



OPINION 6 THE RISE OF SUNITA KEJRIWAL

WORLD 9 ISRAEL'S WEST BANK OPERATION KILLS NINE PALESTINIANS

MONEY 10 NIFTY GAINS marginally TO HIT LIFETIME HIGH

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY AUGUST 29, 2024; PAGES 12-13

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PATHAK NAMED INDIA GOALKEEPER IN TROPHY SQUAD 11 SPORTS

## PRESIDENT MURMU READS THE RIOT ACT TO MEN: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu has voiced her dismay and horror in her first public remarks regarding the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata earlier this month and said "enough is enough." She urged society to confront the chronic issue of violence against women and should force honest self-inspection to uncover the roots of the malaise. In a statement, President Murmu said the gruesome incident of rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata has left the nation shocked. "I was dismayed and horrified when I came to hear of it. What is more depressing is the fact that it was not the only incident of its kind; it is part of a series of crimes

against women. Even as students, doctors and citizens were protesting in Kolkata, criminals remained on the prowl elsewhere. The victims include even kindergarden girls. No civilised society can allow daughters and sisters to be subjected to such atrocities. The nation is bound to be outraged, and so am I," she said. "On the occasion of Women's Day last year, I had shared my thoughts and hopes about women's empowerment in the form of a newspaper article. I remain an optimist, thanks to our past achievements in empowering women. I consider myself as an example of that spectacular journey of women empowerment in India. But I myself feel deeply anguished when I hear about brutality against women in any

part of the country," President Murmu said. "More recently, I was in a unique predicament when some schoolchildren who had come to celebrate Rakhi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan asked me innocently if they could be assured that there would be no recurrence of the Nirbhaya-type incident in future. I told them that though the State is committed to protect every citizen, training in self-defence and martial arts is essential for all, particularly girls, to make them stronger. But that's not a guarantee for their security as women's vulnerability is influenced by many factors. Obviously, the full answer to that question can only come from our society," President Murmu said, "For that to happen, what is needed first of all



is honest, unbiased self-inspection. The time has come when we as a society need to ask ourselves some difficult questions. Where have we erred? And what can we do to remove the errors? Without finding out the answer to that question, the half of our population cannot live as freely as the other half. "To answer it, let me explain it right at the beginning. Our Constitution granted equality to all, including women, when it was only an ideal in many parts of the world. The State then created institutions to establish this equality, wherever needed, and promoted it with a series of schemes and initiatives. Civil society came forward and supplemented the State's outreach in this regard. Visionary leaders in

all spheres of society pushed for gender equality. Finally, there were exceptional, feisty women who made it possible for their less fortunate sisters to benefit from this social revolution. That has been the saga of women's empowerment." She said, "Yet, this journey has not been without its obstacles. Women have had to fight for every inch of ground they have won. Social prejudices as well as some customs and practices have always opposed the expansion of women's rights. This is a rather deplorable mindset. I won't call it a male mindset, because it has little to do with the gender of the person: there are many, many men who don't have it. This mindset sees the female as a lesser human being, less powerful, less capable, less intelligent. Those

who share such views then go further and see the female as an object. "It is this objectification of women by a few that is behind the crimes against women. It is ingrained deeply in the minds of such people. Let me also note here that, regrettably, this is the case not only in India, but across the world. Difference between one place and the next is more of a degree than kind." President Murmu said "Countering this mindset is a task for both the State and the society. In India, over the years, the two have fought hard to change the wrong attitude. There have been laws and there have been social campaigns. Yet, there is something that continues to come in the way to torment us. Continued on Page 8

## Cabinet approves massive boost to manufacturing horizons Bangla Bandh call by BJP unsettles West Bengal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a determined effort to boost domestic industry and create jobs, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved establishment of 12 new industrial cities in 10 States with an estimated investment of ₹28,602 crore. More than one million direct jobs will be created in these projects. Spanning 10 States and strategically located along six major corridors, these projects represent a significant leap forward in India's quest for enhanced manufacturing capabilities and rapid economic growth. These industrial areas will be located at Khurpia in Uttarakhand, Rajpura-Patiala in Punjab, Dighi in Maharashtra, Palakkad in Kerala, Agra and Prayagraj in UP, Gaya in Bihar, Zaheerabad in Telangana, Orvakal and Kopparthi in AP, and Jodhpur-Pali in Rajasthan. The Union Cabinet has approved 12 new project proposals under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) with an estimated



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw briefs the media over Cabinet decisions in New Delhi on Wednesday

investment of ₹28,602 crore, said Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw after the Cabinet meeting. The move will transform the industrial landscape of the country, creating a robust network of industrial nodes and cities that will significantly boost economic growth and global competitiveness. They will be developed as green field smart cities of global standards. The approach ensures that the cities are equipped with advanced infrastructure that

supports sustainable and efficient industrial operations. The NICDP is expected to generate significant employment opportunities, with an estimated 1 million direct jobs and up to 3 million indirect jobs being created through planned industrialisation. These projects will create an investment potential of about ₹1.52 lakh crore. The NICDP is designed to foster a vibrant industrial ecosystem by facilitating investments by large anchor

industries and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). These industrial nodes will act as catalysts for achieving \$2 trillion exports by 2030, reflecting the Government's vision of a self-reliant and globally competitive India, a Government statement said. It also said India will soon wear a grand necklace of industrial smart cities and termed the decision as landmark. The new industrial cities will be developed as green field smart cities of global standards, built "ahead of demand" on the 'plug-n-play' and 'walk-to-work' concepts. This approach ensures that the cities are equipped with advanced infrastructure that supports sustainable and efficient industrial operations. Aligned with the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan, the projects will feature multi-mode connectivity infrastructure, ensuring seamless movement of people, goods, and services. The industrial cities are envisioned to be growth centers for transformation of the whole region. Continued on Page 8

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Violent clashes marred the BJP-sponsored 12-hour shutdown in West Bengal on Wednesday, disrupting road and train services, and sparking scuffles between the police-ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) workers and bandh supporters at several pockets of the State. The BJP claimed the bandh was successful while the TMC said it has failed to evoke overwhelming response. Several BJP leaders, including former MPs Roopa Ganguly and Locket Chatterjee, Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya and MLA Agnimitra Paul, were detained for blocking roads and urging people to enforce the bandh since morning. The most significant of these clashes was reported from Bhatpara in North 24 Parganas district where, the BJP alleged, TMC goons fired multiple rounds on its local leader Priyangu Pandey's car and shared a purported video of the crime on social media platforms. He claimed that the



BJP leader Rahul Sinha (sitting, 3rd from left) along with party workers raises slogans as security personnel stand guard during the party's 12-hour general strike in Bengal to protest the police action against participants of Tuesday's 'Nabanna Abhijan' rally which was held against the RG Kar incident, in Kolkata, on Wednesday

Trinamool workers opened fire at him and hurled bombs when he was travelling in a car in Bhatpara. Four people have been arrested, the Kolkata Police said. The shutdown affected daily life in the State with many people choosing to remain indoors apprehending trouble on the roads. In Kolkata, the usual weekday flurry was missing with a lesser number of buses, autorickshaws and taxis plying. Private vehicles were also significantly fewer, even as

markets and shops remained open as usual. Schools and colleges were open, though the number of students was less. In many private offices, attendance was low with employees asked to work from home. However, attendance was as usual in Government offices. An Eastern Railway official said bandh supporters blocked tracks at 49 places under its jurisdiction in the State in both Sealdah and Howrah divisions. While the blockades were lifted at most

places, it continued for longer durations in nine stations, mostly in the Sealdah South section, he said. BJP workers demonstrated at various stations in North and South 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Nadia and Murshidabad districts in support of the bandh. Suburban railway services were also disrupted when bandh supporters dropped banana leaves on overhead electrical wires at various places, railway officials confirmed. The violence was followed by a showdown between local BJP leader Arjun Singh and his TMC counterpart Somnath Shyam, with both leaders and their supporters standing face to face in altercation further triggering tensions and the police finding it tough to disperse the warring groups. "Miscearants owing allegiance to the Trinamool Congress fired the shots. If police are not around we will show TMC what people's power looks like," Singh said. Shyam countered by saying that the BJP leader was trying to "incite violence in a peaceful area". Continued on Page 8



## Noose tightens, 17 cases filed for Bollywood sleaze

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) consisting of women IPS officers commenced its probe into allegations of sexual abuse made by Malayalam film actresses against senior artistes like Mukesh, Siddique, Babu Raj, Manian Pili Raju, Jaayasoorya and movie maker Ranjith (who quit as chairman of Kerala Chalachitra Academy, the Kerala Government-run institution for holding International Film Festival of the State). Sources in the SIT told The Pioneer that they would ask Mukesh and Ranjith to present themselves before the team for questioning. Bengali film actress Sreelekha Mitra has lodged a complaint against Ranjith by e-mail with the SIT about the harassment meted out to her by the movie maker in 2009.

Minu Muneer, Sonia Malhotra and Revathi Sampath are the other artists who have complained against their male co-artists alleging rape, physical assault and violation of modesty. Muneer said in her complaint that Mukesh, who is a CPI(M) MLA asked her to sleep with him for a positive response to her application for the membership of Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA), a stepping stone to the film industry's welfare programme. Continued on Page 8

## Bail for laundering funds remains the rule, says SC

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a judgment having significant implications, the Supreme Court on Wednesday reiterated that the principle of bail is the rule and jail is the exception applied even to money laundering cases under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) while granting bail to one Prem Prakash, an alleged aide of Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren in a money laundering case. This comes a day after the Supreme Court granted relief to Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader K Kavitha, who was arrested in March in a money laundering case linked to Delhi's now-scrapped liquor policy. Earlier this month, AAP leader Manish Sisodia was also granted bail in the same case. A Bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan held that liberty of individual is always the rule and deprivation of the same by procedure established by law, is the exception. The Bench made it clear that the stringent conditions for bail under PMLA will override this principle. "The appeal is allowed and impugned order dated 22.03.2024 of the High Court of Jharkhand at Ranchi is quashed



File photo: Ranjan Dimri

and set aside," the Bench said in its 44-page order. "...the appellant has satisfied the twin conditions under Section 45. Inasmuch as from the material on record, this Court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the appellant is not guilty of the offence of money laundering as alleged under Sections 3 and 4 of the PMLA and the Court is further satisfied that the appellant is not likely to commit any offence if enlarged on bail," it said. The Bench referred to the August 9 verdict in the money laundering and corruption cases involving former Deputy Chief Minister

Sisodia to say that liberty of the individual is always the rule and deprivation of it by procedure established by law is the exception. The Bench said, "Relying on the judgment in Manish Sisodia case, we have said that even in PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act), bail is a rule and jail the exception." The Bench referred to Section 45 of the PMLA that mentions twin conditions for bail — there should be prima facie satisfaction that the accused has not committed the offence and that he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail. All that Section 45 specifies, the court said, is the conditions to be met for bail. "Liberty of the individual is always the rule and deprivation, by procedure established by law, the exception. Twin test does not take away this principle," it added. The bench clarified that any incriminating statement made by an accused in custody in a PMLA case before an investigating officer will not be admissible in court. "It will be extremely unfair to make such statements admissible as it will be against all canons of justice." Continued on Page 8

## UP Government deals death blow to anti-national social media

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW/NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh Government has come up with a new social media policy that will not only regulate content on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and X but also encourage influencers to promote the State Government initiatives. Under the policy, posting objectionable, anti-national content will be considered a serious offence that carries penalties. The State Government will also pay up to Rs 8 lakh per month to influencers and holders of these accounts on different social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram and YouTube depending on their followers and subscribers. Yogi Adityanath's cabinet approved the Uttar Pradesh Digital Media Policy, 2024, prepared by the State's Information Department, on Tuesday. "In case of uploading objectionable content on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and YouTube, legal action has been arranged against the concerned agency/ firm as per rules. Under no circumstances should the content be indecent, obscene and anti-

national," stated the Press note signed by Principal Secretary Sanjay Prasad. The police will also help create jobs, the statement noted. According to the digital media policy, posting anti-national content is a serious offence that will carry severe consequences including penalties ranging from three years' imprisonment to life term. Earlier, such actions were addressed under Sections 66E and 66F of the Information Technology (IT) Act, which deal with privacy violations and cyber-terrorism, respectively. Under the new policy, digital mediums like X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and YouTube will also be encouraged to display content, videos, tweets, posts, reels based on the schemes and achievements of the State Government by listing the related agencies or firms and issuing advertisements. "With the release of this policy, the residents of the State who are residing in different parts of the country and abroad will be ensured to get employment in large numbers," it said. Continued on Page 8

## ED slaps DMK MP with ₹908 crore penalty over FERA violation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday slapped a penalty of ₹908 crore has been imposed on DMK MP S Jagathrathakan and his family members in a case related to the alleged violation of foreign exchange rules. The federal agency issued a statement which said properties worth ₹89.19 crore, seized in September 2020, have been confiscated following an adjudication order issued on August 26 under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). Jagathrathakan, 76, represents the Arakkonam Lok Sabha seat in Tamil Nadu. He had earlier served as a Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting in the Union Government. The agency said a FEMA violation probe was initiated against the MP, a businessman from Tamil Nadu, his family members and a related Indian entity. This investigation, it said, resulted in the passing of seizure order, dated September 11, 2020, under section 37A of FEMA, for various movable and immovable properties in the name of the MP and his family members. These are valued at ₹89.19 crore. "The properties worth ₹89.19 crore which were seized in terms of section 37A of FEMA were also ordered for confiscation, and penalty of ₹908 crore is levied vide Adjudication Order dated 26/08/2024," the ED said. Continued on Page 8

## Medal winning hockey player at Paris Olympics humiliated by Kerala Government

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The legendary hockey star of India PR Sreejesh (member of the Indian hockey team that won the bronze medal in Paris Olympics) and his family were humiliated by the Government of Kerala which has shocked the sporting fraternity in the State. The CPI (M)-led Kerala Government had invited Sreejesh to Thiruvananthapuram to felicitate him in a State function for his feat in the hockey field. The hockey star reached Thiruvananthapuram

accompanied by his family members. But what happened unknown to Sreejesh was the last-hour cancellation of the felicitation programme. It seems Sreejesh's act of speaking to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attending the reception hosted by the latter had not gone down well with the Marxists and Muslim members in the Council of Ministers that may have led to the ungainly treatment meted out to the hockey icon. The reason why the reception was cancelled, according to sources in the State Secretariat,

was the differences between Education Minister V Sivankutty and Sports Minister V Abdul Rehman over who should float the bill. While Sivankutty is a CPI (M) ideologue, Abdul Rehman is an erstwhile Congress leader who switched sides and joined the CPI (M) hours before the announcement of the 2021 election schedule. A business baron, Rehman wields enormous influence in the CPI (M). The sources would have us believe that both the ministers wanted to teach Sreejesh an



unforgettable lesson, and hence the last-minute cancellation of the programme. It was only on Tuesday morning that an unwary Sreejesh was informed that the felicitation stood cancelled and that he would be 'summoned' to the capital city later on. Left in the lurch, Sreejesh and family decided to turn an unpleasant incident into a spiritually uplifting experience. They visited for 'darshan' Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple and Lord Ganapathy Temple at Pazhavangadi where the hockey wizard came across

Union Minister Suresh Gopi. Gopi was taken aback to hear about the sudden cancellation of the felicitation, and took Sreejesh and family to the former's residence and treated them to a sumptuous Onam lunch. Sreejesh's wife, children, father and mother had a nice time with the actor-turned-politician and took selfies before boarding the train to return home on Tuesday. Since he happens to be an employee of the Kerala Government, Sreejesh is not in a position to make his feelings public.

# Old man hacked to death

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

An 85-year-old man was murdered in Banthra police station area of Lucknow on Tuesday night. The assailants hacked him to death with an axe. Personal enmity is believed to be the motive behind the murder but the police are also probing the case from the angle of property related dispute. The police formed two teams to investigate the case and nab the killers. A case has been registered and two suspects from the village have been detained. As per reports, the victim, identified as Balwant of Bhatganj village in Banthra, was lying dead on the road a few furlongs from his house late on Tuesday night. The family members of the deceased told the police that Balwant left the house at 4 pm on Tuesday and when he did not return till late in the night, they launched a search for him. His body was found lying in a pool of blood on a nearby road with a deep cut on his throat.

