn" on its poll promise of implementing the old pension scheme in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and



Telangana after coming to power in these States. "The Congress has made the old pension scheme a massive issue in Indian politics over the last two years. So much so that the Congress made even Priyanka Gandhi Vadra announce during elections in Himachal Pradesh that the party will implement the old pension scheme in the State if voted to power," Prasad said. "Will this Congress only make announcements or implement them as well? The Congress in general and Rahul Gandhi in particular, please tell the nation did you implement the old pension scheme

as promised in Himachal Pradesh?" he asked. The BJP leader accused Gandhi of "bluffing" people by making false promises for votes and asked him to desist from such practice. "We are proud of Prime Minister Modi that he listened and understood the concerns of the (central Government) employees, set up a committee to look into that, and a meaningful decision was made. On behalf of the party, we greet the Government, especially the Prime Minister for this," he added. Prasad said the Congress had become "so

wary of the palpable falsehood" of its assurance about the pension scheme that it could not muster the courage to include it in its Lok Sabha poll manifesto. "Rahul Gandhi, what are you doing brother? How much do you bluff? Tell the truth sometimes. And when you say something, you should do it. If you can't do it then don't say it," he said. "Rahul Gandhi, the country is not run like this. Governing India is a serious business where decisions have to be made after careful consideration. Adhocism doesn't work here," Prasad added. However, the BJP asserted that the UPS has been in the making since 2023 and it was reported by media too. "Kharge ji, the Unified Pension Scheme has been in the making since 2023, much before June 4, 2024..." BJP IT department Head Amit Malviya said in response to Kharge's post. "You are the Congress President. Can't come across as so clueless and ill-informed. But what the new well-thought out-pension scheme has done is reduced Congress's room for profligate politics," he said.

Omar thanks Amit Shah for noticing NC's election manifesto



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

National Conference (NC) Vice President Omar Abdullah on Sunday said he was thankful to Union Home Minister Amit Shah for noticing his party's election manifesto. People who were not ready to read it, have now been compelled to go through it, Abdullah added. "I am thankful to the Home Minister from the bottom of my heart for talking about our manifesto. For a small party, contesting an election in a far-flung area of the country, it is a huge thing that the country's Home Minister has seen our

manifesto," Abdullah told reporters here after a party function. Shah on Friday slammed the Congress for its alliance with the NC for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls, accusing the party of repeatedly risking the country's unity and security in its "greed for power". The Congress has once again "exposed its ulterior motives by allying with the Abdullah family's National Conference," the BJP leader said on X and posted 10 questions for the national party and its leader Rahul Gandhi, while listing several of the manifesto promises of the NC.

Rijiju criticises Rahul's comments on marginalised communities' representation in Miss India contest

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Union Ministers Kiren Rijiju and Giriraj Singh on Sunday criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his remark questioning lack of representation from the marginalised communities in the Miss India beauty pageant. Union Minister Rijiju, in a post on X, said, "Now, he wants reservations in Miss India competitions, films, sports! It is not only an issue of 'Bal Budhi' (childish mentality), but the people who cheer him are equally responsible too!" He further said that "while childish behaviour might be entertaining, it should not come at the expense of ridiculing or undermining the backward communities through divisive tactics". In another post, Rijiju noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi made it clear that the Supreme Court won't be allowed to alter reservations in IAS, IPS, IFS, and all top services recruitment. "But he can't see 1st Tribal President, OBC PM, Record Numbers of SC/ST Cabinet Ministers," the BJP leader said. "His grandfather divided India

to become Prime Minister, but we will not allow another partition of India to make this divisive man the Prime Minister," Rijiju added. Criticising Rahul, Union Minister Giriraj Singh said that a caste census is unavoidable and will be carried out by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at right time. The Union Minister questioned why Rahul Gandhi demands a national caste census when the Congress Government is yet to release the results of the caste census conducted in their states. "Rahul Gandhi stays away from ground reality and does politics of perception. Caste census has been done in Karnataka, yet Congress government there has not declared it. When it's time for the country, PM Modi will get it done," Singh said.

Chirag re-elected LJP (Ram Vilas) chief, pitches for caste census

PTI ■ RANCHI

Union minister Chirag Paswan was on Sunday re-elected as Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) president for five years at its national executive meeting here. The decision was taken unanimously at the meeting, Paswan said. "The national executive, in its meeting here, has re-elected me for the next five years," he said. Paswan, the Minister of Food Processing Industries, said the upcoming assembly elections in Haryana, Jammu Kashmir and Jharkhand were also discussed in the meeting. In Jharkhand, the party may contest the polls either with national alliance partner BJP or on its own, he said. "We have taken suggestions from the state units whether they want to contest the elections in alliance or alone in states where our organisation is strong... At the national level, we have an alliance with the BJP and we are a strong coalition partner of the NDA. "In the 2014 elections, we had a tie-up with the BJP for vidhansabha polls in Jharkhand and contested the Shikaripara seat. If there is a respectable seat-sharing, we may go with



an alliance or else we can go alone in the polls," Paswan said. Assembly polls are due in Jharkhand later this year. He also pitched for a nationwide caste census, but cautioned against making the figures public as it will create a "rift" in society. "We have always emphasised that we want the caste census to be conducted... It will ensure that the government has correct numbers. However, I do not want the figures of the census to come out in public.

That may create a rift," said the minister, whose late father Ram Vilas Paswan was among

the tallest Dalit leaders of the country. He also said a special resolution was passed at the national executive meeting to extend a motion of thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his welfare initiatives and work towards the SC-ST community. Commenting on the creamy layer in SC community, he said: "We have been opposed to it since they are not just victims of social and educational backwardness, but even untouchability". Paswan said even after so many years of Independence, Dalit grooms are prevented from riding a horse during weddings, and "I even learnt about an IPS officer seeking security for his marriage". "Even today we hear that members of the Dalit com-

munity cannot enter temples... The observation of the Supreme Court did not have any mention of untouchability. The PM has also said that as per constitutional norms, the provisions for SCs would continue," he said. Earlier this month, a seven-judge bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud ruled in a 6:1 majority judgement that state governments were permitted to sub-classify communities within the SC list based on empirical data. Supreme Court judge Justice B R Gavi had said that states must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) and deny them the benefit of reservation.

Men run for cover in...

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"I was locked in a room by Siddique and abused many times. He threatened me with dire consequences if I reveal any information about this nasty incidence," said Revathy Sampath, an actress in Kerala. She said the attitude of Siddique was literally shocking as he terrorised the victims. Revathy disclosed that Siddique had contacted her using a fake social media account under the guise of discussing a film project. "He's a criminal. He subjected me to sexual assault for an hour. He asked me to come to Hotel Mascot to discuss the offer. I was caught unawares when he asked me immediately whether I was ready for adjustments. When I expressed shock, he became explicit in his demands saying that his sexual fantasies include women with long nails," she said. Sources close to Ranjith told The Pioneer that the actor, scion of the Chalappuram Nair family, was a victim of intra party and inter party political rivalry. "His predecessor, Kamaluddeen, was accused of sexual abuses by many actresses but no action was taken against him. We have a strong feeling that there is double standard viz-a-viz Ranjith's case," they said.

in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, Omar Abdullah said the NC has prepared an extensive manifesto for the assembly polls which has been copied by other parties. "We have not left out anything in the manifesto. Today, everyone has copied our manifesto. They should have kept some differences," he said, referring to the PDP's manifesto which was released by Mehbooba on Saturday. "The (PDP) said if the NC-Congress alliance accepts their agenda, they will not put up candidates. You have put all our agenda in your manifesto. You have already accepted our agenda and now there is not much of a difference between your agenda and our agenda. Then do not field candidates and come, we will build a better tomorrow for Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

PM Modi assures...

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He also released a "Revolving Fund" of Rs 2,500 crore, benefiting about 48 lakh members of 4.3 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and disbursing bank loans of Rs 5,000 crore which will benefit 2.35 lakh SHGs. "Since the start of the Lakhpati Didi Yojana, one crore women have already been made Lakhpati Didis and the government has set a target of making three crore Lakhpati Didis," he said. Having apparently taken cognisance of the Kolkata rape and murder incident and also the alleged sexual abuse of two four-year-old children at a kindergarten school at Badlapur in Maharashtra, the Prime Minister said: "The safety of the women is a top priority of the nation as much as their empowerment. I understand the pain and anger of my sisters and daughters, irrespective of the states. I remind all the state governments and the political parties of the country that atrocities against women are an unpardonable sin and the guilty persons and accomplices must not be spared". The Prime Minister said that the Government was, on its part, making laws stricter to give the harshest punishment to those who commit atrocities on women. "Earlier FIRs were not being registered on time on complaints relating to sexual crimes. As a result, the investigations in such cases used to be very time-

consuming. The obstacles have been removed in the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS) where an entire chapter has been made on atrocities against women and children," Modi said. "The victims can now register e-FIR if they do not wish to go to the police station and measures are in place to ensure swift action and no tampering with e-FIR at the police station level. This helps in speedy investigation and strict punishment for the culprits," he said. The Prime Minister said that the new laws had provisions for death penalty and life imprisonment for sexual crimes against minors. "BNS clearly defines false promises of marriage and deception to act against cheating in the name of marriage. I assure you, our government is with the state governments in every way to stop atrocities against women. We cannot stop until this sinful mentality has been eradicated from Indian society," Modi said. Modi, who began his address by offering his condolences to the families to at least 27 persons from Jalgaon killed in a recent bus accident at Tanahun in Nepal, said that the Government had rushed Union Minister Rakshatai Khadse was sent to Nepal immediately after the incident. He said that the mortal remains of the deceased had been brought by special Air Force aircraft and those injured are being looked after. Apart from praying for the speedy

recovery of those injured in the incident, he assured the affected families possible assistance from the Centre and State Government. Averring that the traditions of Maharashtra are known not only in India but around the world", Modi said that he witnessed the culture of Maharashtra during his recent visit to Poland where "the people of Maharashtra are highly respected". Recalling the era of World War II when thousands of women and children from Poland were given refuge by the royal family of Kolhapur following the traditions laid down by Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. "The Kolhapur Memorial is dedicated to the spirit of service and hospitality of the people of Kolhapur by the people of Poland. I felt proud when such tales were narrated to me during my visit to Poland," he said. Alluding to the contributions made by women in making India the third-largest economy in the world, Modi lamented that empowerment of women had been neglected in the past. "Crores of women in the country did not own any property which caused a major hindrance in availing bank loans to start small businesses. "That's why I pledged to reduce the burden on women. Our Government took decisions in the interest of women one after the other." Drawing parallels from the 10 years of the Modi government with the seven decades of previous

governments, the Prime Minister said that work the government had done in the interest of women than any other previous governments of the past. "We, therefore, decided to register the houses for the poor in the name of the woman of the house. Most of the 4 crore houses built so far have been registered under the name of women. Even in the upcoming 3 crore houses being built, most of them will be registered in the name of women," the Prime Minister said. Modi said that even in the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, most bank accounts were opened in the name of women. "Seventy percent of the beneficiaries of Pradhan Manti Mudra Yojana are mothers and sisters of the nation," he said. Recalling how he was warned against giving loans to women in the past, Modi said: "I have complete trust in the Matrushakti and that they would return the loans honestly without fail. Based on the encouraging response we have received, we have increased the loan limit of PM Mudra Yojana to Rs 20 lakh," he said. Referring to the Swandhi scheme launched for street vendors, Modi said that even under this scheme, loans were being given without guarantee, whose benefits had reached the women-folk. He said that this government had extended benefits without guarantee to many women of the Vishwakarma families, who are doing

handicrafts. Dwelling upon the importance of Sakhi Mandalis and women's self-help groups was not recognized earlier, Modi said that every village and tribal region was witnessing positive changes brought by women's self-help groups. He said that ten crore women have joined the campaign in the last ten years. "Bank loans worth less than Rs 25,000 crore were sanctioned for self-help groups in 2014, while today that number has risen to Rs 9 lakh crore in the last 10 years, Modi said that in the recent Union Budget, Rs 3 lakh crore had been allocated for schemes related to women. He said that the government was working towards opening all sectors for women which were once restricted for them and gave examples of women officers in all three armed forces including fighter pilots, admission into Sainik schools and academies and increasing number of women in the police force and paramilitary force. "A large number of women are managing businesses ranging from the agriculture and dairy sector in villages to the start-up revolution," he said. Maharashtra Governor P Radhakrishnan, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, deputy chief ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, and Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shivraj Singh Chauhan were prominent among those present at the function

Israel flattens...

From Page 1

It said the operation was targeting "a qualitative Israeli military target that will be announced later" as well as "enemy sites and barracks and Iron Dome (missile defence) platforms." Hezbollah said the strikes would allow it to launch more attacks deeper into Israel, but a later statement said "military operations for today have been completed." militant group said it targeted 11 bases, barracks and military positions in northern Israel and the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, and dismissed Israel's claim to have thwarted a stronger attack. Hezbollah did not provide evidence for its claims. Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, was expected to give a speech later on Sunday. After an emergency government meeting, Lebanon's caretaker Economy Minister Amin Salam said officials were "feeling a bit more optimistic" about a de-escalation. "We feel more reassured since both sides confirmed that the expected operations ended, and we know that the negotiations in Cairo are very serious," he said. In the US, a spokesman for the National Security Council, Sean Savett, said President Joe Biden was "closely monitoring events in Israel and Lebanon." The Pentagon said Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with his Israeli counterpart, Yoav Gallant, about Israel's

defenses. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. CQ Brown, is on a visit to the region that is expected to take him to Israel, Egypt and Jordan. All-out war seems to have been averted for now. In recent weeks, diplomats from the US and European countries have made a flurry of visits to Israel and Lebanon in an attempt to tamp down the escalation that they fear could spiral into a regional war. Randa Slim, a senior fellow at the Washington, DC-based Middle East Institute, said Sunday morning's exchange was "still within the rules of engagement and unlikely at this point to lead to an all-out war." Danny Citrinowicz, an expert at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, said Hezbollah might be trying to "balance the equation without escalating into war." Each side is now hoping their narrative will be sufficient for them to declare victory and avoid a wider confrontation, he said. Hezbollah began attacking Israel almost immediately after the start of the war in Gaza, which was triggered by Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel. Israel and Hezbollah have been exchanging fire almost daily, displacing tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border. Hezbollah, which fought Israel to a stalemate in the summer of 2006, is believed to be far more powerful than it was during that conflict.

The United States and Israel estimate it has some 150,000 rockets and is capable of hitting anywhere inside Israel. The group has also developed drones capable of evading Israel's defences, as well as precision-guided munitions. Israel has one of the world's best militaries and an extensive multi-tiered missile defense system, and it is backed by a US-led coalition that helped it shoot down hundreds of missiles and drones fired from Iran earlier this year. The US military has been building up its forces across the region in recent weeks. Israel has vowed a crushing response in the case of all-out war, one that would likely demolish critical civilian infrastructure, especially in south Beirut and southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah's main strongholds are located. A war would likely displace hundreds of thousands of people on both sides. Hezbollah is a close ally of Iran, which has also threatened to retaliate for the killing of a senior Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, in an explosion in Tehran last month that was widely blamed on Israel, which has not said whether it was involved. Iranian state media on Sunday played up the Hezbollah attack, calling it a success, but there was no immediate comment from Iranian officials. Egypt hosts high-level Gaza talks

Israel and Hezbollah trade heavy fire, region braces for war

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel launched a wave of airstrikes across southern Lebanon early Sunday in what it said was a preemptive strike on Hezbollah. The militant group responded that it had launched hundreds of rockets and drones to avenge the killing of one of its top commanders last month.

The heavy exchange of fire does not appear to have ignited a long-feared war, but the situation remains tense. Meanwhile, Egypt on Sunday is hosting high-level talks aimed at brokering a cease-fire in the 10-month-old Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, which diplomats hope will tamp down regional tensions. The Israeli military said it struck because Hezbollah was planning to launch a heavy barrage of rockets and missiles toward Israel. Soon after, Hezbollah announced it had launched an attack on Israeli military positions as an initial response to the killing of Fouad Shukur,

one of its founding members, in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut last month. By mid-morning, it appeared that the exchange had ended, with both sides saying they had only aimed at military targets. At least three people were killed in the strikes on Lebanon, while there were no reports of casualties in Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking at the start of a Cabinet meeting, said the military had eliminated "thousands of rockets that were aimed at northern Israel" and urged citizens to adhere to directives from the Home Front Command. "We are determined to do everything to defend our country, to return the residents of the north securely to their homes and to continue upholding a simple rule: Whoever harms us — we will harm them," he said.

Air raid sirens and flight diversions Air raid sirens were reported throughout northern

Israel, and Israel's Ben-Gurion international airport closed and diverted flights for approximately an hour due to the threat of attack. Israel's Home Front Command raised the alert level across northern Israel before later lifting restrictions in most areas.

Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said Hezbollah had intended to hit targets in northern and central Israel. He said initial assessments found "very little damage" in Israel, but that the military remained on high alert. He said around 100 Israeli aircraft took part in Sunday's strikes. Lebanon's Health Ministry reported that two people were killed and another two wounded in the strikes in southern Lebanon. Separately, a fighter for the Amal group, which is allied with Hezbollah, was killed in a strike on a car, Amal said. Hezbollah said its attack involved more than 320 Katyusha rockets aimed at multiple sites in Israel and a

"large number" of drones. It said the operation was targeting "a qualitative Israeli military target that will be announced later" as well as "enemy sites and barracks and Iron Dome (missile defence) platforms." Hezbollah said the strikes would allow it to launch more attacks deeper into Israel, but a later statement said "military operations for today have been completed." The militant group said it targeted 11 bases, barracks and military positions in northern Israel and the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, and dismissed Israel's claim to have thwarted a stronger attack. Hezbollah did not provide evidence for its claims. Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, was expected to give a speech later on Sunday.

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developed drones capable of evading Israel's defences, as well as precision-guided munitions. Israel has one of the world's best militaries and an extensive multi-tiered missile defense system, and it is backed by a US-led coalition that helped it shoot down hundreds of missiles and drones fired from Iran earlier this year. The US military has been building up its forces across the region in recent weeks. Israel has vowed a crushing response in the case of all-out war, one that would likely demolish critical civilian infrastructure, especially in south Beirut and southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah's main strongholds are located. A war would likely displace hundreds of thousands of people on both sides. Hezbollah is a close ally of Iran, which has also threatened to retaliate for the killing of a senior Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, in an explosion in Tehran last month that was widely blamed on Israel, which has not said

whether it was involved. Iranian state media on Sunday played up the Hezbollah attack, calling it a success, but there was no immediate comment from Iranian officials. The US and other mediators see a cease-fire in Gaza as key to heading off a wider Mideast conflagration. Hezbollah has said it will halt its strikes on Israel if there is a cease-fire in Gaza, and Hezbollah and Iran might delay or scale back any retaliatory strikes over Shukur and Haniyeh. Egypt is hosting high-level talks in Cairo on Sunday aimed at bridging the gaps in an evolving proposal for a truce and the release of scores of hostages held by Hamas. The talks were to be attended by CIA director William Burns, Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and Egypt's chief intelligence official, Abbas Kamel, according to two Egyptian officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations.