A blood stained axe was also found lying near the body. Police said that the preliminary investigation revealed that Balwant had a heated argument with two youths three days ago and a police team detained these suspects after the same was confirmed by other villagers. The police said the suspects had also threatened the victim of dire consequences during the brawl. A villager said on condition of anonymity that he spotted mud stuck on the victim's clothes and his slippers were lying at some distance from the crime scene. The news of Balwant's murder spread like a wildfire and soon a large number of people gathered at the house of the deceased. DCP (South) Keshav Kumar, in a video statement, said a case had been registered on the complainant of the family of the deceased and the case would be cracked soon. ACP (Krishnanagar) Vinay Dwivedi said the body had been sent for post-mortem. Banthra police station in-

cluding flypast by aircraft, Para drop, Para motors, Micro Light Flying and many more, will be the main attractions. The festival will be held from September 3 to 5 every day from 10 am to 6 pm. Entry to the festival does not require any tickets or passes and is free for all citizens. This is a unique opportunity for the people of Lucknow to witness the might of the Armed Forces. Live displays

charge Inspector Ram Singh said that both the suspects were being questioned. He said the police would investigate the case from all angles. Meanwhile, a man was accused of brutally beating his wife to death. Leveling this allegation on his son-in-law, the victim's father, Yadendra, lodged a report of dowry death at the Chinhat police station. The incident took place on August 24 and the report was lodged on Wednesday. The victim woman Vandana's father alleged his son-in-law, Shrawan, and other members in his family used to torture Vandana for dowry since her marriage. "Her in-laws used to harass her. Many times they beat her up and even had thrown her out of the house in the past. When we intervened, she was allowed to live at the house," Yadendra said. According to the complainant, on August 24, Shrawan Tiwari called them and told them that Vandana had died. When the family reached Lucknow, they found Vandana's body at



The weather became pleasant after heavy rain in Lucknow on Wednesday

Pioneer

# Jobless youth duped of ₹2.54 lakh

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

A jobless youth was duped of Rs 2.54 lakh by a fraudster who promised him a job in the secretariat in Lucknow. The incident was reported from Ashiyana police station area. As per reports, the victim, Dinesh, was preparing for government services for the last four years but he did not get any success as yet. In his complaint, Dinesh said that six months ago his maternal uncle Rakesh Kumar met one Mohammad Safiq Warsi who introduced himself as an assistant review officer in the secretariat. "The accused introduced himself as an assistant review officer in the secretariat at the time of his meeting with me. After having convinced the victim, Warsi took Rs 1.32 lakh through Google Pay app and another Rs 1.20 in cash as facilitation money for the job," he alleged. Dinesh said when he did not get the job, he demanded the

money back. "The accused started abusing me for asking a refund and he also threatened to kill me," he said. The victim said realising that he had been duped and he went to the police station where he gave a written complaint. The police have registered a case and have started an investigation. Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused tried all tested methods to keep the victim in his confidence. To gain the victim's trust, gave his driver and son's phone numbers and assured them that the Dinesh would get the joining letter soon. "When the joining letter for service was not received by the victim even after a long time, he asked for refunding the money. Then the accused started making excuses to buy time," the investigation findings said. Meanwhile, a woman was duped of Rs 45,000 by a fraudster who impersonated as her father's friend in PGI police sta-

tion area on Wednesday. As per reports, the victim, Anjani Devi of Svaroop Nagar Kharika Telibagh, under PGI police station, got a call from an unknown mobile number and the caller introduced himself as her father's friend. He told the victim that he had to transfer Rs 15,000 in her bank account as per her father's instruction and asked for her Paytm number. After some time she got a message of crediting of Rs 10,000 in her account. She then got a call from the miscreant who told her that he mistakenly had sent another Rs 50,000 in place of the remaining sum of Rs 5,000 in her account. He further asked her to refund his Rs 45,000. An unsuspecting victim returned a sum of Rs 45,000. A little later, the miscreant called the victim again and said he mistakenly had sent another Rs 35,000 in her account. He further explained that he intended to transfer the money in another man's account. This time the victim checked

her bank balance. To her surprise she found she never received Rs 10,000 and Rs 50,000 in her bank account and that she had been cheated of Rs 45,000. "On her complaint, a case under Section 318 (4) BNS has been registered at the police station and necessary legal action is being taken," a spokesman said. **DEAD** A 22-year-old youth was killed while his friend suffered critical injuries in a road mishap in Banthra police station area. The incident took place on August 26 and the youth identified as Ajay Sohamrao of Unnao died on Tuesday at a private hospital in Lucknow. Ajay along with his friend Sachin of Banthra was going for some work and they were hit by a loader near Umaidkhera in the area. Both were rushed to a hospital where doctors diagnosed Ajay's condition as serious and had referred him to a hospital with higher medical facilities. He died on Wednesday.

## Civil services aspirant found hanging

**Lucknow (PNS):** A civil services aspirant was found hanging in his rented accommodation in Madaion on Wednesday. The police said the body was two three days old and has started decomposing as it was stinking badly. The house owner Asha Devi told police that Rohit (22) was found dead in a room in the upper part of her house. She said Rohit was a native of Sitapur and he lived on rent.

# 3-day Armed Forces Festival to kick off on September 3

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

A three-day Armed Forces Festival is being organised at Surya Khel Parisar in Lucknow Cantonment from September 3. The festival will feature the latest military equipment, developed as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat, showcasing the might of technology driven Indian Armed Forces. Citizens will witness state of the art weapons including tanks,

including flypast by aircraft, Para drop, Para motors, Micro Light Flying and many more, will be the main attractions. The festival will be held from September 3 to 5 every day from 10 am to 6 pm. Entry to the festival does not require any tickets or passes and is free for all citizens. This is a unique opportunity for the people of Lucknow to witness the might of the Armed Forces. Live displays

including flypast by aircraft, Para drop, Para motors, Micro Light Flying and many more, will be the main attractions. The festival will be held from September 3 to 5 every day from 10 am to 6 pm. Entry to the festival does not require any tickets or passes and is free for all citizens. This is a unique opportunity for the people of Lucknow to witness the might of the Armed Forces. Live displays

**CLASSIFIEDS**

### NOTICE

I hereby declare that in my Passport my name is wrongly registered as SURESH CHANDRA while in my Aadhar Card and Pan Card my name is registered as SURESH CHANDRA ARYA which is correct. Hence, from now in my all documents my correct name SURESH CHANDRA ARYA will be written and known. Suresh Chandra Arya S/O Bhagwat Ram R/O 319A, Kripa Bhawan, Vijay Laxmi Nagar, Near Punjabi Dharmshala, Arya Nagar, Sitapur (U.P.)

### NOTICE

Due to mistake in my Passport No. N-2818029, my Mother's Name written as Madhu Bajpai, where as her correct name is madhu Bajaj. Please correct accordingly. Radhika Agrawal W/o Arpit Agrawal, A-19 Flat no. 201, Mirai Residence, Niralanagar, Lucknow

### NOTICE

I Have Changed My Name From Riyaj Ahmad Minhaj Ahmad to Riyaj Ahmad. In Future I shall be Known as Riyaj Ahmad. Riyaj Ahmad s/o Late Minhaj Ahmad, 110/11, J.K. Colony, Jajmau, Kanpur-208010

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from SAAD HASHAN to SAAD HASAN C/O MOHAMMAD TAHIR for all future purpose R/o H.No.95/25 FARRASH KHANA HALEEM COMPOUND PARADE, Kanpur Nagar

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from Paras Kumar To Paras Kumar Singh S/o Sunder Lal Singh R/o I-102, World Bank Barra Kanpur Nagar 208027

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from MOHAMMAD JAFAR AHMAD to ZAFAR AHMAD C/O GULAM GHOUH for all future purpose R/o H.No. 63 MEERPUR CANTT RAASI WALI MASJID , Kanpur Nagar.

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from SAFIYA BEGUM to SAFIA BEGUM W/o MODH. IRFAN. R/o 133/410 Dhakna Purwa, Kanpur Nagar. 208023, I would be known & recognise by this name only.

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from Amarjeet Singh Bhatia to Amarjeet Singh. Amarjeet Singh S/o Balbir Singh 111A/155 Ashok Nagar Kanpur

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from BADRUN NISA to BADRUN NISHA W/o MOHAMMAD ILIYAS for all future purpose R/o H.No.116/930 ROSHAN NAGAR RAWATPUR GAON , Kanpur Nagar.

### NOTICE

I inform that wrong Spelling Dhruv Kumar Ahuja is printed in Diploma, Certificate No. 272 of year 1966. I declare that Dhruv Kumar Ahuja and Dhruv Kumar Ahuja are one. It is known as Dhruv Kumar Ahuja 122/730 Shastri Nagar Kanpur

### NOTICE

In some of my records, my name has been erroneously mentioned as Mohammad Alfahad instead of Alfahad Ahmad. In future I may be known as Alfahad Ahmad S/O Fareed Ahmad 652/67 Sector C, Kursi Road, Aliganj, Lucknow.

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### सूचना

सूचित हो कि मैंने अपना नाम हेमन्त वर्मा से बदलकर हेमन्त कुमार वर्मा रख लिया है। भविष्य में मुझे हेमन्त कुमार वर्मा के नाम से जाना पहचाना जाये। हेमन्त कुमार वर्मा पुत्र श्री नारायण वर्मा, 126/78 बी, एच- ब्लॉक, गोविन्द नगर कानपुर - 208006

# Govt to install street lights in villages near tiger reserves

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

In a novel initiative to protect villagers from wild animals at night, the Uttar Pradesh government is installing street lights in sensitive villages surrounding the Dudhwa, Pilibhit, Amargarh and Ranipur tiger reserves. This effort is being supported by a memorandum of understanding between the state government and Bharat Cares, which is managing the installation of the street lights through its CSR fund. The street lights are being provided by Signify. Installation work has already begun in the highly sensitive villages near the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, with marking and survey work underway in other areas. This initiative by the Yogi Adityanath government is expected to significantly reduce conflicts with wild animals entering the villages at night and enhance overall security. Street lights are being installed in the highly sensitive villages near the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve to address human-wildlife conflicts, particularly with animals such as tigers and leopards. Divisional Forest Officer at

Pilibhit, Manish Singh, stated that this initiative began on August 12, funded by Bharat Cares' CSR contributions. "Over 200 street lights have been installed across 50 villages, and the installation of more than 750 additional lights is progressing rapidly," he said. Manish Singh further explained that streetlights are being installed in villages like Pandri, Bhairon, Goyal Colony, Mala Colony, Jamunia and Mandari. To date, more than 16 lights have been installed in Mandari, and work in other areas is also progressing fast, he remarked. LED street lights will be installed in over 60 villages near the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. Additional Chief Forest Conservator Lalit Kumar Verma stated that the company has opted to use solar lights for this project. Surveys are currently underway in villages such as Udhav Nagar, Bashi, Ashok Nagar, Semri, Dharmapur, Amba, Jhala, Golbojhi, Pachpeda, Khambhari, and Raghunagar. The company will soon begin survey work in more than 20 additional villages, including Sakrauha, Kamarha, Elha and Sakra, which are also highly

sensitive due to human-wildlife conflicts near the Ranipur Tiger Reserve. Following the surveys, installation of the street lights will commence shortly. This initiative aims to prevent wild animals from entering the villages at night and to enhance the safety of the residents. A survey will be conducted to determine the locations for installing street lights in 20 highly sensitive villages near the Amargarh Tiger Reserve. The villages will include Rehad, Fatehpur Dhara, Rani Nangal, Muraliwalwa and Jamunwala. Rajat Singh, senior project associate at Bharat Cares, which is overseeing the street light installation funded by CSR, stated, "An MoU was signed with the UP government last month for this initiative. Under this agreement, LED lights will be installed in over 100 forest villages, with solar lights added as needed. Currently, under the Har Ghar Roshan scheme, lights are being installed in Pilibhit. These lights are being provided by Signify. After completing the marking and survey, installations will proceed in the villages around Amargarh and Dudhwa."

# CM keeps a close watch on Operation Bhediya, forest minister visits victims

**Lucknow (PNS):** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is closely monitoring Operation Bhediya in Bahraich. Following his directives, Forest and Environment Minister Dr Arun Kumar Saxena visited Bahraich on Wednesday and held discussions with local public representatives and officials. During his visit to several villages, the minister reassured residents that the forest department was working tirelessly to capture the wolves and ensure their safety. The department is utilising drone mapping for enhanced security and deploying thermal drones to aid in capturing the wolves. Recently, the district administration has provided an ex gratia payment of Rs 5 lakh each to the dependents of four deceased individuals. Payments to the families of the remaining victims will be processed soon. Following Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's instructions, the forest minister visited Bahraich and went to the villages that have been attacked by wolves. He engaged with affected families and local residents. Saxena assured the locals that the department is fully alert and making every effort to capture the three remaining wolves. He urged the community to avoid

sleeping outside at night, keep children indoors, and ensure doors are securely locked. He also advised going out in groups and carrying sticks for protection until the wolves are apprehended. Alongside the forest minister, Principal Chief Forest Conservator and head of department Sudhir Kumar Sharma and Principal Chief Forest

Conservator (Wildlife) Sanjay Srivastava were present on-site. Principal Chief Forest Conservator (Wildlife) Sanjay Srivastava stated, "We have deployed 16 teams to capture the wolves, and 12 district-level officers are also stationed here. Additional Principal Chief Forest Conservator Renu Singh will remain on site until the remaining wolves are captured.

# Gold worth Rs 2 crore looted from jeweller's shop in Sultanpur

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

In a sensational broad daylight loot, five masked men stormed a jewellery store at Chowk Clock Tower in Sultanpur and looted gold jewellery worth Rs 2 crore and Ts 5 lakh in cash at gunpoint on Wednesday. The robbers swiftly filled two bags with jewellery before escaping the scene. CCTV footage of the incident has surfaced, capturing the entire heist as the miscreants executed the brazen act. Local authorities, led by Superintendent of Police Somen Burma have reviewed the footage and assured the public that efforts are underway to apprehend the culprits. IG Ayodhya Range, Praveen Kumar, also visited the spot and claimed that besides the Crime Branch, Special Operation Group, five more teams have also been formed to track down the criminals involved in the incident and arrest them.

He said the police had got 10 vital clues and hoped to arrest the culprits and recover the entire looted jewellery. According to reports, a jewellery market, Sonar Mandi, is situated in Majorganj area, barely 100 metres away from Kotwali, from where local jewellers purchase ornaments. Bharat Soni also owns Bharatji Jewellers in the market. At about 10 am on Wednesday, Soni reached the shop along with his son and opened it. Two customers later reached the shop and Bharat's son started showing them jewellery. The CCTV footage showed that around noon, one youth with his face covered entered the shop and immediately took Bharat Soni at gun-point. Later one more miscreant entered the shop with a black bag followed by three more and they took all others in the shop at gun-point and warned them, saying they would kill anyone who raised an alarm. While two miscreants had

covered their faces with cloth, the other three were wearing helmets. While two remained with pistols in their hands, the other three started to stash the ornaments and cash kept in the shop in the bag. The speed at which they looted the shop indicated that they were aware of all the lockers of the shop. Within just 5 to 7 minutes they looted raw gold and jewellery along with Rs 5 lakh in cash and escaped from the spot. They were seen fleeing on two motorcycles in the CCTV footage installed outside the shop and in other adjoining showrooms in the market. They probably fled towards Pratapgarh. The news of the loot spread like a wildfire and within no time, all jewellery traders reached Bharat Soni's shop and demanded arrest of the miscreants. Soon after learning about the loot, senior officers sealed the city boundaries and Circle Officer (City) Shivam Mishra

and Station House Officer (City Kotwali) AK Dwivedi reached the spot followed by SP Sultanpur, Somen Verma and ASP Arun Chandra. They also summoned sniffer dogs to get some clues but failed. The forensic team also visited the spot. The cops collected the names of all the present and past staff of the shop, including those working in adjacent shops, and are examining whether they could have provided the inputs leading to loot. Presidents of the Sultanpur Jewellers' Association, Devi Prasad Soni, also reached the spot and raised the issue of safety of the members of the community and the manner in which the miscreants executed the crime in the heart of the city that too during the busy hours. He claimed that in September 2023, a similar loot took place in Baba Bhushan Jewellers owned by Abhinav Seth which was also recorded in CCTV, but the police failed to work it out.

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**APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE**  
(For Immovable Property)

Whereas, undersigned being the Authorised Officer of KARNATAKA BANK LIMITED, under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest [Act], 2002(54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with [rule 3] of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notice dated 31.07.2023 calling upon the borrower/ mortgagor/ guarantors : (1) Mrs. Kanak Gupta W/o Mr. Shailesh Kumar Gupta, (2) Mr. Yash Gupta S/o Mr. Shailesh Kumar Gupta, Both No. (1) to (2) are residing at: House No.74, Khasra No.49, Rameshwaram Group, Janki Vihar Jankipuram, Lucknow-226021, (3) Mr. Shailesh Kumar Gupta S/o Mr. Krishna Kumar Gupta, residing at: 1/1237, Sector-J, Jankipuram Vojna, Jankipuram, Lucknow-226021, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 58,27,715.07 [Rupees Fifty Eight Lakhs Twenty Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Fifteen and Paise Seven Only] i.e. (i) Rs.25,96,088.79 under Overdraft Loan Account No. 5947001600000801 along with future interest from 01.08.2023, (ii) Rs. 18,68,219.28 under Term Loan Account No. 5947001600000801 along with future interest from 03.07.2023, (iii) Rs.13,63,407.00 under Term Loan Account No. 5947001600001101 along with future interest from 10.07.2023, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers, mortgagors and the guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, mortgagors, guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken the Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of the powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest Enforcement, Rules 2002 on this the 27<sup>th</sup> Day of August of the year 2024.

The borrowers, the mortgagors and the guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property mentioned herein below and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Karnataka Bank Limited, Lucknow Gontli Nagar Branch for an amount of Rs. 54,06,423.07 [Rupees Fifty Eight Lakhs Twenty Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Fifteen and Paise Seven Only] i.e. (i) Rs.26,22,856.79 under Overdraft Loan Account No. 5947001600000801 along with future interest from 01.08.2024, (ii) Rs.16,95,106.28 under Term Loan Account No. 5947001600000801 along with future interest from 03.08.2024, (iii) Rs.10,88,460.00 under Term Loan Account No. 5947001600001101 along with future interest from 10.08.2024, Plus costs.

[The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.]

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

All that part and parcel of Residential house, constructed on Plot No.74, part of Khasra No. 49, land measuring 178.903 Square meters, building measuring 395 Square meters, consisting of Ground Floor, First Floor and Second Floor, situated at Rampur Nisaf, Rameshwaram Group Janki Vihar Ward- Jankipuram, Pargana, Tehsil & District Lucknow, belonging to Mrs. Kanak Gupta Boundaries: East : House Over Plot No.74 of Shri Vinod Mishra West : House of Shri Anoop Kumar North : 25ft wide Road South : Plot of Others

Sd/-  
Place : Lucknow  
Date : 27.08.2024

For Karnataka Bank Ltd  
Chief Manager & Authorised Officer

# Cong, SP driven by Jinnah's spirit, attempting to divide society: Yogi

PNS ■ ALIGARH/LUCKNOW

In a sharp criticism of the Opposition, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claimed on Wednesday that the Congress and Samajwadi Party, driven by Jinnah's spirit, are attempting to divide society in the same manner.

Speaking at a district-level mega employment fair in Aligarh, the chief minister remarked, "Jinnah committed the grave sin of dividing the nation, which led to his suffocating demise. Congress and SP are committing a similar sin by dividing society."

During the event, Chief Minister Yogi distributed appointment letters to the youth and inaugurated as well as laid the foundation stones for 305 projects worth ₹705 crore. He further stated that as the country reaches new milestones in development, some people are working to fragment society. "Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014, the nation has been advancing. Meanwhile, the opposition is fostering anarchy by sowing seeds of caste discord in society," he said.

Targeting the SP, Yogi remarked, "Those who achieved nothing during their tenure and were known only for their 'kaarname' (misdeeds), are unsettled by the rule of law in the state. These are the same SP individuals who once justified misconduct with the excuse 'ladke hain, aur ladkon se galti ho jaati hai' (they are boys and boys make mistakes). They were responsible for compromising the safety of their daughters."

The chief minister asserted that in the double-engine government, "those who jeopardise the safety of daughters and businessmen face a path to 'Yamlok'".

He criticised SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, saying he has no right to comment on women's safety. "His silence on incidents in Ayodhya, Kannauj and Kolkata speaks volumes," Yogi said. Chief Minister Yogi criticised the Congress, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party for undermining social cohesion whenever they were in power. He accused them of using appeasement strategies to divert society from the path of development.

Emphasising that under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, India is on track to become the world's largest economy, Yogi



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath conducts 'Annaprashan' of a child during a programme in Aligarh on Wednesday. PTI

stated, "Congress has disrespected national heroes such as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Maharaja Mahendra Pratap Singh. "The BJP is dedicated to honouring these great figures, as evidenced by the university established in Maharaja Mahendra Pratap Singh's name," he said.

He criticised Congress and the SP, accusing them of focusing solely on their "own interests". Yogi asserted that the double-engine government practices non-discrimination and will not tolerate anarchy, disorder or hooliganism. Chief Minister Yogi noted that prior to 2017, Uttar Pradesh was grappling with an identity crisis.

"Today, UP is recognised as one of the leading states in the country. Therefore, we must ensure that this progress continues, as the Samajwadi Party, if given the chance, would bring about riots, looting and anarchy," he said.

He emphasised that development is indispensable and employment naturally follows from it, with security being its cornerstone. "Good governance cannot be achieved without security," he added.

Chief Minister Yogi highlighted that employment fairs, inspired by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, are being held across the state, providing youth with opportunities in the private sector.

Meanwhile, Basic Education Minister Sandeep Singh asserted that the Bharatiya Janata Party is committed to a robust agenda of development, contrasting this with the SP, INDI Alliance, and the entire opposition, which, he claimed, engage in destructive propaganda.

He emphasised that only the BJP can honour Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar and safeguard the Constitution he crafted. The minister noted that Chief Minister Yogi is guiding the younger generation and attributed the current sense of security among Uttar Pradesh's youth to his vision.

He also mentioned that development projects are in progress in the Aligarh region and will continue.

At the event, Chief Minister Yogi performed the 'annaprashan' ceremony for two infants. He also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 305 projects totaling ₹ 705 crore, aimed at advancing the overall development of Aligarh district.

Additionally, during this district-level mega Rozgar Mela, over 63 companies and firms issued appointment letters to more than 5,000 youth across

various positions. Loans exceeding Rs 35 crore were granted to eligible individuals and MSME units through various schemes. Moreover, tablets and smartphones were distributed to over 1,500 students under the Swami Vivekananda Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana.

Under the Yogi government, over six and a half lakh youth have secured government jobs in the past seven and a half years. Additionally, more than 3.75 lakh youth have been connected to employment through contracts. The private sector and MSMEs have provided jobs to two crore people. Furthermore, loans exceeding Rs 1.08 lakh crore have been distributed to the state's youth through various schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Swarojgar Yojana, Mudra Yojana, Startup, ODOP, MSME and Mukhyamantri Swarojgar Yojana.

Cane Development Minister Chaudhary Laxmi Narayan, Basic Education Minister Sandeep Singh, Skill Development and Vocational Education Minister Kapil Dev Agarwal, MP Satish Gautam, Anoop Pradhan, MLA Jaiveer Singh, Ravindra Pal Singh, Rajkumar Sahayogi, Anil Prasad and other dignitaries were present with Chief Minister Yogi in the programme.

## 2 UP teachers selected for national award

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two teachers from council schools in Pratapgarh and Mirzapur districts have been selected for the prestigious National Teacher Award-2024. On Teachers' Day, September 5, they will be honoured at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. The selected teachers are Shyam Prakash Maurya from Upper Primary School Malhurpur, Mandhata block, Pratapgarh and Ravikant Dwivedi from Primary School Bhagesar, Mirzapur.

It is worth mentioning here that the Union Education Ministry has announced the names of 50 teachers nationwide for this award. Each awardee will receive ₹50,000 in cash, a silver medal and a certificate of recognition.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has actively encouraged innovative teaching methods in the state's education sector. His efforts include promoting online education in council schools and making curricula available through various apps. Besides, teachers who adopt new and creative teaching techniques are recognised and promoted as role models to inspire their peers.

Shyam Prakash Maurya, a teacher at Upper Primary School in Malhurpur, Mandhata block, Pratapgarh district, uses PowerPoint presentations and modern technology through projectors to teach council school students in a way that makes learning easy and engaging.

In 2022, he established an online group to motivate students across the district to participate in the National Income-Based Examination. As a result, 785 students have been selected for scholarships totaling ₹3.76 crore.

Similarly, Ravikant Dwivedi, the headmaster of Primary School Bhagesar in Mirzapur, gained popularity for his innovative 'Mathematics Garden'. He has introduced various modern technologies, including the Maths Garden and digital classrooms, to provide excellent education to his students.

This prestigious award is given to teachers across the country who have demonstrated exceptional commitment and hard work in improving the quality of school education and have enriched their students' academic and practical lives with strong moral values.

## Govt to promote 'Brand UP' at 5 major airports in India to boost tourism

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government, in a bid to position the state as the country's most favoured tourism destination, is set to promote the state's tourist hotspots at major airports across India.

Uttar Pradesh's tourist destinations are already being showcased at various railway stations, bus terminals, airports and high-traffic locations within the state. Now, this initiative is expanding to include major airports across the country.

In line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision, preparations have been made to promote 'Brand UP' at five major airports in India initially, with plans for further expansion as needed.

Under this scheme, 'Brand UP' will be highlighted through large display boards at strategic locations in airports, including the arrival and departure areas of both international and domestic terminals in Delhi and Mumbai. These displays will provide information on the diverse tourist attractions and the vibrant tourism landscape of Uttar Pradesh.

Similar promotional efforts for 'Brand UP' will also be prioritised at various terminals in Kolkata, Coimbatore and Indore. The Uttar Pradesh

Tourism Department has already initiated this process, with preparations underway for its swift implementation. Uttar Pradesh is renowned both nationally and internationally for its rich and diverse culture, as well as its numerous events and festivals. In line with this, the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department is actively promoting the state's vibrant cities, attractions, natural landscapes, wildlife, adventure tourism destinations, cuisine, heritage, religion and culture through various branding initiatives, aiming to establish the state as a top tourist destination in India.

Tourism plays a crucial role in the economic growth of Uttar Pradesh, significantly contributing to employment generation both directly and indirectly. This sector is also vital to the state's goal of becoming a trillion-dollar economy. Recognising the importance of tourism, the Yogi government has already designated it as a priority sector. Following Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision, this initiative is being advanced as a strategic and organised effort to unlock the sector's vast potential and transform Uttar Pradesh into a major tourist hub. In line with Chief Minister Yogi's vision, 60 display systems of various types will be installed

and operated at both the T3 domestic arrival terminal and the T3 domestic departure terminal. Additionally, 40 and 25 display systems will be set up at the T3 international arrival and departure terminals, respectively. The T2 domestic arrival and departure areas will feature 28 display systems, while the T1 domestic departure terminal will have 32 display systems.

Similarly, 15 display systems will be installed at the domestic arrival terminal of Kolkata airport, with an additional 58 screens placed in various designated areas, including the departure terminal. At Coimbatore airport, a total of 20 display systems will be installed and operated across the arrival, baggage claim, departure areas, SHA hall, and the first floor. In Indore, 36 display screens will be set up at the departure and arrival terminals, bus gate, and rental areas.

In Mumbai, 'Brand UP' will be promoted through 56 display systems at the T2 domestic and international arrival terminals, 58 at the domestic departure terminal, and 40 at the international departure terminal. The Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department has initiated the process of appointing and allocating an agency to complete all these installations.

## Akhilesh criticises renaming of railway stations, BJP hits back

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party government over the renaming exercise and said it should instead focus on improving the condition of railway stations and preventing train accidents.

The Railway Ministry officially renamed eight railway stations in Amethi falling in the Lucknow division of Northern Railways after saints and freedom fighters on Tuesday.

In his post on X (formerly Twitter), Yadav wrote, "And when you get free time from changing names, then take some time out and think about preventing record-breaking railway accidents." The renaming proposal was initially sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs by Amethi's former MP Smriti Irani in February. The MHA gave its approval in March, leading to the changes in the name.

The BJP termed the criticism by Akhilesh Yadav as "colonial slavery". "Akhilesh Yadav hates the

renaming of the railway stations after the icons of the Bahujan samaj and renaming is unacceptable to the SP chief as his politics is rooted in religious appeasement," said BJP spokesman Rakesh Tripathi adding, "Akhilesh Yadav as chief minister renamed Shahuji Maharaj Medical College as King George's Medical College, Lucknow."

According to an order issued by the Northern Railways, Kasimpur halt railway station will now be known as Jais City railway station, Jais as Guru Gorakhnath Dham, Misrauli as Maa Kalikan Dham and Bani as Swami Paramhans. Similarly, the name of Nihalgarh railway station was changed to Maharaja Bijli Pasi, Akbarganj to Maa Ahorwa Bhawani Dham, Warisganj to Amar Shahid Bhale Sultan, and Fursatganj to Tapeswarnath Dham.

The stations were renamed after a demand was made by former Amethi MP Smriti Irani to preserve the cultural identity and heritage of the place. Irani made

the announcement regarding the change of names on social media in March.

The Kasimpur halt station was named after Kasimpur village which is quite far away. Therefore, Jais City was proposed as the new name. As the prominent Guru Gorakhnath Dham ashram is near the Jais station, it was proposed that the station be renamed after the ashram, Tripathi said.

Official sources said there were several temples of Lord Shiva and Goddess Kali near Misrauli, Bani, Akbarganj and Fursatganj railway stations and they were renamed accordingly. The Nihalgarh station is located in an area that has a sizable population of Pasis who are mostly farmers. Hence, it was renamed after Maharaja Bijli Pasi, a king from the community.

Warisganj is known for the bravery of Bhale Sultan who fought against the British in 1857 and the station was renamed after him, the BJP spokesman said.

## UP no longer safe for women, CM Yogi must resign: Cong

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Congress on Wednesday attacked the Yogi Adityanath government over the law and order front, claiming that Uttar Pradesh is no longer safe for girls and women. The grand old party also questioned the government's 'haste' in disposing of the bodies of the two minor Dalit girls who were found hanging from a tree in Farrukhabad on Tuesday morning. The party also demanded the resignation of CM Yogi Adityanath.

Taking on the Uttar Pradesh government stand over declaring the death of two Dalit girls as "suicide" before clearing the suspicions of the victims' father that the two were murdered, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra asked, "Why does a father have to raise these questions after such a horrific incident? Doesn't a victim's father have the right to know the truth about the treatment meted out to his daughter? Why was the administration in a hurry to cremate the bodies of the girls?" Priyanka said the administration's attitude towards the incident and what happened with two Dalit girls in Farrukhabad raised many questions. "Be it Hathras, Unnao or Farrukhabad, the same cruel story is repeated everywhere. So should the Dalits, backward, deprived, poor, women, or whoever is weak, give up hope of justice now?" Priyanka asked.

Expressing grief over the incident, UPCC president and former minister Ajay Rai said that Uttar Pradesh was no longer safe for sisters and daughters. "Serious crimes against women are being committed every day. Just a few days ago, a Dalit girl was raped and murdered in Agra, a Dalit girl was gang-raped in Hamirpur, a minor girl was gang-raped in a

## Schoolgirls suspected to have committed suicide

Lucknow (PNS): Close on the heels of two Dalit girls found hanging from a tree in Farrukhabad, in yet another tragic incident in Mainpuri, two schoolgirls, Anshika and Divya, from the same village, died under suspicious circumstances after consuming poison. The incident occurred in Kuralwali police station's jurisdiction, in the village of Kalyanpur.

The victims, Anshika (16), daughter of Devendra Yadav, and Divya (17), daughter of Kunwar Singh, returned home from their college in Etah on Tuesday evening and they suddenly fell ill. Their family rushed them to the hospital, where they were pronounced dead. Initial medical examination suggested poisoning as the cause of death. The post-mortem reports confirmed that both girls had ingested the same type of poison. The specific nature of the poison is still unknown, as the viscera samples have been sent for further

analysis. The final report will help determine the exact type of poison involved.

The police are investigating the case, which has raised several questions. Notably, Anshika had written "This is the last day of my life" on her hand, indicating a possible suicidal intent. However, the motive behind Divya's presence in the incident remains unclear. The police are exploring whether both girls made a joint decision or if other factors were involved.

According to reports, the girls had gone to college together as usual and had eaten their lunch at the college. Their tiffin boxes were found empty, ruling out any link between their meals and their deaths. It is believed that they may have taken the fatal step shortly after alighting from the bus. Superintendent of Police Vinod Kumar has assured that the matter is being taken seriously and a thorough investigation is underway to uncover the reasons behind this tragic decision.

moving car in Jhansi, a woman was brutally beheaded in Bareilly, a 2-year-old innocent girl was raped and murdered in Meerut, a 4-year-old girl was raped in Ayodhya and many more such incidents. The truth is that Uttar Pradesh has now become a crime state. The situation has become horrific for women. Criminals are roaming around fearlessly and sisters and daughters are sitting scared within the four walls of their homes," the UPCC chief said. "Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath only knows how to

spread religious hatred, sow hatred, reap it, but when it comes to law and order, he remains silent," Rai said, adding that as per NCRB data, out of all the crimes against women in the whole of India, 114 happen in UP alone. Rai said that taking moral responsibility for the deteriorating law and order situation in the state and especially for the heinous crimes against women which were increasing day by day, CM Yogi should immediately resign from his post.

## Cong: BJP wants to 'stifle' digital media through new policy

Lucknow (PNS): Uttar Pradesh Congress targeted the Yogi Adityanath government over the new Digital Media Policy-2024, alleging that the UP government wanted to "stifle" digital media.

The party asked whether the double-engine government of the Bharatiya Janata Party was attacking freedom of expression.

UP Congress tweeted, "The UP government has come up with a new scheme for social media influencers. According to this, those who promote the work of the government can get up to Rs 8 lakh per month and those who oppose them may also have to face punishment. That is, open occupation of digital media. The government has now set out to adopt the media openly without any fear or hesitation. If this is not a threat to democracy, then what is it?"

Congress leader Pawan Khara said, "Will anti-BJP or anti-government comments be considered anti-national? What is the definition of objectionable comment? Are the double-engine governments now preparing to strangle freedom of expression? Due to the opposition of the INDIA bloc, the Narendra Modi government had to withdraw the Broadcast Bill, 2024. Is dictatorship being brought in through the backdoor now?" It may be mentioned that the digital media policy of the UP government cleared by the cabinet on Tuesday has been prepared to reach out to the public welfare schemes of development to the public through social media. There will be encouragement to post the schemes and achievements of the state government on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.



Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav presents a 'chadar' to State General Secretary and MLA Ataur Rahman Sahib ahead of the three-day Urs of Aala Hazrat Imam Ahmed Raza Khan in Lucknow on Wednesday. PTI

## Woman murdered by live-in partner

PTI ■ BAREILLY

A 22-year-old mother of two was allegedly murdered by her live-in partner in Bareilly district following an argument over a delay in their marriage, officials said on Wednesday. Police have taken the accused into custody.

According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP/City) Rahul Bhati, Aasia was initially married to Nafees from Raza Colony in the Kila area of the city. "However, Aasia reportedly developed a relationship with Parvez, a juice seller from Navdia in the Kila police station area who was known to Nafees. Approximately three months ago, Aasia left Nafees and

began living with Parvez," he said. Bhati said Parvez's mother opposed the marriage, leading to a dispute between Aasia and Parvez on Tuesday. Aasia had two daughters with her husband.

Aasia's brother Hasnain alleged that Parvez had promised to marry Aasia but had been delaying the commitment for the past three months, he said.

"On Tuesday evening, Aasia's family received a phone call informing them that Aasia's health had deteriorated. Upon reaching Parvez's residence, they found Aasia's body hanging from a noose. Parvez claimed he had gone to attend a Chehlum event, and upon his return, he found Aasia's

body," the SP said. The police have taken Parvez into custody and sent Aasia's body for post-mortem examination, Bhati said, adding that further investigation in the case is on.