China opposes US sanctions on firms over alleged ties to Russia's war efforts

AP ■ BEIJING

China on Sunday expressed opposition to the latest US sanctions on Chinese companies over their alleged ties to Russia's war in Ukraine, saying it will adopt necessary measures to safeguard the rights and interests of the country's businesses. The US on Friday announced sweeping sanctions on hundreds of firms in Russia and across Europe, Asia and the Middle East, accusing them of providing products and services that enable Russia's war effort and aiding its ability to evade sanctions. The US Department of State said it was concerned by "the magnitude of dual-use goods exports" from China to Russia. The Ministry of Commerce in China in its statement firmly opposed the US putting multiple Chinese companies on its export control list. The move bars such companies from trading with US firms without gaining a nearly unobtainable



special license. The ministry said the US action was "typical unilateral sanctions," saying they would disrupt global trade orders and rules, as well as affect the stability of the global industrial and supply chains. "China urges the US to immediately stop its wrong practices and will take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interest of Chinese companies," it said. The US action is the latest in a series of thousands of US sanctions that have been imposed on Russian firms and their suppliers in other nations since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The

effectiveness of the sanctions has been questioned, especially as Russia has continued to support its economy by selling oil and gas on international markets.

According to the US State Department, some China-based companies supplied machine tools and components to Russia companies. China has tried to position itself as neutral in the Ukraine conflict, but it shares with Russia high animosity toward the West.

After Western countries imposed heavy sanctions on Russian oil in response to the Russia sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022, China strongly stepped up its purchase of Russian oil, increasing its influence in Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin also underlined the importance of China by meeting in Beijing with Chinese leader Xi Jinping soon after being inaugurated for a fifth term in the Kremlin.

French authorities arrest Telegram CEO Pavel Durov

Paris (AP): The founder and CEO of the popular encrypted messaging service Telegram was detained at a Paris airport, French media reported Sunday. Pavel Durov was detained at the Paris Le Bourget airport on Saturday evening after landing in France from Azerbaijan, according to broadcasters LCI and TF1. Investigators from the National Anti-Fraud Office, attached to the French customs department, notified Durov that he was being placed in police custody, the broadcasters said. French prosecutors declined to comment on Durov's arrest when contacted by The Associated Press on Sunday, in line with regulations during an ongoing investigation. French media reported that Durov, 39, was the subject of an arrest warrant issued by France based on allegations that his encrypted platform has been used for money laundering, drug trafficking and allowing the sharing of content linked to sexual exploitation of minors.

'Man surrenders in Germany knife attack that killed 3'

AP ■ SOLINGEN

A 26-year-old man has turned himself into police, saying he was responsible for the Solingen knife attack that left three dead and eight wounded at a festival marking the city's 650th anniversary, German authorities announced early Sunday. Duesseldorf police said in a joint statement with the prosecutor's office that the man "stated that he was responsible for the attack." "This person's involvement in the crime is currently being intensively investigated," the statement said. Federal prosecutors said they were investigating on suspicion of murder, attempted murder and membership in a foreign terrorist organisation. The suspect was to make a first appearance before a judge later Sunday. The suspect is a Syrian citizen who had applied for asylum in Germany, police confirmed to The Associated Press. The dpa

news agency reported, without citing a specific source, that his asylum claim had been denied and that he was to have been deported last year. On Saturday, the Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for the attack, without providing evidence. The extremist group said on its news site that the attacker targeted Christians and that the perpetrator carried out the assaults Friday night "to avenge Muslims in Palestine and everywhere." The claim couldn't be independently verified. Friday's attack plunged the city of Solingen into shock and grief. A city of about 160,000 residents near the bigger cities of Cologne and Duesseldorf, Solingen was holding a "Festival of Diversity" to celebrate its anniversary. People alerted police shortly after 9:30 pm local time Friday that a man had assaulted several people with a knife on the city's central square, the Fronhof. The three people

killed were two men aged 67 and 56 and a 56-year-old woman, authorities said. Police said the attacker appeared to have deliberately aimed for his victims' throats. The festival, which was due to have run through Sunday, was cancelled as police looked for clues in the cordoned-off square. Instead, residents gathered to mourn the dead and injured, placing flowers and notes near the scene of the attack. "Warum?" asked one sign placed amid candles and teddy bears. Why? Among those asking themselves the question was 62-year-old Cord Boether, a merchant from Solingen. "Why does something like this have to be done? It's incomprehensible and it hurts," Boether said. Officials had earlier said a 15-year-old boy was arrested on suspicion he knew about the planned attack and failed to inform authorities, but that he was not the attacker.

French authorities arrest Synagogue explosion suspect

Nice (AP): French police have apprehended and detained a suspect in an arson attack on a synagogue in a southwestern Mediterranean town that injured a police officer, the country's acting interior minister said Sunday. Two cars parked at the Beth Yaacov synagogue complex in the seaside resort town of La Grande Motte, near Montpellier, were set ablaze just after 8 am Saturday. Firefighters discovered additional fires at two entrances to the synagogue. A police officer who walked up to the site was injured after a propane gas tank placed near the burning vehicles exploded. Five people, including the rabbi, who were present in the synagogue complex at the time of the attack were unharmed, it added. "The alleged perpetrator of the arson attack on the synagogue has been arrested," Gerald Darmanin, the acting interior minister, said in a post on X.

UN: 13 die after boat carrying migrants sunk off Yemen's coast

Cairo (AP): A boat carrying migrants sank off the coast of Yemen, leaving more than two dozen people dead or missing, the UN migration agency said Sunday, the latest in a string of shipwrecks that have left scores dead. Despite a nearly decade-long civil war, Yemen — which borders Saudi Arabia to the north and Oman to the northeast — remains a major route for migrants from East Africa trying to reach wealthy Gulf countries for work. The vessel was carrying 25 Ethiopian migrants and the boat captain and his assistant, both Yemeni, when it capsized Tuesday off the province of Taiz, the International Organisation for Migration said in a statement. The bodies of 11 men and two women were recovered along the shore of Bab el-Mandeb Strait that links the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea, while the 14 others — including the two Yemenis — remain missing. The migrants departed from Djibouti, IOM said. "This latest tragedy is a stark reminder of the perils faced by migrants on this route," said Matt Huber, IOM's acting chief in Yemen. "Every life lost in these dangerous waters is one too many, and it is imperative that we do not normalise these devastating losses." According to the agency, the number of migrants arriving in Yemen has tripled in recent years, from about 27,000 in 2021 to more than 97,200 last year, the IOM said, and about 380,000 migrants are currently in the conflict-ridden country.

UK PM Starmer prepares for first Downing Street keynote speech

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is preparing for his first Downing Street keynote speech since being elected last month and ahead of Parliament resuming after its summer recess. According to "The Sunday Times," some members of the public will be invited to the Rose Garden speech on Tuesday in a signal that the Labour Party leader intends to do things differently from his Conservative Party predecessors. In keeping with a theme the government has already struck amid major announcements since the July 4 general election, Starmer will caution the public that things will get worse before they can get better due to the state of things his government has inherited after 14 years of Tory leadership. Excerpts of the speech, which is scheduled a week before the House of Commons resumes, refer to Labour inheriting "not just an

economic black hole but a societal black hole." "And that is why we have to take action and do things differently. Part of that is being honest with people — about the choices we face. And how tough this will be. Frankly, things will get worse before we get better," Starmer is expected to say. The speech will shadow the government's Autumn budget statement, which is widely expected to entail tough new financial announcements on October 30. The UK PM is expected to say: "When there is rot deep in the heart of a structure, you can't just cover it up. You can't tinker with it or rely on quick fixes. You have to overhaul the entire thing. Tackle it at the root. Even if it's harder work and takes more time. Because otherwise, what happens? The rot returns. In all the same places. And it spreads." Taking aim at the Tories — now in Opposition, Starmer will reiterate his Chancellor Rachel Reeves'

previous claim that they discovered a GBP 22 billion "black hole" in the public finances within days of taking charge. "The OBR (Office for Budget Responsibility) did not know about this. They wrote a letter saying so. They didn't know — because the last government hid it," Starmer will allege. The Conservatives have hit back at the government, accusing Labour of poor financial decisions such as rolling back an allowance for senior citizens for their heating bills. "The soft-touch Labour Chancellor is squandering money whilst fabricating a financial black hole in an attempt to con the public into accepting tax rises, and literally leaving pensioners in the cold," said Conservative Party chairman Richard Fuller. "The Prime Minister really should tell his Chancellor to reverse course or step in himself to reverse her decision," he said.