**GIRL ENDS LIFE AFTER BEING GANGRAPE:** A 13-year-old girl died by self-immolation a day after she was allegedly gang-raped at a sugarcane field, police said on Wednesday.

According to a first information report (FIR) lodged by victim's father, the incident occurred at the village in the Bhojipura area here on Monday. He told the police that his daughter had gone to the field to dry clothes when two men — Ankit and Pankaj — allegedly caught her,

dragged her to a sugarcane field and gang-raped her.

The accused fled after the girl's sister reached there on hearing her screams, according to the FIR.

The father further told the police that his daughter immolated herself on Tuesday and was rushed to a hospital but she could not be saved. An FIR has been registered in the matter and one accused has been arrested while hunt is on to nab the other, Additional Superintendent of Police (Rural) Mukesh Chandra Mishra said.

The body of the girl has been sent for a post-mortem examination. The girl was a student of class VIII. A detailed probe has been started, Mishra added.

# Heavy rain causes waterlogging in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Heavy rain, especially in the midnight and wee hours on Wednesday, badly affected life causing waterlogging in many city areas. Till 8 am the city received 77.2 mm rain. Due to lightning, several houses were damaged. In Ajgara area, the roof of Rajesh Kumar Yadav's house was hit by lightning which damaged a television set and other electronics and electrical equipment.



Rain causes waterlogging in an area in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Rain also caused a rising trend in the Ganga here for the fifth time during this rainy season, posing problems to devotees, especially the morning bathers. Due to waterlogging and continuous rain, the passengers faced huge inconveniences when the vehicles, especially three and two wheelers were stranded while going to catch trains in the morning hours. Several trains, especially for Lucknow, Chapra, Gorakhpur, Prayagraj, Patna and other places depart from Varanasi

Junction (Cantt), Banaras and Varanasi City stations in the wee hours. Three intercity-like trains leave for Lucknow via Sultanpur, Pratnagarh and Ayodhya daily in the morning. Besides, rain also hit the flight services. As per the report from Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Babatpur, the flights 6E2211 from Delhi, IX1642 from Bengaluru, SG491 from

Ahmedabad, 6E897 from Bengaluru and QP1498 from Mumbai arrived late. The rain brought down the temperature sharply. Rain left several localities, including Andhrapul, Teliabagh, Mahmooorganj, Sigra, Nagwa, Samneghat, Dashashwamedh, Godowlia, Luxa, Nai Sarak and the roads of many other markets and colonies waterlogged. Rain water entered several shops

and houses in Englishia Line, Shivpurva and many other areas. Power supply in some parts of the city was also disrupted badly.

Meanwhile, as per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC), the water level of Ganga has started rising again after several days of receding trend. Though the Ganga is still flowing at a high level, it continues to pose a flood threat in several low-lying areas increasing the worries of the residents of several localities on both sides of river Varuna and some newly-developed colonies near Samne Ghat in the southern part of the city. Though the water level is increasing 50 mm per hour, the river was recorded at 66.72 metres at 8 am on Wednesday against the warning level of 70.262 metres. Whenever the Ganga crosses 69 metres mark, the Varuna river starts reverse flow from its confluence point near Adi Keshav Ghat in the northern part of the city. Besides, as the

Ganga is still at a high level and the water level of Gomti river continued to rise at upstream Jaunpur, the worries of the residents of four villages of Daab area surrounded by Ganga and Gomti rivers near their confluence at Kaithi village have increased. The Ganga was recorded rising at Varanasi as well as upstream at Prayagraj and Mirzapur while steady at upstream Phaphamau and downstream Ghazipur and Ballia. The situation of flood in Uttar Pradesh-Bihar border district of Purvanchal (eastern UP) Ballia remained grim as the river was inching close to the danger mark. It was recorded at 57.24 metres against the red mark of 57.615 metres and is expected that the level will be at 57.3 metres on Thursday morning. All-time high record in Ballia was reported at 60.39 metres on August 25, 2016. In downstream Ghazipur, the river was recorded at 60.23 metres against the warning level of 62.10 metres.

# CM Yogi to address public meeting in Kanpur today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Minister Yogi Aditya Nath will address a public meeting here at the Government Inter College ground, Chunniganj, on Thursday noon. At the same time, he will also unveil 145 projects worth Rs. 412.87 crore for the people. These include 91 projects of Kanpur Nagar Nigam (KNN) and 54 of other departments. He will also distribute laptop to students and meet 15



beneficiaries of different schemes. Meanwhile, preparations are in full swing at the GIC ground and its surrounding localities on Thursday. Seating arrangements have been made for about 50,000 people. Beneficiaries will be seated in separate blocks. Yogi will distribute laptop to students from the stage and felicitate 15 beneficiaries of different schemes. A Rozgaar Mela will also be organised there. Thereafter, Yogi will hold a meeting with the local public representatives and party office-bearers at the Merchants Chamber hall, Civil Lines. He will also take stock of the law and order at a review meeting to be held with the officials of

different departments, including district administration and police, at the Sarsaiya Ghat new auditorium. "All preparations are almost over. Strict vigil is being maintained on the entire route of the chief minister. Officials have been assigned the work with instructions to perform their best", said District Magistrate Rakesh Kumar Singh. **WOMAN COMMITS SUICIDE:** A woman committed suicide by hanging herself in Uchti village of Maharajpur police area late on Tuesday evening. Police sent the body for autopsy and started probe in the matter. Sita (22) was found hanging from the hook of her room's ceiling.

# MoU between POWERGRID & Vns admn for construction of community halls



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed at Vikas Bhawan between Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) and Varanasi district administration here on Wednesday, under which community halls/barat ghars (marriage house) will be constructed

in 15 gram panchayats. This project is an important milestone for the rural development of Varanasi. This project will not only improve the standard of living of the rural people but will also contribute to the overall development of the area. In the signing ceremony of this agreement, Senior General Manager (Varanasi) AK Rai was present on behalf of POWER-

GRID and Project Director of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Vinod Ram Tripathi. Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal and other senior officers were also present on the occasion. This project will be completed at a cost of ₹1185.90 lakh and POWERGRID will provide financial support for this project under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The construction work will be done by the agency appointed by the district administration and three gram panchayats of Kashi Vidyapeeth development block, six of Araziline and six of Sewapuri block will get the benefit of this project. This project is an important step for social development in rural areas. These new community halls and barat ghars will provide a better venue to the rural people for various social and cultural programmes. This will increase unity and harmony in rural communities.

# SSPO takes charge



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Newly appointed Senior Superintendent of Post Office (SSPO) Abhi Jain took charge at the main post office here on Wednesday. Jain has taken charge here after the transfer of Abhishek Srivastava, who was the Senior Superintendent of Post Office till now. After taking charge, all the postal officers and employees at the office welcomed the new SSPO Abhi Jain by presenting him a bouquet. This is the first posting of the newly appointed SSPO Abhi

Jain after completing his training. Jain is an IPOS of the 2021 batch. Originally from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, Jain held a meeting with the postal officers and employees of Prayagraj division as soon as he took charge and issued necessary guidelines to the postal officers and employees of the division. He said that while serving the public, achieving the target of departmental schemes will be top priority. Every customer coming to the post office is important for us and we are working in the Postal department to serve them. Special care should be taken so that the customers do not have to return disappointed under any circumstances. He said strict action will be taken against the postal employees who harass the customer. On the occasion all the officers of the Postal department, including Senior Postmaster Tanveer Ahmed, ASP Dilip Yadav, Rajneesh Srivastava, Gaurav Tripathi were present.

# Dr Romesh Soni of BHU receives award

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Dr Romesh Soni, Professor at the Dental department of Banaras Hindu University, received an award for the presentation of his research at the 13th International Academy of Oral Implantology. This conference was specifically attended by dental implantol-

ogists from India and abroad. It was held in Lucknow recently. Dr Romesh conducted research on conventional complete dentures and fixed dental implants. His study found that fixed dental implants improve chewing ability and increase blood circulation to the brain, enhancing the functionality of several brain

regions. Dr HC Baranwal, Dean (Faculty of Dental Sciences, IMS, BHU) mentioned that the increased activity in certain brain regions may reduce the risk of dementia in elderly individuals. Dr Romesh Soni stated that fixed dental implant teeth not only aid in chewing but are also beneficial for overall health.

# 14 PHCs nominated under NQAS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

For the first time, 14 Urban Primary Health Centres (PHCs) of Varanasi have been nominated under the National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) of the Government of India. In the district level evaluation done recently by the health officials, these 14 Urban PHCs have crossed the first assessment by getting more than 80 per cent marks. Soon the second and third (final) assessment of these urban PHCs will be completed. PHCs will get NQAS status if they perform better in the final assessment. CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said continuous efforts are being made by the department to strengthen the services and cleanliness provided at the community level health centres. The medical units that perform better in these facilities are awarded with the NQAS certificates. In this sequence, for the first time, he informed that 14 urban PHCs from Varanasi have been enrolled for the NQAS certification. "Emphasis is being laid on providing better medical and health facilities in urban health centres. For this, the entire staff, including the doctors, are being given regular training on maternal and child related services, adolescent health, communicable and non-communicable disease control, family welfare programme etc. They have been directed to feed data relative to the target on the 20th to 22nd of every month", he said. Besides, the CMO said emphasis has also been laid on cleanliness and hygiene at the PHC. The doctors and staff

have been directed to ensure that the patient gets the necessary treatment, medicine and consultation. He said the health services being provided at the urban PHCs are being observed under the supervision of nodal officer Dr Amit Singh and quality nodal officer Dr YB Pathak. This work is also being done at urban CHCs and they will also be enrolled soon, he added. Quality Assurance's Divisional Advisor Dr Tanveer Siddiqui said that it is a matter of happiness for the first time 14 urban PHCs of the district have been enrolled for NQAS. Now a second evaluation of all these urban PHCs will be done. Whichever PHC gets more than 70 per cent marks, its final evaluation will be done by the National Health Team, for which all the staff will be trained. If the final evaluation also scores more than 70 per cent then that urban PHC will become NQAS certified, which will be valid for the next three years. According to him, the 14 Urban PHCs are Shivpur, Cantonment, Townhall, Pandeypur, Jaitpura, Konia, Bajardiha, Bhetapur, Madanpura, Lalapur, Madhopur, Durgakund, Manduadhi and Orderly Bazar. Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have received better scores on the seven standards set by the Government of India such as Care in Pregnancy and Childbirth, Neonatal and Infant Health Services, Childhood and Adolescent Health Services, Family Planning, Management of Communicable Diseases, Management of Simple Illnesses Including Minor Elements and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases.

# Murder accused arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

With the arrest of the accused, police claimed to have worked out the murder of Abhishek Kushwaha alias Tanu who was killed for just ₹1 lakh. His friends had given him ₹1 lakh to him when he needed it. When asked to return Tanu was reluctant to do so. In such a situation, he was called for settlement and when the matter got worse, Tanu was killed.

Ali reached there, Aditya Malviya was sitting on the driver's seat in the car. Abhishek Kushwaha Tanu was also sitting next to him. Kallu was sitting on the back seat. Aditya Malviya asked him to sit in the back seat. Everyone reached Kallu's farm in Gadara village in Ghurpur area. Abhishek was asked to return the ₹1 lakh. He started refusing to give the money. This infuriated the accused. Akash alias Kallu Malviya's brother Aditya brought a stick. Everyone together beat him up. When he started becoming unconscious, they made him drink water and made him sit in the car. He was beaten up on the way and then they threw him near the garbage house and fled. Inspector Sanjay Kumar Dwivedi said that four cases are already registered against the arrested accused Mohammad Ali. A case under Gangsters Act has been registered against him at the Khuldabad police station in 2019.

make farming more sustainable, efficient, and productive. It is a multisensory IoT device strategically installed in farmlands, collecting real-time crop-specific atmospheric and soil parameter datasets. These datasets are then forwarded to a dedicated cloud server, where proprietary algorithms analyse them in reference to crop stage and microclimatic forecasts. The outcome provides valuable insights, including pest predictions and crop growth stage-specific actionable suggestions to farmers throughout the entire crop production cycle. NovosEdge innovative approach signifies in leveraging technology for the betterment of the agricultural industry. SHUATS Director IPC Prof Derrick M. Denis along with the team initiated talks with the company for the installation of the IoT and sensor based tower in the farm of SHUATS. The tower will receive real time data over their AgriDoot app and provide valuable suggestions to the farmers for soil health, irrigation, disease detection etc. The data will be communicated in multiple regional languages. Presently SHUATS is involved in providing 5G based technologies to start-ups so as to fine tune and validate their technology. This technology will be helpful to farmers all over the country. SHUATS professionals are providing the basic data sets for 158 agricultural products including cereals, fruits, vegetables and spices with the emphasis on promoting highly economical exotic variant of fruits and vegetables. This technology can be used by the farmers, FPOs, FPCs, government organisations, students, scientists and researchers all over the country and the world.

**SIGNED:** A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between SHUATS and NovosEdge, a start-up company founded by Shashwat Raj and Shashi Ranjan in the year 2023. It is an innovative agritech start-up focused on revolutionising agriculture through advanced IoT based solutions to enhance crop growth with high yield. AgriDoot, one of their flagship products offers farmers, data-driven insights, precision farming tools, and expert guidance to optimise crop production and enhance agricultural outcomes. This represents a paradigm shift in traditional agricultural practices, aiming to

# UPMASICON-2024 from tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Department of Surgery, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU), in association with Varanasi City Chapter of Association of Surgeons of India (ASI) is organising Midterm State Conference UPMASICON-2024 from August 30 to September 1 under the aegis of the UP Chapter of the Association of Surgeons of India. Addressing a press conference in Banaras Hindu University here on Tuesday, organising chairman Dr Puneet, co-organising chairman Dr Seema Khanna, secretary Dr SP Mishra and treasurer Dr RN Meena said that the conference will be attended by around 600 delegates from the country and abroad. They said on the first day, the video presentation of the surgical procedure will be demonstrated emphasising about the surgical skill and technique along with the post operative patient care. The resident doctors from various colleges will also present interesting surgical cases and eminent surgeons will discuss about their

investigative procedure and management. On the second day, they informed that the surgical lecture on the important surgical topics will be delivered by the eminent surgeons. On the same day, various orations will be delivered by the eminent surgeons from various part of the country.



IMS-BHU's Surgery department faculty members addressing a press conference in Varanasi

There will be some special guests like Dr Romeo Kansakar (president, Society of Surgeons of Nepal), Dr Prabin Thapa from Nepal, Dr Agni Gautam Shah from Nepal, Dr Sonam Deki from Bhutan, Dr Praveen Suryawanshi (vice president ASI), Dr G Siddesh and Dr SK Misra, both past presidents of ASI apart from EC members of ASI and UPASI. The various panel discussions of the important surgical topics will also be held by well-known surgeons on the second day, they added. On the third day, the panel discussions, lectures are planned. In this conference, the resident doctors from various parts of the country are also participating by presenting research articles and posters. The total number of research paper to be presented will be around 300. This conference will provide a platform to the young surgeons and residents to interact and exchange their knowledge, skill and technique for better patient care. This conference will also provide impetus to the young surgeons for newer research activities.

# Bike-borne milkman killed in accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A killed when a speeding truck knocked him down on Bhaunti highway under Sachendi police station area on Wednesday afternoon. The passers-by chased the truck for about one km away and caught hold of its driver. Police took the truck driver into custody and sent the body for autopsy. Jitendra (38) of Sheoli (Kanpur Dehat) was engaged in milk

supply. Running a mini dairy at home, he would daily visit Kanpur to supply milk on bike. On Wednesday after supplying milk when he was returning home the speeding truck hit him from behind on the Bhaunti highway. Jitendra fell on the street and succumbed to his serious head injury on the spot. After the incident, a massive jam prevailed on the highway. Passers-by caught hold of the fleeing truck and its driver

and handed them over to police. After sending the body for autopsy, police got the traffic restored after around one hour. On hearing about the incident, wife Sheila, son Viru, daughters Tanya and Khushi were upset. On seeing the body of her husband, Sheila fell unconscious. Meanwhile an auto driver was killed on being knocked by a truck on Kanpur-Etawah national highway under Sachendi police station area on

Tuesday afternoon. After the incident, irate kin staged massive agitation and blocked the highway which lasted for about one hour. Police pacified the situation. Vishnu Kamal (34) of Basai Naubasta, Sheoli (Kanpur dehat) was carrying the auto around 3.30 pm on Tuesday. In front of BPLC pump, a speeding uncontrolled truck knocked the auto from side. Eyewitness informed about the rash driving of the truck driver. As both the damaged vehicle

remained lying on the highway, massive jam prevailed there. Irate villagers and kin of the deceased also staged a protest and blocked the highway. After pacifying the issue, SO Pankaj Tyagi got the damaged vehicles removed from the highway with the help of a crane and restored the traffic. Meanwhile, people caught in the jam proceeded for destination through other route. He said on the basis of complaint, action will be initiated against the guilty.

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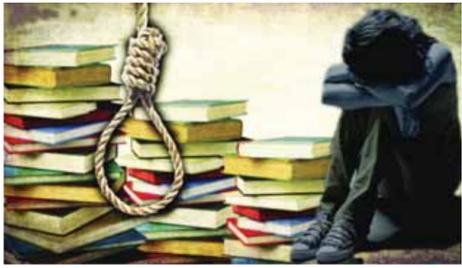
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# Suicide by students surges by 4 per cent annually: NCRB data

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Incidents of student suicides in India have grown at an alarming annual rate, surpassing the population growth rate and overall suicide trends, according to a new report. Based on the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, the "Student suicides: An epidemic sweeping India" report was launched on Wednesday at the Annual IC3 Conference and Expo 2024. The report pointed out that while the overall suicide numbers increased by 2 per cent annually, student suicides cases surged by 4 per cent, despite a likely "under reporting" of student suicide cases. "Over the past two decades, student suicides have grown at an alarming annual rate of 4 per cent, double the national average. In 2022, male students constituted 53 per cent of the total student suicides. Between 2021 and 2022, male student suicides decreased by 6 per cent while female student suicides increased by 7 per cent," noted the report compiled by IC3 Institute. "The incidence of student suicides continues to surpass both population growth rates and overall suicide trends. Over the last decade, while the population of 0-24-year-olds reduced from 582 million to 581 million, the



number of student suicides increased from 6,654 to 13,044," it added. The IC3 Institute is a volunteer-based organisation that provides support to high schools around the world through guidance and training resources for their administrators, teachers and counsellors to help establish and maintain robust career and college counselling departments. According to the report, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh are identified as the states with the highest number of student suicides, together accounting for one-third of the national total. Southern states and union territories collectively contribute 29 per cent of these cases, while Rajasthan, known for its high-stakes academic environment, ranks 10th, highlighting the intense pressure associated with coaching hubs like Kota.

"The data compiled by the NCRB is based on police-recorded first information reports (FIRs). However, it is important to acknowledge that the actual number of student suicides is likely underreported. This under-reporting can be attributed to several factors, including the social stigma surrounding suicide and the criminalisation of attempted and assisted suicide under Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code. Although the 2017 Mental Healthcare Act decriminalises suicide attempts for individuals with mental illness, the legacy of criminalisation continues to impact reporting practices, it said. "Moreover, there are significant data discrepancies due to the lack of a robust data collection system, particularly in rural areas, where reporting is less consistent compared to urban regions," it said.

Ganesh Kohli, the Founder of the IC3 Movement, said the report serves as a reminder of the urgent need to address mental health challenges within our learning institutions. "Our educational focus must shift to fostering the competencies of our learners such that it supports their overall well-being, versus pushing them to compete amongst each other. "It is imperative that we build a systematic, comprehensive, and robust career and college counselling system within each institution, while seamlessly integrating the same within the learning curriculum," he said. Additionally, the report noted a dramatic increase in student suicides, with male suicides rising by 50 per cent and female suicides by 61 per cent over the past decade. "Both genders have experienced an average annual increase of 5 per cent in the last five years. These alarming statistics underscore the critical need for enhanced counseling infrastructure and a deeper understanding of student aspirations. "Addressing these gaps is essential for shifting the focus from competitive pressures to nurturing core competencies and well-being, thereby supporting students more effectively and preventing such tragedies," the report said

# India to commission its 2nd indigenous nuclear-powered submarine INS Arighat today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a major boost to operation readiness and nuclear deterrence, India is likely to commission its second indigenously designed and manufactured nuclear powered submarine INS Arighat on Thursday. The first submarine INS Arihant was commissioned in 2016. As regards, INS Arighat, it was launched in 2017 at its manufacturing base, Ship Building Centre (SBC), Visakhapatnam. In fact, the SBC is building five nuclear powered submarines. While Arihant is already operational and Arighat to be commissioned on Thursday, work is now on the remaining two submarines. They are in advanced stage of construction, it was learnt. INS Arighat is 111.6 meters long and weighs 6,000 tonnes. It plays a crucial role in India's nuclear triad, enabling the nation to launch nuclear missiles from land, air, and sea. Powered by an 82.5 MW pressurized light water reactor developed with Russian assistance, INS Arighat can achieve a top speed of 24 knots submerged and 10 knots on the surface. Its primary armament consists of 12 K-15 Sagarika submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), each with a range exceeding 700 kilometers. These missiles are housed in four large vertical launch system (VLS) tubes



and are a testament to India's indigenous missile development capabilities. The submarine is divided into seven compartments, housing propulsion and combat management systems, a platform management center, and a torpedo room. Additional safety measures include two standby auxiliary engines and a retractable thruster for emergency power and mobility. INS Arighat follows in the footsteps of INS Arihant, India's first SSBN, which was commissioned in 2016. A third, yet-to-be-named SSBN was launched in 2021, further solidifying India's commitment to developing a credible sea-based nuclear deterrent. The commissioning of INS Arighat is expected to be attended by top defence, national security, and military officials. The Arihant class submarines, named after the Sanskrit word meaning 'Destroyer of the Enemy,' signify the strategic importance of nuclear-powered submarines. India is actively working on having five Arihant class boats along with six nuclear attack submarines to be built in three blocks.

# Cabinet approves three railway projects worth ₹6,456 crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved three railway projects with a total estimated cost of Rs 6,456 crore. According to a statement from the Ministry of Railways, the approved projects will improve logistical efficiency by connecting the unconnected areas, increase the existing line capacity and enhance the transportation networks, resulting in streamlined supply chains and accelerated economic growth. "The new line proposals will provide direct connectivity and improve mobility, providing enhanced efficiency and service reliability for the Indian Railways. The multi-tracking proposal will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much-required infrastructural development on the busiest sections across the Indian Railways," the ministry said. "The projects are in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of a New India which will make people of the region 'Atmanirbhar' by way of comprehensive development in the area which will enhance their employment/ self-employment opportunities," it added. According to the Ministry, the projects are result of PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity which have been possible through integrated planning



and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services. "The three projects covering seven districts in four states i.e., Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 300 kms," the Ministry said. "With these projects, 14 new stations will be constructed, providing enhanced connectivity to two aspirational districts (Nuapada and East Singhbhum)," it added. Highlighting the benefits of the new line projects, the ministry stated these will provide connectivity to approximately 1,300 villages and about 11 lakh population. "Multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity to approximately 1,300 villages and about 19 lakh population," it said. The Ministry also emphasized the benefits to the freight traffic as these are essential routes for transportation of commodities such as agriculture products, fertilizer, coal, iron ore, steel, cement and limestone etc. "The capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 45 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum)," the ministry said.

# IAF launches comic book to motivate youth to join force

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force on Wednesday launched a comic book telling the story of legendary IAF Marshal Arjan Singh and the epic Battle of Boyra fought during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, aiming to educate the youth about the glorious history of the force and motivate them to join it. The 32-page 'Heroes of the Indian Air Force - Vol. I' was released by IAF Chief Air Marshal V R Chaudhari at an event held at the Vayu Bhawan here. Arjan Singh, who fought in the Burma campaign during the World War II and the 1965 Indo-Pak war, was the IAF officer to be conferred the rank of the Marshal of the Indian Air Force and he had also earned the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) before Independence. The project conceived last year was led by DISHA (Directorate of Induction and Selection in a Holistic Approach) Cell of the IAF under Air Chief Marshal Chaudhari's vision. The medium of comic books was chosen to reach young minds especially those in schools and motivate them to take up career in the Indian Air Force, according to a video played at the launch event. The first volume has two stories -- 'Find Your Calling' which tells the tale of a boy named Arjan Singh who went on to become the first Marshal of the Indian Air Force; and 'Battle of Boyra' that narrates the story of the epic battle in the IAF's war history fought during the 1971 Indo-Pak war.



The stories with compelling visuals aim to foster among the children better appreciation for values of courage, motivation and perseverance, and to let them learn to walk in his footsteps, said a senior official. The second story has "adrenaline-pumping action sequences" seen through the pilot's eyes. "This air combat engagement was a significant engagement of the fighting prowess and valour of young pilots of No.22 Squadron, the Swifts, which earned the squadron the moniker Sabre Slayers," he said. The comic book's purpose is to educate young readers and depict heroics embodied in an air combat, the IAF official said. "For youngsters, it is a direct call to action," he said. A pdf version of the book will be launched online and it will be available for "free sharing" on social media, the official added. Air Force History Cell and the Air Force Museum played a key role in providing and vetting historical facts while the IAF's Directorate of Ceremonials ensured the uniform was correctly depicted as per the period described in the stories. This project aims to educate the youth about the glorious history of the IAF and motivate them to join the force, he said.

# PM Modi: PMJDY personifies dignity, empowerment as it marks 10th year

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana completed 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the scheme personifies dignity, empowerment and the opportunity to participate in the economic life of the Nation. Modi also hailed those who worked to make the Jan Dhan Yojana a success, and said the scheme has been paramount in boosting financial inclusion. "Today, we mark a

momentous occasion - #10YearsOfJanDhan. Congratulations to all the beneficiaries and compliments to all those who worked to make this scheme a success," the Prime Minister said in a social media post. The Jan Dhan Yojana has been paramount in boosting financial inclusion and giving dignity to crores of people, especially women, youth, and the marginalised communities, he said. Later, on a LinkedIn post, Modi said today marks a decade since the Pradhan

Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana was launched and for him, this initiative was more than just a policy it was an endeavour to build an India where each and every citizen, irrespective of one's economic background, has access to the formal banking apparatus. "Many of you, especially the youth, would be thinking -- why does this matter so much? After all, in this age, having a bank account would be very basic and even taken for granted. However, when we assumed office in 2014, the situation was very different. It



was almost 65 years since Independence, but access to banking was a distant dream for almost half of our households," the Prime Minister said. There was a world where savings were kept at home, vulnerable to loss and theft, he noted. "Access to credit was often at the mercy of predatory lenders. The

absence of financial security held back so many dreams," Modi said. "This problem becomes even more ironical considering the fact that four and a half decades ago, banks were nationalised by the then (Congress) Government and that too in the name of the poor! Yet, the poor never got access to banking," he said. "When the Jan Dhan Yojana was rolled out, I remember the scepticism that surrounded it too. Some people asked -- could it really be possible to bring such a large number of

people into the banking system? Will this effort lead to any concrete changes? Yes. The scale of the challenge was enormous, but so was the determination of the people of India to ensure it becomes a reality," he said. The success of the Jan Dhan Yojana has two parts to it, Modi pointed out and said one is in the numbers with over 53 crore people who never imagined they would enter a bank having bank accounts now. These accounts have a deposit balance of over Rs. 2.3 lakh crore, he said.

# Vice Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar takes reins of Project Seabird

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Vice Admiral Rajesh Dhankhar on Wednesday assumed duties of the Director General Project Seabird, with a charter to oversee largest defence infrastructure project currently progressing at the Karwar Naval Base, from Vice Admiral Tarun Sobti., navy said here. The change of guard took place at the Headquarters, Project Seabird, New Delhi. Dhankhar was commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1990 and is a specialist in Navigation and Direction. The Flag Officer is an alumnus of the prestigious Naval Academy, Defence Services Staff College, and has undergone the Higher Command Course in Japan. During his illustrious career spanning 34 years, the Flag Officer has tenanted specialist appointments onboard warships Pondicherry, Godavari, Kora and Mysore. The officer has also done



instructional tenures in the erstwhile Project 15 Training Team, Navigation and Direction School and at the MIDS Wing Officer's Cadet School, Singapore. His command appointments include Executive Officer onboard INS Delhi, and as Commanding Officer onboard INS Ghrial, Mumbai and Vikramaditya. His notable staff appointments include those as Joint Director and Director at Directorate of Naval Plans, Principal Director/Commodore(Pers) at the Directorate of Personnel.

In Flag rank, he has tenanted duties of Chief Staff Officer (Training), Flag Officer Sea Training, Commandant Naval War College and the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet. The Flag officer has also tenanted additional duties of the Chairman, Carrier Acceptance Trials Team to oversee the acceptance trials of INS Vikrant. The Flag Officer is a recipient of the Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) in 2015 for Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) of Indian nationals from Aden and Al-Hodeida, Yemen. During his tenure as Fleet Commander, over the past ten months, the Eastern Fleet maintained high level of combat readiness and operational tempo undertaking multiple Mission Based and operational deployments, and numerous bilateral and multilateral engagements including MILAN 24 with friendly foreign navies.

# Help victims of Gujarat flood: Cong to Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday expressed concern over the flood situation in Gujarat and urged the Government to take all necessary steps to reduce the impact of the natural calamity. Rain-related incidents claimed nine more lives in Gujarat, taking the death toll to 16 in two days, while another 8,500 people were relocated and rescued from flood-affected areas with rains continuing to lash some parts of the State for the fourth consecutive day on Wednesday, officials said. In a social media post, Kharge said, "The flood situation in Gujarat is extremely worrying as several people have lost their lives and are missing. Our heartfelt condolences to the families of those who have lost their loved ones. Our

thoughts are with the affected people, who are in need of urgent food and medical assistance." "We request the Central Government to ensure more NDRF & SDRF teams. We are proud of our Armed Forces and Coast Guard, who are undertaking rescue efforts. Congress leaders and workers must coordinate all possible relief efforts, in this hour of tragedy," Kharge, who is also the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, said. Rahul Gandhi said the flood situation in Gujarat is getting more severe day by day. "I express my deepest condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones and whose property has been damaged in this calamity. I hope that the injured recover soon," the former Congress Chief said. "An appeal is made to all Congress workers to provide all possible help to the affected people and the administration in relief and rescue work," he said.



# DRDO, TIFR scientists complete testing of 6-qubit quantum processor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Scientists from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Young Scientists Laboratory for Quantum Technologies (DYSL-QT), Pune and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai have completed end-to-end testing of a 6-qubit quantum processor based on superconducting circuit technology, defence ministry said here on Wednesday. The demonstration was carried out in front of the apex committee overseeing the DYSL-QT. This included submitting a quantum circuit from a cloud-based interface, the execution of the programme on the quantum hardware and updating the cloud interface with computed results. The project being executed at TIFR Mumbai's Colaba campus is a three-way collaboration between DYSL-QT, TIFR and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). The DYSL-QT scientists put together the control and measurement apparatus using a combination of commercial off-the-shelf electronics and custom programmed development boards. The qubits were designed and fabricated at TIFR and the quantum processor architecture is based on a novel ring-resonator design invented at TIFR.

# Insufficient pollinator activity poses threat to global food security

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Analysing over 1,500 fields across six continents and over 200,000 'bee visitations' to crop flowers, researchers have uncovered a troubling global trend that shows that one-third to two-thirds of farms worldwide are facing reduced yields of essential, nutrient-rich crops due to insufficient pollinator activity, thus posing the threat to global food security. This phenomenon, known as "pollinator limitation," poses a serious threat to global food security and is exacerbated by the alarming decline in insect

populations, which are crucial for pollination and, consequently, for maintaining agricultural productivity. The disturbing trend comes amid various reports about the decline of insects including bees, responsible for pollination, all across the world. The study led by scientists from Rutgers University-New Brunswick highlights the critical role of pollinators in the production of vital foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes. Published in Nature Ecology & Evolution, the study reveals



that inadequate visits by pollinators are leading to significant yield deficits in vital crops such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes.

Researchers conducted a rigorous statistical analysis of over 200,000 'bee visitations' to crop flowers, utilising one of the most extensive databases on crop pollination available. Katie Turo, a postdoctoral fellow at the University and co-author of the study said, "Our findings are a cause for concern and optimism. We did detect widespread yield deficits. However, we also estimate that, through continued investment in pollinator management and research, it is likely that we can improve the efficiency of

our existing crop fields to meet the nutritional needs of our global population." Rachael Winfree, the senior author of the study and a professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Natural Resources, worked with colleagues from Europe and South America to develop the most extensive database of crop pollination research globally. This open-access resource encompasses 30 years of field data on bee and other pollinator visits to plants. The research focuses on crops that require pollination, such

as fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes — foods that are both nutrient-rich and culturally significant. It does not address major staple crops like rice and wheat, which do not depend on pollinators for reproduction. Pollination involves transferring pollen from the male part of a flower to the female part, enabling the plant to fertilise and produce seeds, fruits, and new plants. This transfer can be accomplished by various methods, including wind, water, or by pollinators like honeybees, wild bees, other

insects, and even bats. World over, pollinators support the reproduction of about 88 per cent of the world's flowering plants and 76 per cent of the leading global food crops. Bees are widely recognised as the most efficient pollinators, a fact highlighted by Rutgers scientists who found that blueberry, coffee, and apple crops were particularly vulnerable to pollinator limitations. The study revealed that yield deficits were evident in 25 distinct crop types across 85% of the countries examined.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Best of luck!

India sends largest ever contingent of 84 para-athletes for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games

The 2024 Paralympic Games opened in Paris yesterday where differently abled athletes from 164 countries would be participating. India has sent its largest-ever contingent of 84 athletes this year. This year's event is a testament to the unyielding spirit of athletes who continue to inspire the world with their incredible stories of perseverance and triumph over adversity. India's participation in the 2024 Paris Paralympics is a landmark moment for the nation. With 84 athletes across various disciplines, India is fielding its largest and most diverse contingent ever. This reflects the growing recognition and support for para-sports in India, as well as the increasing number of athletes who are challenging stereotypes and redefining excellence. The Paralympic Games have a rich history, dating back to 1948, when Sir Ludwig Guttmann organized a sports competition for World War II veterans with spinal cord injuries in Stoke Mandeville, England. This event is widely regarded as the precursor to the modern Paralympic Games. Over



the decades, the Paralympics have grown exponentially, becoming a global platform for athletes with disabilities to showcase their extraordinary talents and push the boundaries of what is possible.