Brazil and Colombia urge Venezuela to release vote results, condemn violence

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

The leaders of Brazil and Colombia on Saturday again called on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to release voting tallies, days after the country's Supreme Court backed the government's disputed claims that it won elections in July. In a joint statement, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Colombian President Gustavo Petro said the "credibility of the electoral process can only be restored through the transparent publication of disaggregated and verifiable data." The two leaders also warned against repression as the Venezuelan government has jailed thousands and met protests with violence. The governments spoke a day after several other Latin American countries and the U.S. rejected the Venezuelan high court's certification. Many were waiting to see how the two leftist leaders would respond to the court because both are



close allies of Maduro and have been working to facilitate talks with both sides. Maduro claims that he won the presidential vote, but so far has refused to release official tally sheets, considered the one verifiable vote count in Venezuela as they are almost impossible to replicate. The main opposition coalition has accused Maduro of trying to steal the vote. Opposition volunteers managed to collect copies of voting

tallies from 80% of the 30,000 polling booths nationwide that show former opposition candidate Edmundo González won by a more than 2-to-1 margin. The Supreme Court alleged those tallies were forged. Lula and Petro said they "take note" of the court's ruling, but added they are still awaiting release of the tallies. The governments also called on actors in Venezuela to "avoid resorting to acts of violence and repression" as security forces

arrested more than 2,000 people and cracked down on demonstrations that erupted spontaneously throughout the country protesting the results. But the two leaders didn't directly accuse the Maduro government of carrying out the violence. The arrests have again spread fear in a country that has seen other government crackdowns during previous times of political turmoil. At the same time, key opposition figure Maria Corina Machado has since gone into hiding and the government said Friday it will order González to provide sworn testimony in an ongoing investigation, claiming he was part of an effort to spread panic by contesting the results of the election. Both Lula and Petro have previously been criticized for what some say have been lenient policies toward Maduro's government, but their tone has grown more stern in recent months, especially in the wake of the election fallout.

NASA extends Astronauts' mission, scraps troubled Boeing capsule return

Cape Canaveral (AP): NASA decided Saturday it's too risky to bring two astronauts back to Earth in Boeing's troubled new capsule, and they'll have to wait until next year for a ride home with SpaceX. What should have been a weeklong test flight for the pair will now last more than eight months. The seasoned pilots have been stuck at the International Space Station since the beginning of June. A cascade of vexing thruster failures and helium leaks in the new capsule marred their trip to the space station, and they ended up in a holding pattern as engineers conducted tests and debated what to do about the flight back. After almost three months, the decision finally came down from NASA's highest ranks on Saturday. Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams will come back in a SpaceX capsule in

February. Their empty Starliner capsule will undock in early September and attempt to return on autopilot with a touchdown in the New Mexico desert. As Starliner's test pilots, the pair should have overseen this critical last leg of the journey. "A test flight by nature is neither safe nor routine," said NASA Administrator Bill Nelson. The decision "is a result of a commitment to safety." Nelson said lessons learned from NASA's two space shuttle accidents played a role. This time, he noted, open dialogue was encouraged rather than crushed. "This has not been an easy decision, but it is absolutely the right one," added Jim Free, NASA's associate administrator. It was a blow to Boeing, adding to the safety concerns plaguing the company on its airplane side. Boeing had counted on Starliner's first crew trip to

revive the troubled spacecraft program after years of delays and ballooning costs. The company had insisted Starliner was safe based on all the recent thruster tests both in space and on the ground. Boeing did not participate in Saturday's news conference by NASA, but released a statement: "Boeing continues to focus, first and foremost, on the safety of the crew and spacecraft." The company said it is preparing the spacecraft "for a safe and successful return." Rand Corp's Jan Osburg, a senior engineer who specializes in aerospace and defense, said NASA made the right choice. "But the U.S. is still left with egg on its face due to the Starliner design issues that should have been caught earlier." Wilmore, 61, and Williams, 58, are both retired Navy captains with previous long-duration spaceflight experience. Before

their June 5 launch from Cape Canaveral, Wilmore and Williams said their families bought into the uncertainty and stress of their professional careers decades ago. During their lone orbital news conference last month, the astronauts said they had trust in the thruster testing being conducted. They had no complaints, they added, and enjoyed pitching in with space station work. Wilmore's wife, Deanna, said she and their daughters, along with family and friends, "were praying for a safe return on whatever spacecraft that may be." While they are disappointed that he will be away longer, "we know that it's the Lord's plan," she said via text. Flight operations director Norm Knight said he talked to the astronauts Saturday and they fully support the decision to postpone their return.

There were few options. The SpaceX capsule currently parked at the space station is reserved for the four residents who have been there since March. They will return in late September, their routine six-month stay extended a month by the Starliner dilemma. NASA said it would be unsafe to squeeze two more into the capsule, except in an emergency. The docked Russian Soyuz capsule is even tighter, capable of flying only three — two of them Russians wrapping up a yearlong stint. So Wilmore and Williams will wait for SpaceX's next taxi flight. It's due to launch in late September with two astronauts instead of the usual four. NASA is yanking two to make room for Wilmore and Williams on the return flight in late February. NASA said no serious consideration was given to asking SpaceX for a quick

stand-alone rescue. Last year, the Russian Space Agency had to rush up a replacement Soyuz capsule for three men whose original craft was damaged by space junk. The switch pushed their six-month mission to just over a year. Former Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, applauded the decision via X: "Good to err on the side of caution for astronaut lives." Long missions are "what astronauts work their entire career for. I'd take it in a heartbeat!" Starliner's woes began long before its latest flight. Bad software fouled the first test flight without a crew in 2019, prompting a do-over in 2022. Then parachute and other issues cropped up, including a helium leak in the capsule's propellant system that nixed a launch attempt in May. The leak eventually was deemed to be isolated and small enough to pose no concern. But more leaks sprouted

following liftoff, and five thrusters also failed. All but one of those small thrusters restarted in flight. But engineers were perplexed by ground testing that showed a thruster seal swelling and obstructing a propellant line. They theorized the seals in orbit may have expanded and then reverted to their normal size. Officials said the results marked the turning point, as their concerns grew. With all the uncertainty about how the thrusters might perform, "There was too much risk for the crew," Steve Stich, NASA's commercial crew program manager, told reporters. These 28 thrusters are vital. Besides needed for space station rendezvous, they keep the capsule pointed in the right direction at flight's end as bigger engines steer the craft out of orbit. Coming in crooked could result in catastrophe.

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Macro data, F&O expiry, global cues to chart market direction this week: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Release of key macroeconomic numbers, monthly derivatives expiry, and global cues are likely to drive stock market movement this week, according to analysts. Markets will also be reacting to remarks made by the US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, they said. "This week, we expect the market to witness a gradual up-move with stock-specific action. The focus will shift to monthly F&O expiry as well as global cues. Markets on Monday would react to commentaries of the US Fed Chair at the Jackson Hole Symposium," Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. US Fed Chair Jerome Powell on Friday signalled that the central bank would cut its interest rate in the September meeting. Powell made a crucial speech that laid the groundwork for future interest rate

reductions. Powell said, "The time has come for policy to adjust." "The market has been expecting an interest rate cut during the next Federal Reserve meeting in September. There are indications that the rate cuts could happen at a faster pace, especially with the weakening of jobs data. "However, Powell believes that the chances of the US economy entering a recession in the near term are very low. This implies that rate cuts would likely align with

consensus expectations, and the possibility of higher rate cuts may be lower," Chief Investment Officer at Axis Securities PMS Naveen Kulkarni said. After the Fed Chief's speech, US markets started their upward movement and closed higher on Friday. Traders are anticipating some volatility in the subsequent sessions due to the monthly F&O expiry scheduled this week, experts said. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 649.37 points or 0.80 per cent. The

NSE Nifty too closed with gains of 282 points or 1.1 per cent. "The Indian market continued its recovery rally this week, buoyed by positive US economic data, which diminished the likelihood of a US recession. Moreover, positive global sentiment from ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas, along with a decline in crude prices, contributed to the rally," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said. In institutional activity, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) pulled out Rs 1,608.89 crore from equities, however, domestic institutional investors kept their buying streak, purchasing Rs 13,020.29 crore worth of stocks during the previous week. According to Religare Broking's Senior Vice-President of Research, Ajit Mishra, domestically, investors will keep an eye on economic data releases, including GDP figures and infrastructure output.

Anil Ambani reviewing Sebi order, to take appropriate steps: Statement

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Businessman Anil Ambani is reviewing a Sebi order imposing a fine and banning him from capital markets for five years in an alleged fund diversion case and will take appropriate next steps as legally advised, his spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday. Ambani, the spokesperson in a statement said, had resigned from the board of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd and Reliance Power Ltd, pursuant to Sebi's interim order dated February 11, 2022 in the matter pertaining to Reliance Home Finance Ltd. He "is in compliance with the said interim order (of February 11, 2022) for the last two and half years," the statement said. On the August 22 order that banned him and 24 others from the securities market for five years on charges of diversion of funds, the spokesperson said, "Mr Ambani is reviewing the final order dated August 22, 2024 passed by Sebi in the said matter, and will take appropriate next steps as legally advised." The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) had also imposed a fine of Rs 25 crore on Ambani, saying he orchestrated a scheme to "siphon off" funds from Reliance Home Finance, a listed subsidiary of conglomerate Reliance Group of which he is chairman.

The ban means that he and the other 24 will not be able to access the securities market and are prohibited from buying, selling or otherwise dealing in securities, directly or indirectly. In a separate statement, Mumbai-listed Reliance Infrastructure Ltd said it "was not a noticee or party to the proceedings before Sebi in which the order is passed. No directions are given in the order against Reliance Infrastructure Ltd." "Mr Ambani had resigned from the board of directors of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd pursuant to the interim order dated February 11, 2022 passed by Sebi in the same proceedings. Therefore, the order dated August 22, 2024 passed by Sebi has no bearing whatsoever on the business and affairs of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd," it said. Reliance Power, the other listed company of Anil Ambani's group, also issued a

similar statement saying Ambani had resigned in 2022 and that the latest Sebi order has no bearing on it. Sebi in the August 22 order had stated that a "fraudulent" scheme "siphoned off" funds from Reliance Home Finance, which provides loans for housing and construction, by structuring them as loans to credit-unworthy borrowers. Most of these borrowers were linked to "promoters", the regulator had said. Anil Ambani and his elder brother Mukesh had in July 2006 split their father Dhirubhai Ambani-created Reliance Industries Ltd. Anil Ambani's Reliance Group spanned financial services, infrastructure and telecommunications while the elder brother got the traditional oil refining and petrochemicals business. Over the last few years, Anil Ambani has seen three of the largest firms within the group, including Reliance Communications, Reliance Capital, and Reliance Infrastructure, undergoing bankruptcy over unpaid debt. Sebi has charged that more than Rs 9,000 crore worth of loans from Reliance Home Finance were made to "nondescript borrowers who had no demonstrable financial ability to repay any of it". The other 24 banned include executives of Anil Ambani's Reliance Group and other unlisted companies connected to him.

Nine of top 10 valued firms add ₹95,522 cr to market valuation

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The combined market valuation of nine of the top 10 most valued firms jumped by Rs 95,522.81 crore last week, with Reliance Industries, TCS and HUL emerging as the biggest gainers. Rising for the fourth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 33.02 points or 0.04 per cent higher at 81,086.21 on Friday. Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 649.37 points or 0.80 per cent. The market capitalisation (Mcap) of Reliance Industries surged by Rs 29,634.27 crore to Rs 20,29,710.68 crore. The valuation of TCS jumped Rs 17,167.83 crore to Rs 16,15,114.27 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever by Rs 15,225.36 crore to Rs 6,61,151.49 crore. The Mcap of Bharti Airtel rallied by Rs 12,268.39 crore to Rs 8,57,392.26 crore and that of ICICI Bank by Rs 11,524.92 crore to Rs 8,47,640.11 crore.

ITC soared Rs 3,965.14 crore to Rs 6,32,364.24 crore, while State Bank of India added Rs 2,498.89 crore to Rs 7,27,578.99 crore. In addition, the valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India jumped by Rs 1,992.37 crore to Rs 6,71,050.63 crore and that of Infosys by Rs 1,245.64 crore to Rs 7,73,269.13 crore. However, the mcap of HDFC Bank plunged by Rs 4,835.34 crore to Rs 12,38,606.19 crore. Reliance Industries retained the title of the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys, State Bank of India, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

FPIs inject ₹11,366 cr in debt market in August; inflow tally crosses ₹1 lakh cr for 2024

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



Foreign investors infused Rs 11,366 crore in the Indian debt market so far this month, pushing the net inflow tally in the debt segment to over the Rs 1-lakh-crore mark. Foreign investors' strong buying interest in the Indian debt market can be attributed to India's inclusion in JP Morgan's Emerging Market government bond indices in June this year. According to data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) injected Rs 11,366 crore in the debt market this month (till August 24). This inflow came following a net investment of Rs 22,363 crore into the Indian debt market in July, Rs 14,955 crore in June and Rs 8,760 crore in May. Before that, they pulled out Rs 10,949 crore in April. With the latest flow, FPIs net investment in debt has reached Rs 1.02 lakh crore in

2024 so far. Market analysts said that ever since the announcement of India's inclusion came in October 2023 year, FPIs have been front-loading their investments in Indian debt markets in anticipation of the inclusion in global bond indices. Even after the inclusion, their inflows have continued to remain robust. On the other hand, FPIs pulled out over Rs 16,305 crore from equities so far this month, due to unwinding of the yen carry trade, recession fears in the US and ongoing geopolitical conflicts. Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director, Manager

Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said the post-budget announcement of an increase in capital gains tax on equity investments has largely fueled this selling spree. In addition, FPIs have been cautious due to the high valuations of Indian stocks, coupled with global economic concerns such as rising recession fears in the US amid weak jobs data, uncertainty over the timing of interest rate cuts, and the unwinding of yen carry trade, he added. Overall, India remains in a favourable position, attracting long-term investments from FPIs. "Amidst a global slowdown, geo-political crisis in the middle east and neighbouring countries, India still stands at a sweet spot compelling the foreign fraternity to take a bet for a long term investment horizon," Manoj Purohit, Partner & Leader, Financial Services Tax, Tax & Regulatory Services, BDO

India, said. In terms of sectors, FPIs were big sellers in financials in India in the first fortnight of August. Vipul Bhowar, Director Listed Investments, Waterfield Advisors, said that FPIs are selling banking shares due to concerns over slow deposit growth. "There are also challenges in Q1FY25 for banks with shrinking margins, deteriorating asset quality, and rising provisions, especially in credit cards, personal loans, and agriculture portfolios," he said. Besides, selling was witnessed in many other sectors including metals on fears that economic slowdown in US and China will keep metal prices soft, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said. Conversely, foreign investors were buyers in telecom and health care where the growth and earnings prospects are safe and bright, he added.

Next round of India-Australia comprehensive trade pact talks in November



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior officials of India and Australia are expected to hold their next round of talks for a comprehensive free trade agreement in November here, the commerce ministry said on Sunday. The two countries implemented an interim trade agreement in December 2022 and are now under negotiations to expand its scope. It said that the tenth round of India-Australia CECA (comprehensive economic cooperation agreement) negotiations was held from 19-22 August in Sydney in the areas of goods, services, digital trade, government procurement, rules of origin and agri-tech. Intense discussions were held on each of these tracks bringing in clarity and understanding for convergence in the remaining provisions, it added. "The next round of CECA negotiations is likely to be held in November," it said in a statement. The Indian delegation was led by Rajesh Agrawal, the Chief Negotiator and Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce and the Australian delegation was led by Ravi Kewalram, the Chief Negotiator and First Assistant Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

"The meeting saw intensive discussions and negotiations to narrow down the differences through better understanding of each other's proposals and the way to bring in convergence. Efforts were made by both the sides keeping in mind the domestic sensitivities for reaching a balanced outcome," the ministry said. Further the ministry said that the Australian side proposed to hold the first meeting of the India-Australia Agri Tech Forum (IAATF), a newly constituted forum by Australia, in New Delhi on September 23, with the Indian agricultural stakeholders including industry, research institutions and government. The objective of the meet is to build on mutually beneficial relationships by exploring opportunities for focused activity around technology transfer and knowledge sharing in agriculture and horticulture sectors. Australia is an important trading partner of India in the Oceania region, with merchandise trade between India and Australia reaching around USD 24 billion in 2023-24. India's exports to Australia last fiscal stood at USD 7.94 billion, while imports were USD 16.15 billion. The trade between the two countries has been hovering at around USD 25 billion mark since 2021-22.

IOC, BPCL, GAIL fined for 5th straight quarter for not meeting listing norm

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



India's biggest oil firms including Indian Oil, BPCL and gas utility GAIL have been slapped with fines for a record fifth straight quarter for failing to meet listing norms of having the requisite number of independent and women directors on their board. Stock exchanges BSE and NSE have slapped fines on oil refining and fuel marketing giants Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), explorer Oil India Ltd (OIL), and refiner Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) for not meeting the listing requirement in the April-June quarter.

In separate stock exchange filings, the companies detailed the fines imposed by the BSE and NSE for either not having the requisite number of independent directors or the mandated women directors in the quarter ended June 30, 2024 (first quarter of current 2024-25 fiscal year), but were quick to point out that appointment of directors was done by the government and they had no role in it. The companies had faced fines for the same reason the previous four quarters as well. Listing norms require companies to have independent directors in the same proportion as executive or functional directors. They are also required to have at least one woman director on the board. IOC said, BSE and the

National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE) imposed a fine of Rs 5,36,900 each on the company for non-compliance of Regulation 17(1) of the SEBI (LODR) relating to composition of the Board of Directors during the quarter ended June 30, 2024.

"In response to the notices, IndianOil vide letter dated August 22, 2024 has represented to the BSE and NSE that being a government company, the power to appoint directors (including independent directors) vests with the Ministry of

Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India and hence the shortfall in independent directors including non-appointment of women independent director on the board of the company during the quarter ended June 30, 2024 was not due to any negligence / default by the company," IOC said. Stating that IOC should not be held liable to pay the fines and the same should be waived-off, the firm said it regularly takes up with the ministry for appointment of requisite number of directors to ensure compliance with corporate governance norms. "We would also like to inform that the company had received similar notices from the BSE and NSE in the past imposing fines and waiver requests from the company

was considered favorably by the exchanges," it added. BPCL said it has been imposed with a fine of Rs 2,41,900 each by BSE and NSE for having one independent director short. Stating that it has no control over the appointment of directors, the firm said it will be approaching BSE Ltd and NSE for waiver of the fines. HPCL said it has been fined Rs 5,36,900 each by BSE and NSE. GAIL too faced similar fines. "This is to submit that the non-compliance with regard to the composition of the board was neither due to any negligence/default by the company nor within the control of GAIL's management and continuous efforts were also made to meet the compliance requirements," it added.