Among the Indian athletes, one name that stands out is that of Sheetal Devi, a young archer who has defied all odds to compete at the highest level despite being born without hands. Sheetal's journey is nothing short of extraordinary. Using her feet to handle the bow and arrow, she has developed a unique technique that has made her one of the most promising archers in the world. Her story is a powerful reminder that limitations are often only in the mind, and with determination and innovation, they can be overcome. Sheetal Devi's participation in the 2024 Paralympics is more than just a personal achievement; it symbolizes hope and resilience for millions of people around the world. Her ability to turn her perceived limitations into strengths has captivated audiences and earned her recognition as a true champion of the human spirit. The 2024 Paris Paralympics continue the tradition of celebrating the incredible capabilities of athletes with disabilities. The Games are not just about winning medals; they are about breaking barriers, challenging societal perceptions, and inspiring future generations. The inclusion of more sports and the increasing participation of countries like India signify a broader acceptance and encouragement of para-sports worldwide. As the athletes compete in Paris, their stories of courage, like that of Sheetal Devi, remind us of the power of sport to transcend physical limitations and bring people together in a shared pursuit of excellence. The Paralympic Games serve as a global stage where athletes demonstrate that with perseverance, anything is possible. India's largest-ever contingent and the inspiring story of Sheetal Devi exemplify the spirit of the Paralympic movement. As these athletes compete, they continue to inspire millions, proving that no obstacle is insurmountable when met with determination and heart.

## PICTALK



A beautifully painted bus at display in the Heritage Transport Museum, in Gurugram

PANKAJ KUMAR

## Dealing with the eternal conflicts

Conflicts have been an inevitable part of human experience throughout history.

Each of us faces them in our own unique way at different points in life

We face conflicts and dilemmas many times in our lives. We resolve a few of those, avoiding others to avoid confrontation. We went through some fascinating times recently. We cast our votes to elect the next central government. The excitement of the crowd at the polling booth was palpable even early in the morning. There was another major event, which was at our society level. We also had elections for the governing body of our residents' welfare association. I realised that the two elections mirrored each other. New alliances were formed, and old ones were discarded. Sworn foes smiled at each other with a warmth not unlike the hot Delhi summers. There were many heartbreaks too if friends vied for the same position. Two of the prospective candidates for a position went about venting their frustration when told by well-meaning friends about the intent of the other. I suggested a mutual tete-a-tete. The conflict was resolved. I faced a dilemma as an ado-



lescent half a century back. One afternoon, I had an argument with a friend, which went a little overboard, and I punched him. He was taller than me and did not take kindly to my aggression. He punched me back. It did not erupt into a full-blown fist fight only because I had already rationalised his punch a little before it had connected with my soft abdomen. After all, I had started the battle; he was entitled to retaliate. Many of us hesitate to ask for personal favour, apprehensive of facing rejection. It is also a dilemma, albeit in our minds. I had no say in the allotment of the zonal

railways after the completion of our railway probation training. I did get an opportunity to express my heart's desire, when my senior asked me if I had any preference for the place of posting. I was diffident and I gave a convoluted reply, "Anywhere, though my preference would be Mughalsarai." This was a small town in my native state. He took the first part of my statement at face value. I was posted at Sealadh, the other end, and a long way from my hometown - physically, linguistically, and culturally. I understood much later in life the importance of plain speaking, however unpalatable it might be. It may cause initial bitterness, but the relationship would be stronger eventually. The self-realisation still did not give me the courage to upbraid a junior colleague for his tardiness. I chose to walk away from confrontation by not allocating him any responsibilities. I envy those who have mastered sugar-coating the bitter pill. It softens the blow, yet hits the person equally

hard. But it might even convey a wrong meaning. During a recent conversation, my wife and her friend contemplated conveying a rather difficult sentiment to another friend through a message. A small phrase was added to be polite. I felt that this changed the intent to something entirely different. They did not agree and chose not to send the message. Yet, the friend had not hesitated to upbraid another friend a few days earlier over a trivial issue. I saw conflict in the two situations, she did not. Conflicts have been a part of our lives since ages. I would not like to be the Arjun who faced the biggest challenge of his life. I am a mere mortal. I have my follies. It is not for me to preach to be perfect. I would look at the words of author Jo Coudert to give me strength, "Every life is a dilemma that must be solved by the person living it." (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

## The rise of Sunita Kejriwal

As Arvind Kejriwal remains behind bars, Sunita Kejriwal steps up to bridge the gap between her husband and the party, taking on the mantle of leadership in his absence



KALYANI SHANKAR

Whoever thought the low-profile Sunita, wife of Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal, would emerge as an acceptable leader in the Aam Admi Party? Her increasing involvement is particularly significant after her husband has been jailed for a liquor scam since March. She has become a crucial link between her husband and the Party.

The recent Lok Sabha and Assembly elections provided her an opportunity to demonstrate her potential. It is still unclear whether she will continue working for the Party after Kejriwal is released on bail.

Women from political families often enter politics as substitutes for their relatives. One successful example is Sonia Gandhi. She was the power behind the throne. Rabri Devi, the wife of former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, served as the Chief Minister of Bihar from 2000 to 2005. Lalu had to resign due to his alleged involvement in a scam. Rabri was merely a rubber stamp while her husband was the de facto chief minister.

She may be a novice in politics, but Sunita brings a wealth of experience and a solid professional background. Her 22-year tenure in the income tax department, ending as I-T commissioner at the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), showcases her competence.

Sunita supported her husband, Kejriwal, keeping a low profile, even during India Against Corruption, when he became a political leader and activist. Kejriwal projected himself as a family man and campaigned with Sunita during the polls.

Sunita's increasing involvement in the Aam Admi Party, particularly after Kejriwal's imprisonment, demonstrates her commitment and determination. Kejriwal is the only incumbent chief minister in Indian history who refused to resign his chief ministership even after his arrest. Speculations about her possibly succeeding Kejriwal if he resigns have been doing the rounds.

Secondly, Sunita's leadership is



crucial. She has arrived at a when the Aam Admi Party grapples with a crisis. The Assembly elections in Haryana will be held next month, and Delhi polls are due in January 2025. Many senior leaders are facing allegations of corruption charges. The recent arrest of Kejriwal has added to the Party's challenges. The Centre gave him a long rope and did not dismiss his government based on a constitutional breakdown.

Manish Sisodia, Kejriwal's deputy, says Sunita's role in the Party will end when Kejriwal is out of jail. Sisodia was also arrested last year in connection with an excise policy case. AAP MP Sanjay Singh claims Sunita's role as Kejriwal's messenger is growing. Still, Kejriwal says Sunita has no interest in politics.

While Sunita may be seen as a stop-gap replacement, her growing influence in the Party makes it challenging to sideline her. Sunita's role in the Party will remain significant even if Kejriwal returns.

Fourthly, the Party faces a crisis of leadership. With the upcoming Haryana and Delhi polls, AAP needs a credible leader and a good campaigner. Sunita's role as a morale



SUNITA HAS LAUNCHED HER CAMPAIGN WITH FIVE "KEJRIWAL'S GUARANTEES" FOR THE UPCOMING HARYANA ASSEMBLY POLLS

booster is to fill the gap and give pep talk.

Fifthly, the AAP members have accepted Sunita as the link, though Sunita holds no official position in AAP. She has campaigned during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and has just begun campaigning in Haryana. She has been hard-hitting on the Modi government and the BJP. Her line of defence was that some political forces were involved in discrediting her husband.

The opposition coalition INDIA has acknowledged Sunita's increasing involvement and acceptability. She was seated in a prominent position alongside Sonia Gandhi at a recent rally in Ramlila Maidan.

Sunita has launched her campaign with five "Kejriwal's Guarantees" for the upcoming Haryana Assembly polls. They include free electricity, medical treatment, education, \$1,000 monthly aid for women, and youth employment. She lauded the AAP government for its initiatives and urged people to vote for AAP. Sunita has some downsides. Despite Kejriwal's political success, she is untested. Whether she can keep the Party intact is still being determined. Her limit-

ed purpose is to convey Kejriwal's message from prison and campaign for the upcoming elections.

Sunita is in talks with other parties like the Nationalist Congress Party and has gained access to top opposition leaders. Her strategy for selecting candidates and forming coalitions depends on the Aam Admi Party's future alliances. Overcoming anti-incumbency as AAP seeks a third term in Delhi is challenging.

When Kejriwal returns, he must ensure that the Party is under control. And that his image in public is not tarnished. He must also keep an eye on Punjab, where AAP is ruling. He must ensure a chain of command between the Party and the government. He must develop a second line of leadership, as he has not allowed any leader to emerge. He needs to keep his team united and realistically evaluate his promises of benefits. The results of the upcoming elections in Haryana and Delhi could significantly shape Delhi's future political landscape. The results will show whether Sunita succeeds.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## WORLD NEEDS STATESMEN

Madam — The editorial, 'Give peace a chance' (27-8-24) is timely. But war is an essential factor to keep the economy of a few nations alive. Weapon trading being a flourishing trade the countries engaged in manufacturing weapons long for wars somewhere between some countries.

With these countries craving for wars the world is longing for a leader who can play a genuinely mediating role and ensure peace. The US and the members of NATO want war between Ukraine and Russia to go on for long to make Ukraine a good market for their weapons. Countries like India may not have weapons to sell but finds war between Ukraine and Russia a good opportunity to buy oil at a lesser cost to benefit a few Indian monopolists if not the public.

With such vested interest in the ongoing war India cannot play any mediation to bring peace. Similarly the war in the Gulf having religion as its base has no scope to ensure peace there till either of the group loses in the war. Institutions like the UNO stand abjectly exposed for their emptiness, and helplessness. Besides religion the rich resource of oil makes this region more vulnerable for undue exploitation and war. We have witnessed an unnecessary war that destroyed nations like Iraq, Libya.

In the present global economic order everything is a commodity including Peace. But peace is proved to be such a costlier product there is no means to buy it. The world needs a charismatic selfless statesman who can interfere with confidence and boldness to establish peace anywhere. But still one should reach this problem with an open mind and positive attitude to find a solution.

A.G.Rajmohan | Anantpur

## SAFETY FIRST

Madam — The cargo ship was routed from Kolkata to Port Blair when it reportedly sank due to rough seas

## Remember the Hippocratic Oath!



Kudos to Mr. Sujit De for the letter titled "Don't make patients suffer" (August 26). Based upon professional fraternity (not human fraternity), the Doctors of the government hospitals are in strike in West Bengal! May it be asked what is the fault of the poorest of poor patients who have no option but to visit government hospitals during medical emergency! Why are they being denied medical treatment prolonging their suffering! Is providing treatment to patients and protesting against the murder mutually exclusive to each

other! Can't the two coexist together! What compensation would the Doctors provide to a family if their member passes away due to lack of treatment! How can the hypocrite Doctors make a cruel mockery of the Hippocratic oath! Hasn't any Doctor indulged in sexual atrocities in India previously!

What about that horrific incident (almost a decade ago) revolving around the poor mentally-retarded innocent Korpan Shah who was lynched to death by the trainee Doctors right within the campus of NRS Hospital Kolkata just on the baseless apprehension of stealing a cell phone! Will today's "revolutionary" Doctors dare to have a look at the mirror and indulge in a bit of self introspection! Of course Doctors must enjoy rights as entitled to human beings; but perhaps the last person in the queue like Korpan Shah was also entitled to the same human rights!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

about 90 nautical miles south of Sagar Island. With an immediate response, the Maritime Search & Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Chennai received a distress signal late on August 25.

The ICG immediately dispatched two of its ships, Sarang and Amogh, and also a Dornier aircraft outfitted with enhanced night-capable sensors, to locate and rescue the stranded crew. The Dornier aircraft was crucial in spotting drifting life rafts and identifying the crew's survival red flares. The aircraft guided the ICG ships to the coordinates where two life rafts had been found tied together, sheltering the survivors.

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur

## MIDDLE PATH ON PENSION

Madam — Government seems to have adopted the mid way approach amid the growing demand for the rollback of the OPS, the government has filled the gap between market returns and a 50% assured pension. Under the Unified Pension Scheme government contribu-

tion will increase from 14% to 18.5%. And it will take a stock of the situation after three years whether to increase this or not. What is really beneficial for the government employees who joined after 1st January 2004 is that UPS will provide them assured pension, inflation indexation and family pension. At the moment it looks like that employees will be content with the new rolled out scheme but they may come on to the streets to demand the difference between OPS and UPS.

With life expectancy going higher and higher, how the government will be able to fund these expenses for such long durations would be a million dollar question. Employees should not forget that NPS has the unique advantage of having the equity exposure over a long period of time and invariably it will fetch far better returns over any other product or Pension scheme.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## CHOOSE DIALOGUE NOT DEBATE

By fostering a mindset of dialogue over argument, we contribute to a more harmonious society



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

There is a famous saying: "Two wrongs don't make a right," meaning it is not right to do something bad to someone just because they did something bad to you. In our day-to-day life, we end up doing many things that are wrong, but we still justify them as right by arguing well. Argument has always been a very powerful self-defense tool for people since ages. But one must know an important fact: behind every argument that we engage in, lies our ignorance towards truth and sometimes deceiving ourselves by knowing the truth. Hence, the best way to sort things out is through dialogues and healthy discussions. The beautiful part of a dialogue is that it's a mutual exploration for reaching an amicable resolution with an open exchange of views, as compared to an argument, which leads to a battle of opinions. In dialogue, there is much more listening than talking, and in an argument, there is war! A dialogue is possible only when two parties collaborate to uncover deeper wisdom and co-create a new understanding with a positive attitude.

We all argue in our day-to-day life because we have an opinion on almost everything, based on our beliefs. More so, when we see the beliefs of others as a personal threat, we either start defending or attacking, creating an environment of fear and aggression. There are many who are always armed with their opinions, prepared to defend their beliefs, and ready to do battle. The best way to avoid an argument with such people is first to support their beliefs positively to make them feel happy



from inside, and then after some time, make them realize their mistake with utmost love and care.

Many of us have experienced that if we do not have an opinion about important issues, then we are considered to be weak and conciliatory. But we must not forget that if our opinion is in defense of a position or against someone else's opinion, then it might result in a huge conflict that could lead to a war-like situation. History has shown that, at the root of the majority of wars fought were differences of opinion and clash of beliefs. Hence, it takes a lot of courage to have a point of view and yet be receptive to others' to the extent that you are prepared to shift your contention. This shows that you are flexible and acknowledge there are many other ways of looking at a situation. It also demonstrates that you have the humility to learn from others' points of view. However, to possess such courage, one needs to be enlightened with spiritual powers, for it is an enlightened soul that moves from an argument to a discussion to a dialogue, a process that is driven not just by the need, but by genuine curiosity and the intention to understand others to create a peaceful and harmonious environment.

In today's fast-paced world, arguments often arise from misunderstandings, impatience, and a lack of willingness to understand the other side. Technology, while connecting us globally, has also distanced us from face-to-face interactions where emotions and intentions are better understood. This digital age has made it easy to voice opinions without accountability, often leading to heated debates rather than constructive discussions. Moreover, the culture of instant gratification has diminished our capacity for patience, making us less tolerant of differing viewpoints. We must realize that true progress, both personally and collectively, comes from understanding and empathy. When we take the time to engage in dialogues rather than arguments, we open doors to new perspectives and solutions that we might not have considered otherwise. In doing so, we not only resolve conflicts but also build stronger, more meaningful relationships. Therefore, it is essential to cultivate the habit of active listening, where we fully engage with the speaker, seeking to understand before being understood. This approach can transform potential conflicts into opportunities for growth and learning.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

## A saga of violence and betrayal in Afghanistan



NILANTHA LLANGAMUWA

Kabul has long stood as a symbol of Afghanistan's resilience but conduct of many of its leaders like Hafizullah Amin remains shrouded in mystery and contention

Kabul, situated over a mile above sea level, is complemented by the Paghman Hills to the west, traditionally a retreat for Kabul's elite. Paghman, known for its pleasant climate and historical significance, was also the site of significant events, including King Amanullah's struggle for independence and the 1920 asylum of the Amir of Bukhara. The town symbolises Afghanistan's resistance to foreign dominance.

Hafizullah Amin, born in Paghman in 1929, rose to prominence as a staunch opponent of superpower influence. His brief tenure as leader, lasting only 104 days, ended with his assassination in 1979, marking a pivotal moment in Afghan politics. Amin's early education in Kabul and further studies at Columbia University, interrupted by political turmoil, solidified his political engagement. His relationship with Nour Mohammad Taraki and his subsequent return to Afghanistan via Moscow shaped his radical stance and political trajectory.

However, the accusation that Amin was a CIA agent, levied with equal fervour from the left, has been eagerly embraced by Babrak Karmal as a means to legitimise his own rule. Despite Karmal's claims of having known about Amin's alleged CIA ties since the 1950s and his assertion of possessing documentary proof, he has yet to present any credible evidence. Some foreign socialists privately dismiss this claim, suggesting that the new regime's intent was to tarnish Amin's reputation, particularly among the unassuming Afghan peasantry, by branding him as an American agent. A more nuanced explanation from a Karmal sympathiser posits that the Afghan populace, repelled by Amin's policies which they viewed as detrimental to the revolution, resorted to the CIA agent narrative as a simplistic justification. Although the USSR propagated this narrative domestically in an early 1980 film on Afghanistan, it has been notably cautious in its international communications.

An article on CIA interference in the Third World, published in International Affairs, notably omits any reference to Amin. As one commentator noted, "The uncomfortable reality for both Russians and Americans is that Amin resisted manipulation from either side." If Amin's portrayal as a genocidal dictator, a Soviet puppet, or a CIA operative is unsupported by evidence, what then is the truth? What was Amin's actual role in the Afghan revolution, and why did the Soviet Union deem it so crucial to eliminate him?

In August 1978, Nour Mohammad Taraki addressed the Islamic protest movement with a defiant stance, denouncing capitalist and reactionary forces for using religion to undermine his progressive agenda. He believed these tactics, driven by imperialistic ambitions, were outdated and doomed to fail. Despite his confidence, Taraki faced significant internal strife, particularly with Hafizullah Amin, whose ambitions threatened his leadership. Taraki's reliance on Soviet support proved insufficient as his political blindness and failure to address social realities created



HAFIZULLAH AMIN WAS WIDELY SUSPECTED OF USING MARXISM AS A POLITICAL TOOL RATHER THAN ADHERING TO ITS PRINCIPLES, WHILE PUBLICLY PRESENTING HIMSELF AS A STRICT RELIGIOUS PERSON

opportunities for extremist groups.

Taraki's plan to correct his previous mistakes and form a new government with Babrak was thwarted by Amin's swift action. Despite Taraki's efforts to arrest Amin and align with Babrak for national reconciliation, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan necessitated external military intervention. Amin's quick consolidation of power and Taraki's subsequent political struggles illustrate the volatile and precarious nature of Afghan politics during this tumultuous period.

Hafizullah Amin was widely suspected of using Marxism as a political tool rather than adhering to its principles, while publicly presenting himself as a strict religious person. Despite his significant position as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, he faced substantial opposition, particularly from the Parcham faction. This internal discord delayed his rise to a full member of the PDPA's political committee. Amin's ability to navigate these challenges and become a prominent figure in Afghan politics, including his role in the Moscow friendship treaty, marked his personal success amidst a turbulent environment.

In September 1979, Taraki's visit to Cuba and subsequent meeting with his rival Babrak Karmal in Moscow remains enigmatic. There is speculation that Taraki sought to reconcile with Babrak to remove Amin and redistribute power, though Soviet influence likely played a crucial role in these negotiations. The depth of the animosity between Taraki and Babrak suggests that Soviet intervention was necessary to facilitate

any form of political reconciliation, particularly given Taraki's longstanding hatred for Babrak and Amin's role as a significant obstacle to his power.

The political instability within the Khalq and Parcham factions weakened Afghanistan's administration, making it vulnerable to extremist support. With the security situation deteriorating and the Afghan army struggling, Taraki saw the need for Soviet intervention to restore order. Despite plans to arrest Amin and form a new government with Babrak, Taraki's efforts faltered, and Amin swiftly resolved his political predicament. The complexities of this period highlight the challenging dynamics of Afghan politics and external influences shaping its trajectory.

In early December 1979, Yuri Andropov alerted Leonid Brezhnev to Amin's covert activities, his pro-Western inclinations, and the potential end of communist rule in Afghanistan, which could threaten Soviet influence. Andropov emphasized the need for military aid to support Babrak Karmal and his allies, though he did not explicitly propose a full-scale Soviet invasion. However, Andropov's primary goal was to finalize plans for the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Following this, key figures including Andropov, Dmitriy Ustinov, Andrei Gromyko, and Boris Ponomarev, convened with Brezhnev and secured approval for Soviet military action. The Politburo authorized these officials to manage the invasion's execution in utmost secrecy. The documents related to the plan were handwritten by Politburo mem-

bers, and even typists were excluded from the process. Marshal Akhromeyev and the General Staff Operations Group established their base near the Afghan border, while KGB operatives traveled to Kabul to oversee Amin's removal, marking the commencement of Operation Agate.

The KGB's secrecy surrounding the assassination plan was intense. A covert team, including a chef planted in Amin's palace, was tasked with administering poison. The same toxicology laboratory that had been involved in previous assassinations, like that of Georgi Markov, handled the preparation of the poison. Talebov, an Azerbaijani operative, infiltrated Amin's kitchen and poisoned the food, ensuring the execution of the assassination plan without arousing suspicion.

On December 13, 1979, Babrak Karmal and key members of his future government secretly flew from Moscow to Bagram Air Base, positioning themselves to take control of Afghanistan immediately after Amin's removal. Meanwhile, on December 17, Asadullah Amin, Hafizullah Amin's son-in-law and head of the security service, fell gravely ill from food poisoning and was rushed to Moscow for treatment. The meal that led to his illness had been prepared for Hafizullah Amin, indicating that the poisoning attempt, orchestrated by Talebov, had not gone as planned. Despite Talebov's efforts, Amin's cautious behavior, including frequent changes in his food and drink, thwarted the poisoning plot.

(The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are personal)

## The impact of CHETNA: Saving lives and empowering communities

'CHETNA@40-Nurturing Dreams, Empowering Destinies,' chronicles four decades of transformative work in women's health and community empowerment across India

When Julkiben, a dai or a traditional birth attendant (TBA), received a call from a pregnant woman, she immediately swung into action. First, she dialled 108, the number of the state government emergency ambulance. After she reached the pregnant woman's house, she cut a clean cloth into pieces to be used at the hospital and kept an empty lota (water container) ready to fetch and store water. But when the woman's labour pains increased and it became impossible for her to climb down the hillock to reach the ambulance, Julkiben summoned young men from the neighbourhood to make a sling from a bed sheet and carry the pregnant woman to the ambulance. They had bare-



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

ly reached the hospital labour room when the woman delivered. Julkiben's presence of mind and timely action helped to save the lives of mother and child.

It was not just TBAs like Julkiben but women, their families and community members in 60 villages in Vansada and Chikhali, two tribal blocks of Gujarat's Navsari district, who learnt that maternal deaths could be

prevented by accessing the public health system's maternal healthcare services. In fact, the three-year initiative in these two blocks by the Centre for Health Education Training Nutrition and Adolescents (CHETNA), the Ahmedabad-based not-for-profit working to empower women, adolescents and children, led to remarkable changes. There was an increase in institutional deliveries from 58% to 82% in Vansada block. More importantly, of the 776 deliveries that took place during the last phase of the intervention, not a single maternal death was registered in the area.

How was this achieved? What was done differently that brought about behavioural change? Could this success be replicated in other districts

with poor health indicators for women?

Answers to all these questions and more have been given in the recently published coffee table book to mark their milestone of turning forty. Titled 'CHETNA@40-Nurturing Destinies', the book chronicles the organization's four decades of collective efforts, its distinctive approaches and the impact made by its innovative communication strategies that transformed countless lives and communities in 78 districts, 124 blocks and 439 villages in seven states.

One of the biggest reasons behind its ability to make a difference has been its focus on incorporating a gender lens to all its work, says Pallavi Patel, co-founder and Director,



CHETNA. Being the country's first all-women health initiative helped make CHETNA a trendsetter in women's health, nutrition and gender. Its pioneering approaches and impactful communications material gave it an edge over others. The popularity of their resources can be gauged by the fact that in 2022-2023 alone, over 2,77,981 copies of CHETNA's materials were sought by various government and NGOs based in 11 states.

The book unpacks their hands on, people-centred strategies to tackle not just the challenges in dealing with child birth complications in remote tribal areas with minimal health facilities in Rajasthan and Gujarat, but widespread nutritional anaemia in Gujarat, Rajasthan and MP. It also reveals how CHETNA fostered a change in behaviour in getting 70 schools certified tobacco free in Ahmedabad as well as in mindsets especially in Mehsana, Gujarat, one of the districts with the worst child sex ratio (CSR) in the eighties and nineties. The deeply entrenched son preference psyche and practice of placing the blame on the woman when a girl was born was addressed through saas-bahu meetings, engaging with caste panchayat leaders

and innovative dal-chawal games to explain the role of the X and Y chromosomes in determining the sex of the child. At the centre of these efforts has been CHETNA's ability to be adaptable, flexible and, creative. Besides out of the box thinking, health messages have been tweaked according to local needs, traditions and practices. Their innovative anaemia kit has undergone several adaptations as has their unique and highly popular cloth aprons with several flaps that are worn by male and female trainers to show the reproductive organs in the two sexes. Songs, games and animation films have been created to share knowledge on child care, nutrition, puberty, menstruation, adolescent

health, anaemia and contraception.

The book details how CHETNA, which works under the symbiotic umbrella of the Nehru Foundation for Development set up in 1966 by the eminent scientist Vikram Sarabhai, strategically used their scientific and inventive health communications to make a lasting impact. Whether it has been to break the silence on menstruation, or creating an enabling environment for girls, CHETNA has shown that the dream it began with 40 years ago, of making women the mistress of their own destinies, was not an impossible one.

(The writer is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views are expressed are personal)

# Striking docs refuse to budge as Mamata uses FIR threat

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The striking doctors of the RG Kar Medical College Hospital and other medical colleges remained nonchalant to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's veiled threat on Wednesday asking them to resume work "as I do not want to take stringent action against you that might spoil your career."

Even as the doctors carried out long processions in various parts of Kolkata, Banerjee from a students' rally in central Kolkata said, that she too was sympathetic towards their cause and that she had done all that she could do to get justice for their departed colleague — a postgraduate lady doctor whose semi nude corpse was recovered from inside the seminar of the RG Kar Medical College in the morning of August 9 — but appealed to them to resume work as many poor people were getting affected by doctors' strike. She said, "even the Supreme Court has given us the power to act ... unlike some authorities elsewhere we did not file any FIR against the doctors in Kolkata because we had been



very sympathetic towards their movement ... but we will have to consider that the greater cause is suffering ... the poor people are not getting their treatment ... already 16 days have passed since the incident took place ... now I request you to come back to work ... "I do not want to register FIR and take action against the doctors who have long careers ahead of them ... we want them to shine and prosper in life ... we appreciate that ... but they will also have to understand the Government's compulsion ... so I request them to join work." The doctors however remained adamant on their demand saying they would not join work till they get justice for their departed colleague. "It is not only a heinous crime but an unprecedented crime that has taken place where a

lady doctor has been raped and murdered inside her work place ... which has hit everyone's confidence ... if justice is not delivered ... if the culprits are not arrested then there is no point creating these hullabaloo for these many days ... so we are not going to work ... we want justice to be delivered first," one of the agitating doctors said. Meanwhile, in a parallel and related development the Indian Medical Association on Wednesday cancelled the membership of Dr Sandip Ghosh the ex-principal of RGKMCH. The IMA steps comes a day after the Enforcement Directorate registered a case of economic offence on the RG Kar issue. "It is going to be a tough situation for Sandip Ghosh as he may get arrested soon and all his corrupt works will soon come to the fore," Akhtar Ali a former Assistant Superintendent of the medical college said. His statement came almost in tandem with the Central Bureau of Investigation officials revisiting the RG Kar campus to inspect the accounts books, sources said.

# Lankan population homogeneous; Sinhala, Tamils have genetic mixing: Study

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

An international team of scientists, drawn mainly from Sri Lanka and India, have demolished the concept of Eelam Tamils in the island nation through a comprehensive genetic study. A three-year long molecular biology research spanning across Sri Lanka and India have established that the population in the island nation is homogeneous in nature and there is no scientific basis for the claims by the Tamils that they had their origin in that country. The findings probe that the demand for a separate Eelam (country) for Tamils is bunkum and thousands of Tamils and Sinhalese massacred in the war for Eelam died for a non-existent cause. "The Sri Lankan population, mainly the Sinhala and Tamils have massive genetic mixing. If the Tamils had their origin in Sri Lanka, their DNA should be visible and discernible. But it is missing," said Prof Gyaneshwar Chaubey, Department of Zoology, Banaras Hindu University who led the team of scientists in this path breaking research. The peer-reviewed research paper "Reconstructing the Population History of the Sinhalese, the major ethnic



group of Sri Lanka," has been published in iScience, a widely respected scientific portal. While Dr Chaubey led the team of Indian scientists, R Ranasinghe (Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of Colombo) led the researchers from the island nation. It may be remembered that Dr Chaubey and a team of researchers from Estonia, Harvard and Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (Hyderabad) had demolished the Aryan and Dravidian linguistic theory and proved that both of these groups share same forefathers. "The analysis based on the frequency of various genetic mutations showed a tight cluster of Sinhalese and Tamil populations, suggesting strong gene flow beyond the boundary of ethnicity and language. A further connection of Sinhalese with the West of India has been estab-

lished based on the traces of DNA segments. Over all in the South Asian context, Sri Lankan ethnic groups are genetically more homogenous than others", said the team leaders. The study also found that the Sinhala language spoken in the country is a combination of Konkani, Marathi, Sanskrit and Gujarati and reached the island nation through Arabian Sea. According to KM Raghavan, a Sri Lankan historian, the Tamils could have reached Sri Lanka as part of the Kaurava army units hired by the princes of the island nation to fight for them as private army warriors. The Kauravas, who were defeated by the Pandavas in the Mahabharata War took refuge in the East Coast of India and reached Sri Lanka at the invitation of various Kings in the island nation. Following the Portuguese occupation of Sri Lanka, the Kauravas got converted to Christianity and their name was changed to Karavas, writes Raghavan in his book Ramaswami Vijayabalan, a plantation owner and Tamil scholar based in Colombo, told The Pioneer that the Tamils in north and north east of Sri Lanka are descendants of migrant workers from Malabar province in present day Kerala.

# Maha Dy CM Ajit apologises for collapse of Shivaji statue

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a damage-control exercise undertaken ahead of the State Assembly polls, Maharashtra's deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday apologised publicly to "13 crore people of the people of the state" over the collapse of the 35-feet tall Shivaji statue in Sindhudurg district, even as the Opposition Shiv Sena (UBT) and the ruling BJP workers had a face-off at Malvan where the statue crashed on Monday. The political temperatures in the state rose in the state over the collapse of Shivaji's statue for the third consecutive day, as the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) announced its plan to hold a "Jode Maro" (hit with slippers) protest against the MahaYuti government in Mumbai on September 1. The 35-feet tall Shivaji statue at 12.30 pm on August 26, within nine months after it was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 4, 2023 as part of the Navy day celebrations. In an apparent effort to blunt the continued protests by the Opposition, Ajit Pawar tendered apology to the people of

the state and said that the state government would initiate stern action against the contractor and state government officials responsible for the collapse of the statue of Marath king at Malvan in Maharashtra's coastal Konkan region. Speaking at a public function held at Latur in Marathwada region, Ajit Pawar said: "Shivaji Maharaj is our deity. The collapse of the Shivaji statue at Rajkot fort in Sindhudurg has come as a big shock for us. On behalf of the MahaYuti government, I apologise to the 13 crore people of the state.... We will take stern action against the contractor and officials responsible for the erection of the Shivaji statue". Ajit Pawar also said that the state government would re-erect Shivaji's statue at the same spot where it collapsed on Monday. In a related development, the supporters of Union Minister and senior BJP leader Narayan Rane and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aditya Thackeray virtually clashed at Malvan where both the leaders were on a visit to inspect the site where Shivaji's statue collapsed on Monday.

# Azad not to campaign in Assembly polls, cites health reasons

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In his heydays in politics, Ghulam Nabi Azad was labeled the 'lucky mascot' and 'master strategist'. He won many difficult elections in his long political career. But ever since Azad severed his ties with the Congress party he has been struggling to find a foothold and consolidate his support base in his home state. Azad launched his political party Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) in September 2022 and campaigned extensively across different corners of Jammu and Kashmir to prepare ground in support of the party. The party's performance was not up to the mark in the recently held Lok Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir. Azad was left stranded midway after several senior party leaders jumped the ship in search of greener pastures. The exit of leaders like Taj Mohiuddin, Haji Abdul Rashid Dar, Sham Lal Bhatt, Abdul Majeed Wani and Ghazal Wani among others had weakened the DPAP. Upset with these developments Azad was maintaining a low profile to avoid media glare. Ironically, even before launching the poll campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections

in Jammu and Kashmir, Ghulam Nabi Azad on Wednesday communicated to his party workers and senior leaders that he has decided not to campaign for his Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) owing to health reasons. He also advised party candidates that they could withdraw from the race due to his absence in electioneering. In a statement issued to media houses in Srinagar, Azad said that on the night of August 25, he suffered acute chest pain in Srinagar. "Following morning, I took the earliest available flight to Delhi and was admitted to AIIMS hospital, where I stayed for two days," the statement added. While doctors assured him that there was no immediate danger, Azad said that he was dealing with other health concerns that require both medication and rest. "These unforeseen circumstances have forced me to step back from the campaign trail," he added. Meanwhile, J&K BJP Chief Ravinder Raina is also facing tough times as party workers have come out in the open at several places in protest questioning the selection of candidates for the Assembly segments by the party's high command.

# Modi chairs PRAGATI meeting to review seven key projects progress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday chaired a PRAGATI meeting to review the progress of seven key projects which included two projects relating to road connectivity, two rail projects and one project each of the Coal, Power and Water Resources sectors, having a cumulative worth of around Rs 76,500 crore. All these projects are related to 11 States and UTs viz., Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Odisha, Goa, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Delhi. This was the first meeting in the third term. Prime Minister Modi said that the 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' campaign can help safeguard the environment while undertaking project development. During the interaction, the prime minister also reviewed AMRUT 2.0 and public grievances related to Jal Jeevan Mission. These projects together inter-alia address water issues in the urban and rural areas. Prime Minister Modi emphasised that water is a basic human need and quality disposal of grievances at the district level as well as state level must be ensured by the state governments, according to the statement. Adequate Operation and Maintenance mechanism of Jal Jeevan projects is critical for its success and the prime minister suggested involvement of women self help groups where possible and skilling of youth in Operation and Maintenance works, the statement said.