Union Minister Jitin Prasada to inaugurate IPHEX 2024

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada will inaugurate the three days international exhibition for pharma and healthcare exhibition (IPHEX 2024) which will begin from August 28 at India Expo Mart in Greater Noida. More than 400 major Indian pharma companies are expected to showcase their pharmaceutical products and Technologies at the expo. India exported pharma products worth USD 27.84 billion during the fiscal 2023-24. During FY24 pharma exports are set to touch USD

31 billion a jump of 11% led by key markets US and UK. "The three day pharma expo will offer the domestic industry majors from India and all across the world a great platform to connect and do business. It will provide you with an opportunity to meet new and existing customers actively looking for new suppliers, or looking to assess the current progress of existing projects," said SV Veeramani, Chairman, PHARMEXCIL. About 70 per cent of World Health Organisation's (WHO) vaccines under essential immunization schemes served from India" he said.

ONGC opens well in KG field to raise oil production

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on Sunday said it has opened another well on its flagship deep-sea project in Krishna Godavari basin in Bay of Bengal, which will help augment production of crude oil and natural gas. In January this year, ONGC had started producing oil, which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries, from the KG-DWN-98/2 or KG-D5 block. "On August 24, 2024, ONGC marked a significant milestone by starting production from its fifth oil well in the Block KG-DWN-98/2 Cluster-2 asset," the firm said in a stock exchange filing on Sunday. "Leveraging the floating production, storage, and offloading (FPSO) vessel, ONGC has begun transporting and sale of associated gas, all the while underscoring its commitment to achieving zero gas flaring," It, however, did not state how much the new well was producing. With this, ONGC also successfully commissioned its gas export line from the offshore-to-onshore terminal. "Earlier in January, oil production commenced from the same asset, with 4 of 13 wells already flowing. Gas production is also advancing, with 3 of 7 wells online," it added. The block, which sits next to Reliance Industries' KG-D6 block in the KG basin, has a

number of discoveries that have been clubbed into clusters. Located 35 kilometres off the coast of Andhra Pradesh in water depths ranging from 300-3,200 metres, the

discoveries in the block are divided into Cluster-1, 2 and 3. Cluster 2 is being put to production first. As per original plans, oil production from Cluster-2 should have begun by

November 2021, but was delayed because of the Covid pandemic. Thereafter, ONGC set May 2023 as the first Cluster-2 oil production deadline but then extended it to August 2023 and thereafter extended the flow of first oil every month, with the last deadline announced being December 2023. Oil started flowing from January 7, 2024. At the time of start of production in January, ONGC had stated that peak or maximum production from the field is expected to be 45,000 barrels of oil per day (bopd) and over 10 million standard cubic meters per day (mmscd) of gas which is used to make fertilisers, generate electricity, turned into CNG for use as fuel in

automobiles and piped to household kitchens for cooking. In an investor call on August 6, ONGC Director (Finance) Vivek Tongaonkar had stated that the firm was producing 12,000 bopd and 0.4 mmscd of gas from the eastern offshore block. This production was from four wells and one more well was planned to be opened in August, he had said. This well would not just raise the oil production but also help increase the amount of natural gas which flows out with oil, to 1.5 mmscd. "And subsequently, from the third quarter (October-December 2024), we expect to open further wells, which would add to our oil production as much.



CELEBRATING JANMASHTAMI THE DANCE AND DRAMA DEPICTION OF LORD KRISHNA'S JOURNEY

Experience the divine journey of Lord Krishna with Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra's **KRISHNA**. Directed by Padmashri Shobha Deepak Singh, this captivating production combines mesmerising dance with stunning visuals, vividly portraying Krishna's playful childhood and profound wisdom, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



Photos: Pankaj Kumar/Pioneer

At its core, 'KRISHNA' was more than just a retelling of an ancient story. It was a message of hope and peace, echoing the enduring spirit of Krishna. In a world that often seemed overwhelmed by conflict and confusion, Krishna's teachings offered a hope of light.

Janmashtami also known as Krishna Janmashtami or Gokulashtami is a festival filled with joy and devotion that celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna. This beloved figure in Hinduism is honoured on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in Bhadrapada (August-September), marking his birth in Mathura to Devaki and Vasudeva. The festival brings people together, uniting them in vibrant celebrations and shared experiences of devotion. Lord Krishna's life, known for its compassion, love and playful spirit, has a profound impact on Hindu culture and philosophy. Janmashtami is not just a religious occasion, it's a time when communities come together to celebrate his teachings and spirit creating a joyful and unifying experience for all involved.

A MESMERISING FUSION OF DANCE AND DRAMA: A VISUAL SPECTACLE

One of the most captivating expressions of Janmashtami celebrations was through dance dramas that depicted the life and teachings of Lord Krishna. Among these performances, Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra's annual dance drama "KRISHNA," under the esteemed guidance of Padmashri Shobha Deepak Singh (Vice Chairperson, Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra), stood out as a unique blend of art, culture and spirituality. This year, the world geared up to honour Lord Krishna, the Kendra presented the latest edition of this mesmerising dance drama at the Kamani Auditorium in New Delhi.

The production was more than just a performance, it was a journey through the life of Lord Krishna, capturing the essence of his divine playfulness, wisdom and eternal teachings. The stage was transformed into the vibrant world of Vrindavan, where young Krishna's charm and mischief took centre stage. The use of traditional costumes, combined with the captivating storytelling, ensured the audience remained engaged throughout. The seamless transitions and attention-grabbing scenes created an immersive experience, drawing viewers into a realm where Krishna's divine playfulness unfolded with every moment. The choreography executed with exceptional attention to detail, vividly brought Krishna's legendary stories to life. From his playful interactions with friends to his cheeky escapades with the butter pot (matka) and his enchanting dances with the gopis, each scene was a visual delight that resonated on a deeper spiritual level. These moments beautifully captured Krishna's joy, mischief and the simple yet profound essence of his childhood.



THE DIVINE CONNECTION: KRISHNA AND RADHA

Every retelling of Krishna's story beautifully unfolded his profound relationship with Radha. Krishna's life was incomplete without depicting his profound connection with Radha, his eternal consort. In this production, their connection wasn't just depicted as a love story, it was portrayed as a deeply spiritual journey. The dance sequences, set to soulful music, depicted the deep bond between Krishna and Radha, with Krishna endearing Radha with his divine presence. The choreography captured the delicate balance between earthly affection and spiritual connection, leaving the audience mesmerised. The dance drama took a mystical turn as Krishna, in his divine form, multiplied himself so that every gopi felt she was dancing with him. This scene, set on a full moon night, was a visual treat with the stage bathed in soft, ethereal light. The dancers, clad in flowing white costumes, moved in perfect harmony, creating an illusion of multiple Krishnas dancing with the gopis.

THE LEGEND OF GOVARDHAN: A TALE OF FAITH AND DEVOTION

One of the most iconic episodes from Krishna's life was his lifting of Mount Govardhan to protect the people of Vrindavan from the wrath of Indra, the god of rain. This tale of faith and devotion was brought to life in the dance drama with powerful choreography and cutting-edge technology. The use of sound to mimic the torrential rain, combined with the visual effects of Krishna lifting the mountain, created a dramatic and immersive experience. This scene was a reminder of Krishna's role as a protector and guide, offering shelter to those who sought refuge in him. The production also delved into Krishna's teachings, particularly his discourse in the Bhagavad Gita, where he imparted profound wisdom to Arjuna on the battlefield of

Kurukshetra. These moments were portrayed with a deep sense of reverence, with the actors embodying the solemnity and gravitas of the occasion.

THE BOND OF FRIENDSHIP: KRISHNA AND SUDAMA

Another beautifully portrayed scene in this production was the touching story of Krishna and his childhood friend Sudama. The drama captured the essence of their humble friendship, where Sudama, a poor Brahmin, visited Krishna with a small offering of beaten rice. Despite his wealth and status, Krishna welcomed Sudama with open arms, treating him with the utmost love and respect. This scene was a poignant reminder of the value of true friendship and the humility that Krishna embodied. The emotions conveyed in this part of the drama were both heartwarming and inspiring, showcasing the depth of Krishna's compassion and kindness.

A MODERN TAKE ON A TIMELESS NARRATIVE

What set this production apart was its seamless blend of tradition and innovation. The use of a state-of-the-art LED wall enhanced the storytelling, providing a dynamic backdrop that shifted with the mood and tone of the scenes. Whether depicting the serene beauty of Vrindavan, the dramatic battlefield of Kurukshetra, or the divine dance of the gopis, the LED wall brought each scene to life with stunning visuals. The choreography itself was a fusion of traditional Indian dance forms like Kathak, Mayurbhanj Chhau and Kalaripayattu. Kalaripayattu, a martial arts form, was used to depict Krishna's role as a warrior, while the graceful movements of Kathak highlighted the romantic and spiritual elements of his story. This combination of dance forms not only added variety to the performance

but also showcased the versatility and depth of Indian classical dance.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND PEACE

At its core, 'KRISHNA' was more than just a retelling of an ancient story. It was a message of hope and peace, echoing the enduring spirit of Krishna. In a world that often seemed overwhelmed by conflict and confusion, Krishna's teachings offered a hope of light. His life, as portrayed in this dance drama, was a reminder of the importance of love, compassion and understanding. Whether it was his playful interactions with the people of Vrindavan or his profound discourse in the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna's message was timeless, resonating with audiences across generations.

Under the esteemed guidance of Padmashri Shobha Deepak Singh, the production had been carefully crafted to bring out the essence of Krishna's teachings. She shared her vision, stating, "KRISHNA is a living embodiment of Lord Krishna's timeless wisdom. Through captivating storytelling and artistic brilliance, we bring his life's journey to the stage. Each performance is a symphony of dance, music and visuals, creating a world where divine and human intertwine."

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF 'KRISHNA'

As the final scene unfolded with Krishna delivering his message, the audience was deeply impressed by the scale and beauty of the performance. The combination of traditional dance, modern technology and powerful storytelling created an experience that was both entertaining and thought-provoking. It was a production that stayed with everyone long after the final bow, leaving them with a renewed sense of faith and a deeper understanding of Krishna's teachings. In its 48th edition, 'KRISHNA' continued to captivate audiences, offering a fresh perspective on the story. It served as a reminder that Krishna's story was not just

a part of India's cultural heritage but a universal message of love, wisdom and divine grace. As the lights dimmed and the audience stood to applaud, it was clear that the legacy of Krishna, as brought to life by Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, was as enduring as ever.

This Janmashtami, as you celebrate the birth of Lord Krishna, take a moment to reflect on his life and teachings. Whether through the lens of this mesmerising dance drama or in the quiet moments of prayer, let the spirit of Krishna guide you towards a path of love, compassion and peace. After all, as Lord Krishna himself said, "Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness, O Arjuna, at that time I manifest myself on earth." Let his words inspire you to be the change you wish to see in the world.

AN EXPERIENCE BEYOND WORDS

The dance drama was a breathtaking spectacle that left a lasting impression on everyone fortunate enough to witness it. The seamless fusion of traditional dance forms, vivid costumes and intricate choreography captivated audiences across all ages. Children gazed in wonder at the playful and mischievous Little Krishna while older viewers were drawn into the deeper layers of his life story, each moment beautifully portrayed with an authenticity that touched the soul. The meticulous attention to detail in every aspect of the production was evident. The vibrant costumes, reflecting the rich culture of India, were perfectly complemented by the dancer's expressive movements. The makeup artistry brought out the divine essence of Krishna, making him not just a character on stage but a living, breathing deity with whom the audience felt a personal connection.

Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra's 'KRISHNA' was not just a performance; it was an experience. It was an annual tradition that rekindled our faith in the enduring legacy of Lord Krishna and his teachings.

As we celebrate Janmashtami, we carry forward the lessons from this dance drama into our own lives, striving for a world where love, compassion and righteousness prevail. The life of Krishna, as depicted in this magical performance, reminds us that divinity resides not in the heavens alone but within each one of us, in the love and kindness we show to others. As we enjoy the festivities, let's carry forward the lessons of love, compassion and wisdom that Krishna embodies, allowing them to guide us in our everyday lives.



Paralympic social media accounts front traditional media with edgy take

AP ■ PARIS

The message is clear: Paralympians are not participating. They are competing. A number of athletes preparing for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games have proclaimed that on their social feeds over the past few days, reminding the world that Olympians are not the only athletes coming to Paris looking for gold. The games will be underway next week with the opening ceremony on Wednesday. Athletes and the games' own social and creative teams have been taking a more aggressive approach to their messaging, leaning into disabilities and being willing to risk discomfiting their audience to introduce athletes and their personalities, not just their



disabilities. The International Paralympic Committee has released several YouTube videos to show the edgier side of its competitors, including: "Paris 2024: What Really Matters" and "Paris 2024: 100 Days to Go - Welcome to the Paralympics." The tagline for

both: "This is the Paralympics... they're not playing games." A Guy With No Arms "If you didn't know the characters, the "What Really Matters" series opens on a jarring note. A genial 5-foot-6-inch man grasps a car's steering wheel

with his foot. He leans over to his passenger and says with a sideways smile, "Is this your first time riding in a car with a guy without arms?" The guy with no arms is Paralympic silver medalist Matt Stutzman, who has built up a brand as the "Armless

Archer." He maneuvers the car with his feet: left foot on the pedals, right foot on the steering wheel. Stutzman's passenger is Chuck Aoki, a wheelchair rugby player joining Stutzman on Team USA. In the YouTube series, Stutzman hosts Aoki and para track and field athlete Scout Bassett telling their stories from a different point of view with humor thrown in. "There's that connection; it's like an unspoken bond," said Stutzman, who earned a silver medal in the men's individual compound open at the London games in 2012. "I might not know who Bassett is, but we both know that we both had to go through something specific to even get to the level where we're in sport." Edgy takes The IPC has received criticism for leaning into the disabilities of their

athletes, but spokesman Craig Spence said the irreverent approach was necessary. "If you speak to Paralympians, they've got a great sense of humor. They're not wrapped up in cotton wool and protected from society," Spence said in an interview earlier this year. "They like to laugh about themselves," he said. "Like we all do, and that's why we've tried to be really edgy on the Paralympic TikTok account." Spence said the criticism the IPC had received came mostly from people outside the community of people with disabilities, and the comments often ask who the admin is on the account - implying it's someone making fun of disabilities. But according to Spence, the "admin" is 2008 Paralympian Richard Fox from Britain.



Nacer, voice of Olympic boxing, now targets Paralympic glory as judoka

AP ■ PARIS

Nacer Zorgani has had a busy summer. In July at the Paris Games, his captivating baritone voice gained him fans as the announcer at the Olympic boxing. Zorgani will compete on Sept. 7 in the men's 90-kilogram, J2 classification for visually impaired athletes. For him, the sport is far more than just a competition; it is the embodiment of his lifelong commitment to the "way of the bushi," with the traditional Japanese martial art philosophy of bushido shaping his journey. Before finding his calling in judo, Zorgani dabbled in various sports, including boxing and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. "It's all one thing for me," he said. "I follow the way of the bushi... Resilience, discipline, and an unwavering focus. Whether it's in the ring, on the mat, or in life, the principles are the same." His transition to judo was a natural progression. The sport's emphasis on balance,

technique, and mental strength resonated with Zorgani, who found in judo not just a way to compete but a path to mastering his own limitations. Zorgani was declared legally blind at 17 after a doctor diagnosed progressive deterioration of both retinas. By 20, he had lost most of his vision and could only see blurry shapes in very bright environments. This did not deter him; instead, it fueled his determination to excel. "I've lived through very dark moments, when I felt beat down by my disability," Zorgani said. "But combat sports really, really helped me." In judo, the tactile nature of the sport can be useful for athletes like Zorgani. From the moment he comes to grips with his opponent, he uses touch to sense their movements, balance, and intentions. The lack of sight can sharpen his other senses, allowing him to anticipate and react with split-second precision. "Judo is about feeling your opponent's energy, your center of gravity, and their intentions," he said. "In that sense, my visual impairment has taught me to trust my instincts and my training even more."

Lakshya heads to Austria for physical assessment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Aiming to be in the best shape for the upcoming tournaments in the BWF circuit, India's Lakshya Sen on Sunday left for Austria for a detailed evaluation of his body. The 22-year-old from Almora, who had come close to winning an Olympic medal in Paris before finishing fourth, will undergo a series of tests at the Red Bull Athlete Performance Centre in Salzburg to get a detailed evaluation to rev up his fitness and game. "Lakshya is going to Austria to do some physical assessment. There is a good sports institute there, where he wants to do some physical exercise. He left today and will be back after a week," Vimal told PTI. Lakshya is accompanied by his trainer, Gaurav and a 15-year-old junior shuttler Nishchal Chand from Uttarakhand to help him keep abreast with the game during the week. "The tests will focus basically on specific strength aspects. Many of the elite athletes go and get themselves tested there. We had consulted Dr Dinshaw Pardiwala for all his niggles and injuries. "Right now, he is fine but before he really starts going full-fledged, it is important for him to get the right physical training, and unless the strength and conditioning program is really spot on, he can get injuries. So we have to find the right things to do." Lakshya is likely to play the Hong Kong Super 500 and China Open Super 1000 next in late September this year. Badminton is a physically demanding game and Vimal feels Lakshya has to keep working on his overall fitness, especially considering the kind of game that he possesses. "He needs to definitely get better on fitness aspects, especially the speed, endurance and other things he needs to work on."

Bangladesh registers historic 10-wicket win after Pakistan collapse to 146 all out in 1st test

AP ■ RAWALPINDI (PAKISTAN)

Bangladesh shrugged off political unrest back home to notch a historic 10-wicket win after Pakistan collapsed to 146 all out in a dramatic final day of the first test on Sunday. Off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz and left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan, who was a lawmaker in the government of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, shared seven wickets after the pace bowlers mopped up the top order to give Bangladesh its maiden win in 14 test matches against Pakistan. Openers Zakir Hasan and Shadman Islam were unbeaten

on 15 and 9, respectively, as Bangladesh reached 30-0 at the stroke of the tea interval for only its seventh away test win and the first since beating New Zealand at Mount Maunganui in January 2022. Pakistan, which conceded a 117-run first innings lead despite declaring at 448-6, was bowled out by a disciplined pace and spin attack after it resumed on 23-1 and still 94 runs behind. Mohammad Rizwan followed his career-best unbeaten 171 to top-score with 51 but most of his teammates were guilty of falling to rash shots coupled with some aggressive field placings by Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto.



Mehidy picked up 4-21 and Shakib 3-44 while the three fast bowlers Shoriful Islam, Hasan Mahmud and Nahid Rana snared one wicket each.

Earlier, in a dramatic first session Bangladesh set up its victory as Pakistan limped to 108-6 and lost five wickets. Captain Shan Masood (14) was dismissed in the second over of the day when Hasan found a faint edge and had the Pakistan skipper caught behind. Masood argued with onfield umpire Richard Kettleborough for the second time in the test match after he was also caught behind in a controversial manner in the first innings, but the television replays clearly suggested the left-hander had a tinkle on the ball after Bangladesh went for a successful television referral.

Hasan should have had Babar Azam out for a pair of ducks in the game, but wicketkeeper Litton Das spilled a simple catch off the first ball Babar faced. Babar tried to break the shackles and hit three boundaries before he was out to fast bowler Rana (1-30) when on 22. Pakistan's middle-order batters were guilty of throwing away their wickets against the two spinners, Shakib and Mehidy. First innings century-maker Saud Shakeel needlessly tried to play an extravagant shot against Shakib and got stumped for zero for the first time in his short test career.

Meet 13-year-old badminton prodigy Tanvi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Thirteen-year-old Tanvi Patri from Odisha has cemented her status as one of India's most promising badminton prodigies by clinching the girls' singles title at the U-15 Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 Junior Championships in Chengdu, China, the country where she first honed her skills in the sport. Patri capped off a phenomenal week with a superlative performance, defeating Vietnam's second seed Thi Thu Huyen Nguyen 22-20, 21-11 in a 34-minute final, offering a glimmer of hope after Indian badminton's recent struggles at the Paris Olympics. "I'm feeling good after winning the title," Patri told PTI from Chengdu. "I had expected to win, and I'm happy I could do that. I've been training at the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA) in Bangalore for the last two years." Patri displayed remarkable resilience, fighting back from 11-17 down in the opening game to win the title without dropping a game throughout the tournament.



Her parents, Rabinarayan Patri and Sailabala Panda, are software professionals who previously worked in China, where she first took up badminton. The family returned to India in 2020 following the COVID-19 pandemic. Vimal Kumar, Director of PPBA, sees great promise in Tanvi, even drawing comparisons to the early days of P V Sindhu, one of India's most celebrated badminton players. "She was about eight or nine when she moved to India and joined the academy in 2022," said Vimal. "She reminds me of Sindhu

when she was young. The ability to win matches at a young age is a good sign. She has a long way to go, and with her temperament, she has great potential." Rabinarayan, a software engineer who works from home, accompanies Patri to the academy. In November 2022, he drove 1,400 km from Bengaluru to Balangir for Patri's participation in the state sub-junior badminton tournament. "She is ahead of her age group," Vimal noted. "In the last six months, she has won U-17 tournaments and defeated several senior players, including the

current national championship finalist, Tanvi Sharma. "If she improves her strength and continues to develop, she could be a strong contender for the 2028 or 2032 Olympics." Patri, who also enjoys skating, began her badminton training under Chinese coach Jiang Yong Yi and won nine titles in China between 2017 and 2020. After returning to India, she was spotted by PPBA during a camp and joined the academy in March 2022. She went on to claim both the U-15 and U-17 girls' singles titles in the All India sub-junior ranking tournaments in Hyderabad in June and Mapusa, Goa, in May this year. Tanvi also won the gold medal in the 35th Sub-Junior National Championships in Balangir, Odisha, last November and became the first shuttler from Odisha to win the girls' singles title in the 34th Sub-Junior (U-13) National Championships in Lucknow in 2022. A class eight student, Patri had reached the quarterfinals at the German Junior International in Berlin in March.

Shubhankar Sharma tied 11th in Dutch Golf

PTI ■ AARHUS (DENMARK)

Shubhankar Sharma landed two eagles in his third round but also gave away a double bogey as he closed the day at 2-under 69 to be tied-11th at the Danish Golf Championship. Sharma, who had also shot 69s in his first two rounds, is currently 6-under and six strokes behind leader Lucas Bjerregaard, who after a slow start, shot 5-under 66 that had four birdies between the 10th and the 14th. The Indian star, who had won the second of his two DP World Tour titles in 2018, opened with an eagle and followed it up with a birdie. Pars followed and, on the back nine, he had another eagle on the 10th at which point he was 5-under. He even held a share of the lead briefly. Sharma then gave away too many shots, including a double and two bogeys against just one more birdie on the 17th. It was the third straight round in which he had a double bogey. Bjerregaard will go in search of his first DP World Tour title



for nearly six years as he takes a two-stroke lead into the final round of the championship. The 33-year-old Dane, who won the Portugal Masters in 2017, started his third round with a birdie on the first hole and remained patient on the front nine with eight consecutive pars, before making four gains in five holes after the turn. He then parred his way home to sign for a five under-par 66 and a 12-under total. He is two strokes ahead of Romain Langasque, who is bidding for his second DP World Tour title to follow up on his 2020 ISPS Handa Wales Open success. The Frenchman carded six birdies and a bogey as he signed for a second consecutive round of 66 and a 10-under total.

Mayweather goes distance against John in Mexico City

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

Former world champion Floyd Mayweather went the distance against John Gotti III in an exhibition fight on Saturday night in Mexico City. The 47-year-old Mayweather fought Gotti in an eight-round fight with no judges in Arena Ciudad de Mexico. It was a rematch of a fight that ended in a massive brawl in Florida last June. Mayweather, who retired from boxing in 2017 with an unbeaten record in 50 bouts, dominated the fight from the second round, when the fighter nicknamed "Money" asked for a change of referee. At the end of the fight, Mayweather and Gotti III embraced in the ring as Mexicans fans loudly boomed. Mayweather is considered one of the greatest boxers in history. During a career that spanned 21 years, he won world titles in five different divisions and beat rivals including Manny Pacquiao, Oscar De la Hoya, Shane Mosley and Saul "Canelo" Alvarez.

Bowlers, Dhruv-Lakshay power Central Delhi Kings to 10-wicket win over West Delhi Lions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dhruv Kaushik scored an unbeaten half century after bowlers produced a disciplined effort to help Central Delhi Kings inflict a 10-wicket defeat on West Delhi Lions in the Delhi Premier League here. Chasing a modest target of 124, Central Delhi Kings openers Dhruv (68 off 52 balls) and Lakshay Thareja (46 off 37 balls) came out all guns blazing on Saturday. Right from the start, both openers were aggressive in their approach and found the boundaries comfortably as they chased down the target in

14.5 overs. Dhruv's unbeaten innings included six boundaries and two sixes, while Lakshay smashed three fours and a six. Earlier, West Delhi Lions didn't get the start they would have wished for after they were sent in to bat. Central Delhi Kings' Sumit Kumar dismissed both their openers cheaply. With the openers back in the pavilion, the responsibility came on Yugal Saini and Krish Yadav. With Central Delhi Kings bowlers sticking to their line and length, West Delhi Lions struggled to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Yugal was then dismissed by Yogesh Sharma for 7 runs. At the end of the powerplay, West Delhi Lions were struggling at 33/3. Krish Yadav along with Ayush Doseja then slowly started rotating the strike and kept the score ticking. At the halfway stage of their innings, West Delhi Lions were 53/3. However, the 38-run partnership from 43 balls between Krish and Ayush was broken as the latter was stumped by Lakshay (21) off Prince Choudhary's bowling. With pressure mounting, West Delhi Lions captain

Hrithik Shokeen (4) came to the crease. However, his stint was cut short by Yogesh. With wicket falling at regular intervals, West Delhi Lions struggled to find the boundaries. Towards the end of the innings, Tishant Pawan Dabla and Aryan Dalal contributed 27 and 22 runs respectively. West Delhi Lions made 123/8 in their allotted 20 overs. For Central Delhi Kings, Prince Choudhary, Sumit Kumar and Yogesh Sharma picked up two wickets each, while Money Grewal got one.

Keegan takes 1-shot lead over Adam Scott at BMW Championship

AP ■ CASTLE ROCK (COLORADO)

Keegan Bradley is still getting used to his new title as U.S. Ryder Cup captain. He still feels like a player who should be competing to win and thinking about playing in the matches. He certainly looked the part Saturday in the BMW Championship, all while hearing the occasional "U-S-A! U-S-A!" cheer as he made his way across windswept Castle Pines for a wild round of 2-under 70 that gave him a one-shot lead over Adam Scott.



"To be named Ryder Cup captain and still be a full-time player is strange, said Bradley, at 38 the youngest U.S. Captain since Arnold Palmer in 1963. "I don't know anyone who knows how to handle this situation, so I'm doing the best

I can. The only thing I can keep doing is playing my best golf and maybe play my way on to some of these teams." A victory would make him the first captain to win on the PGA Tour since Davis Love III was 51 when he won the 2015 Wyndham Championship. It also would move Bradley to No. 11 in the world ranking. One round, but that can feel like a long way off considering the developments Saturday. Bradley had eight birdies and still only shot 70, a round that featured three straight birdies on the front, three straight bogeys on the back and four birdies over his last five holes

(the exception was a bogey on the par-3 16th). He was at 12-under 204. It was like that for just about everybody. Adam Scott hit one tee shot out-of-bounds and another in the water after just three holes and had to rally at the end to limit the damage to a 74, leaving him only one shot behind. "I kind of felt like I made a meal of that, and I didn't feel like I did that much wrong - a couple of drives were just not quite right, and a three-putt, and all of a sudden I'm kind of chasing," Scott said. "I'm in a good spot in the end of it to be one back."

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