GATI, the ICT-based modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, involving the Centre and state governments. This was the first meeting in the third term. Prime Minister Modi said that the 'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' campaign can help safeguard the environment while undertaking project development. During the interaction, the prime minister also reviewed AMRUT 2.0 and public grievances related to Jal Jeevan Mission. These projects together inter-alia address water issues in the urban and rural areas. Prime Minister Modi emphasised that water is a basic human need and quality disposal of grievances at the district level as well as state level must be ensured by the state governments, according to the statement. Adequate Operation and Maintenance mechanism of Jal Jeevan projects is critical for its success and the prime minister suggested involvement of women self help groups where possible and skilling of youth in Operation and Maintenance works, the statement said.

# PowerGrid acquires SPV project

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) - a Maharatna CPSU under Ministry of Power has on 28th August 2024, acquired the Project Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) viz. "Bhadra-III Power Transmission Limited" for establishing the transmission system associated with "Additional Transmission System for Evacuation of Power from Bhadla-III PS as Part of Rajasthan REZ Phase-III Scheme (20 GW)". POWERGRID emerged as the successful bidder for the aforementioned project after competing with other private sector player and emerging as successful bidder in Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) process.



# Noose tightens, 17 cases...

From Page 1  
Meanwhile Mukesh accused Muneer of blackmailing him and demanded a lakh of rupees for her silence. There is a complaint filed by Geeth Vijayan, a star of the yesteryears that she was molested by movie makers in 1991. Minu Muneer alleged to the media that she has been receiving threat calls in her phone and the police had identified that the calls were made from Andhra Pradesh. Though Wednesday was by and large peaceful from the film fraternity, a silent war of nerves is going on among various camps of AMMA. Actor Jagadeesh said that the

decision of AMMA office bearers to quit en masse following the disclosures made by the actresses was shocking. "They should have shown courage and presence of mind to tackle the situation," he told reporters. Joy Mathew, a Leftist movie artist, demanded strong action by the law enforcing agencies against the perpetrators of the crime. But Shanthivila Dineshan, movie maker with more than three decades of professional experience in the movie industry told The Pioneer that there was noting new in the allegations or disclosures made by the female artists.

# Delhi Govt accused of hiding truth behind Delhi Jal Board 'scam'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly, Vijender Gupta, has blamed the Delhi Government for attempting to hide the truth behind astounding financial irregularities in Delhi Jal Board. Citing a report by the Chief Secretary of the Delhi Government, Vijender Gupta pointed out that due to the rampant corruption in the Delhi Government, the balance sheets of the Delhi Jal Board for the years 2021-22 and 2022-23 have not been prepared, which has prevented the CAG from conducting an audit. Gupta expressed surprise that this report, which exposes the irregularities of the Delhi Jal Board, was presented by the Chief Secretary on 15th March 2024, upon being called after a resolution passed in the assembly, but instead of presenting this report in the Assembly, it was kept hidden in the files. According to the rules, if a report was requested from the Chief Secretary through the assembly and he provided it to the minister, then why was a

copy of this report not given to the opposition MLAs? The reason is clear: the government wanted to hide its corruption and malpractices. He also mentioned that earlier, the Delhi government had not prepared the balance sheets for 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. However, following an order from the High Court, the balance sheets for these three years were prepared, and due to the delay, the CAG audit was also delayed. It is evident from this that the Delhi Government's intention to not prepare the balance sheets was to hide its financial irregularities and corruption. However, after these three years, the balance sheets for the next two years, i.e., 2021-22 and 2022-23, have again been stalled and are still pending. Gupta further stated that the current Water Minister, Atishi, often complains about not receiving funds, but the reality is that the Delhi Jal Board is not utilising the funds allocated to it in the budget. He alleged that the Delhi Jal Board inflates its budget but is unable to use the allocated funds according to the sanctioned conditions.

# ED slaps DMK MP with ₹908 cr..

From Page 1  
The 2020 seizure order was "set aside" by the Competent Authority (under the FEMA) in February 2021 and the ED challenged it before the Appellate Tribunal where, the ED said, the "appeal is pending". Later, the agency filed a complaint in December 2021 before the FEMA Adjudicating Authority against the MP, his family and a linked company "charging them for violations of various FEMA provisions, particularly in respect of their investment to the tune of Rs 42 crore in a shell company incorporated in Singapore in

2017". The accused were also charged by the agency with "acquisition and holding" of Singapore foreign shares and its subsequent transfer amongst the family members "in defiance of" extant provisions of FEMA, and also with regard to the investment of around Rs 9 crore made into a Sri Lankan entity. This complaint was filed with a prayer to confiscate the properties seized under the order dated September 11, 2020, it said. The ED said the notices (Jagathrachakan and family) filed individual writ petitions before the Madras High Court.

# UP Government...

From Page 1  
In a 13-page judgement on BRS leader K Kavitha, uploaded on the apex court website on Wednesday, a bench comprising Justices B R Gavi and K V Viswanathan reiterated the well-established principle that "bail is the rule and refusal is an exception". Referring to various judgements, including in the case of Manish Sisodia, a former Delhi deputy chief minister and a co-accused, the verdict said, "The prolonged incarceration before being pronounced guilty of an offence should not be permitted to become punishment without trial." We had further observed that the fundamental right of liberty provided under Article 21 of

Adityanath-led government by creating employment and also checking rumour-spreading on social media, the opposition parties called it an attempt to curb freedom of expression on social media and misuse of public funds. BJP spokesperson Rakesh Tripathi said, "The Yogi Adityanath government moves forward with innovations. "It pays attention to the changes happening in society. Digital media policy will create new jobs. "Those who play with law and order by spreading rumours on social media will be strictly punished. UP's social media policy will become an example across the country," he said. The opposition Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress said the state government's move is aimed at stifling freedom of expression.

# Bail for laundering funds...

From Page 1  
The Constitution is superior to the statutory restrictions (of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act)," the judgement said. The 'bail is the rule, and jail is the exception' principle was first used in the 1977 landmark judgement of the 'State of Rajasthan vs Balchand alias Balya' case. In 2019, the court granted bail to P Chidambaram in the INX Media case, despite the seriousness of economic offenses, affirming that the fundamental jurisprudence of bail remained unchanged. In November 2020, the Supreme Court extended interim bail to journalist Arnab Goswami, highlighting the critical nature of personal liberty and the principle of bail as the norm.

# Bangla Bandh...

From Page 1  
The 'Bangla Bandh', which began at 6 am, was called by the BJP in protest against Tuesday's police action on participants of 'Nabanna Abhijan' or march to the secretariat, organised by the newly formed students' group Chitra Samaj over the rape and murder of the doctor at RG Kar hospital. Ganguly and Paul were detained from south Kolkata's Gariahat area when they were urging traders to down their shutters and requesting people to support the bandh. Chatterjee along with party leaders Rahul Sinha and Tamaghna Ghosh were detained from Shyambazar, while Bhattacharya was picked up in Salt Lake. Kolkata's councillor Sajal

Ghosh was arrested from his residence after BJP workers scuffled with TMC supporters while trying to enforce the bandh in the nearby Koley Market. His wife Tania Ghosh alleged that police held him without a warrant. Later, Deputy Commissioner (Central) Indira Mukherjee said Ghosh was arrested for making provocative comments. State BJP president and Union minister Sukanta Majumdar led a procession at Baguihati in the northern fringes of the city and had an altercation with the police who tried to stop him. Former MP Debasree Choudhury and hundreds of party workers accompanied him. Majumdar later went to central Kolkata and blocked the CR Avenue outside the state BJP headquarters along with his supporters.

# PRESIDENT MURMU READS...

From Page 1  
In December 2012, we had come face to face with that element when a young woman was gang-raped and murdered. There was shock and rage. We were determined not to let another Nirbhaya meet the same fate. We made plans and devised strategies. These initiatives did make a difference to an extent. Yet, our task remains unfinished as long as any woman feels unsafe in the environment where she lives or works.

In the twelve years since that tragedy in the national capital, there have been countless tragedies of similar nature, though only a few drew nationwide attention. Even these were soon forgotten. Did we learn our lessons? As social protests petered out, these incidents got buried into a deep and inaccessible recess of social memory, to be recalled only when another heinous crime takes place." She also said "This collective amnesia, I am afraid, is as much obnoxious as that mindset I spoke of."

"History often hurts. Societies scared to face history resort to collective amnesia to bury their heads in the sand like the proverbial ostrich. Now the time has come not only to face history squarely but also to search within our souls and probe the pathology of crime against women," President Murmu said. "I am of the firm belief that we should not let amnesia prevail over the memory of such criminality. Let us deal with this perversion in a comprehensive manner so as to curb it right at the

beginning. We can do this only if we honour the memory of the victims by cultivating a social culture of remembering them to remind us of our failures in the past and prepare us to be more vigilant in future," she said. "We owe it to our daughters to remove the hurdles from their path of winning the freedom from fear. Then we can collectively give a firm answer to the innocent query of those children in the next Raksha Bandhan. Let us collectively say enough is enough, President Murmu said.

# Cabinet approves massive boost to manufacturing horizons

From Page 1  
The approval of these projects is a step forward towards realising the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' — a developed India. By positioning India as a strong player in the Global Value Chains (GVC), the NICDP will provide developed land parcels ready for immediate allotment, making it easier for domestic and international investors to set up manufacturing units in India. This aligns with the broader objective of creating an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' or a self-reliant India, fostering economic growth through enhanced industrial output and employment. The NICDP is expected to generate significant employment opportunities, with an estimated 1 million direct jobs

and up to 3 million indirect jobs being created through planned industrialisation. This will not only provide livelihood opportunities but also contribute to the socio-economic uplift of the regions where these projects are to be set up. The projects under the NICDP are designed with a focus on sustainability, incorporating ICT-enabled utilities and green technologies to minimise environmental impact. By providing quality, reliable, and sustainable infrastructure, the Government aims to create industrial cities that are not just hubs of economic activity but also models of environmental stewardship. The approval of 12 new industrial nodes under the

significant milestone in India's journey towards becoming a global manufacturing powerhouse. With a strategic focus on integrated development, sustainable infrastructure, and seamless connectivity, these projects are set to redefine India's industrial landscape and drive the nation's economic growth for years to come. In addition to these new sanctions, the NICDP has already seen the completion of four projects, with another four currently under implementation. This continued progress highlights the Government's commitment to transforming India's industrial sector and fostering a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive economic environment.

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# Israel launches major raid in occupied West Bank

AP ■ AL-FARAA REFUGEE CAMP (WEST BANK)

Israel launched a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, with its forces killing at least nine Palestinians and sealing off the volatile city of Jenin, according to Palestinian officials. Israel has carried out near-daily raids across the West Bank since Hamas' October 7 attack out of Gaza triggered the ongoing war there. Israel says it is rooting out militants to prevent attacks on its citizens, while Palestinians in the West Bank fear it intends to broaden the war and forcibly displace more of them. Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said "large forces" had entered Jenin, long a militant stronghold, as well as Tulikarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camp dating back to the 1948 Mideast war, all in the northern West Bank. He said the nine dead were all militants, including three killed in an airstrike in Tulikarem and four in an airstrike in Al-Faraa. He said another five suspected militants were arrested, and that the raids were the first stage of an even larger operation. Palestinian militant groups said they were exchanging fire with Israeli troops. The governor of Jenin, Kamal Abu al-Rub, said on Palestinian radio that Israeli forces had surrounded the city, blocking exit and entry points and access to hospitals, and ripping up

infrastructure in the camp. The Palestinian Health Ministry in the West Bank said Israeli forces had blocked the roads leading to a hospital with dirt barriers and surrounded other medical facilities in Jenin. Shoshani said the military was trying to prevent militants from taking shelter in hospitals. An Associated Press reporter saw army vehicles blocking all the entrances to Al-Faraa camp. Military jeeps and bulldozers entered the camp and soldiers were seen patrolling its alleyways by foot. Water leaked onto the damaged streets from houses where fighting had damaged tanks and pipes. Shots rang out every few minutes. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz drew comparisons with Gaza and called for similar measures in the West Bank. "We must deal with the threat just as we deal with the terrorist infrastructure in Gaza, including the temporary evacuation of Palestinian residents and whatever steps might be required. This is a war in every respect, and we must win it," he wrote on the platform X. Shoshani said there was no plan to evacuate civilians. Hamas called on Palestinians in the West Bank to rise up, calling the raids part of a larger plan to expand the war in Gaza and blaming the escalation on US support for Israel. The militant group called on security forces loyal to the Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which cooperate with Israel,



to "join the sacred battle of our people".

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, condemned the raids as a "serious escalation" and

called on the United States to intervene. Abbas later announced he was cutting short a visit to Saudi Arabia and returning to the West Bank, where his government is based. At least 652 Palestinians in the West

Bank have been killed by Israeli fire since the war in Gaza began over 10 months ago, according to the Palestinian ministry. Most have died during raids, which often trigger gunbattles with militants.

Israel says the operations are required to dismantle Hamas and other militant groups. Attacks on Israelis have risen since the start of the war. The Palestinian Health Ministry said the bodies of seven people were brought to the hospital in Tubas, another West Bank city, and another two were brought to the hospital in Jenin. The ministry identified two killed in Jenin as Qassam Jabarin, 25, and Asem Balout, 39. Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three for a future state. Israel has built scores of settlements across the West Bank, which are home to over 500,000 Jewish settlers. They have Israeli citizenship, while the 3 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under Israeli military rule, with the Palestinian Authority exercising limited control over population centers. The war in Gaza erupted when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel and rampaged through army bases and farming communities, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250. The militants are still holding some 110 hostages, around a third of whom are believed to be dead, after most of the rest were released during a November cease-fire. Israel responded with an offensive that has killed over 40,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were

militants. Around 90 per cent of Gaza's population has been displaced, often multiple times, and Israeli bombardment and ground operations have caused vast destruction. Israeli strikes in Gaza overnight and into Wednesday killed at least 24 people, including five women and five children, according to Palestinian health officials. AP reporters at two hospitals confirmed the toll. One strike hit tents housing displaced people near the central town of Deir al-Balah, killing eight including two brothers, 6 and 17 years old. "He's alive!" their mother shouted as the teenager's body was carried to the morgue. She later sobbed and cradled both of them. Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames their deaths on Hamas because the militants fight in dense residential areas. The military rarely comments on individual strikes in Gaza, which often kill women and children. The US, Qatar and Egypt have spent months trying to mediate a cease-fire that would see the remaining hostages released. But the talks have repeatedly bogged down as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed "total victory" over Hamas and the militant group has demanded a lasting cease-fire and a full withdrawal from the territory. There was no sign of a breakthrough after days of talks in Egypt, and the negotiations move to Qatar this week.

## Ban on Jamaat-e-Islami revoked by interim govt in Bangladesh

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh's interim government Wednesday revoked a ban on the rightwing Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, less than a month after it was imposed on the Islamist party by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who was forced to resign following massive protests against her government. "It (lifting the ban) will come under effect immediately," the Home Ministry said in a gazette notification, noting that there was no particular evidence against the organisation. The erstwhile Awami League government led by Hasina had imposed a ban on Jamaat on August 1, 2024, accusing the Islamist party as a "militant and terrorist" organisation. The government blamed Jamaat's student wing for inciting chaos over a quota system for government jobs. The notification said the ban

under the Anti-Terrorism Act 2009 has been lifted as there was no particular evidence against the organisation. The government believed that Jamaat and its associate bodies, including its student front Chhatra Shibir, were not involved in terrorist activities and violence. The decision, formally published in a gazette notification on Wednesday, represents a significant change from the decision taken by the erstwhile Awami League government earlier this month, just days before its ouster. The development came a day after Attorney General Mohammad Asaduzzaman urged the High Court to summarily reject a writ petition seeking an order on the government to ban Hasina's Awami League as a political party and scrap its registration. "The current (interim) government has no intention to ban any political organisation," the government's top law officer told a two-judge High Court

bench, which set August 29 for its decision on the writ filed by one Sarda Society as a public interest litigation. The interim government's law adviser, equivalent to a minister, Asif Nazrul on Wednesday told reporters he was opposed to the call for a ban on Awami League or any other political parties unless there was any strong evidence of their involvement in terrorist activities. "Awami League is the party which led Bangladesh's independence movement and contributed to different democratic movements. (But) what they did in the past 15 years does not go with their heritage, the spirit of the Liberation War," Nazrul said. He said the party had established the "most barbaric fascism" in Bangladesh's history for which someone might have individual or its leaders might have collective responsibility "but I don't think it will be a wise decision to ban it as a political party".

Secretary General of ex-premier Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that anyone should be able to form an independent political party, that is the main goal of democracy. "We are not in favour of banning any political party; any party and any individual has the right to form an independent party. But they must be on the side of freedom and sovereignty. Those who do not believe in freedom cannot be supported," he said at a media briefing on Tuesday. No senior leader of the Awami League, which ran the country for the past 15 years, is seen in the public domain while several ministers of Hasina's cabinet were arrested, on the run or believed to have fled the country since the ouster of the regime. The Jamaat opposed Bangladesh's 1971 independence from Pakistan and sided with the Pakistani troops during the Liberation War.

## Germany, UK seek new bilateral treaty Keir Starmer moves ahead with plans to 'reset' ties with EU

AP ■ BERLIN

The leaders of Germany and the United Kingdom announced plans on Wednesday to draw up a treaty meant to deepen the two nations' trade, defence and other ties. The move comes as new UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer moves ahead with plans for a "reset" of relations with the European Union. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that he welcomes fellow centre-left leader Starmer's desire for a new beginning in relations with the EU, and "we want to take this outstretched hand". Starmer took office in early July after the previous Conservative government was trounced in an election. Four years after the UK left the EU, he says he wants to rebuild ties strained by years of ill-tempered wrangling over Brexit terms. He said that he hopes to conclude the bilateral agreement with Germany, which has Europe's biggest economy, by the end of this year. "That will be ambitious, it will



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (right) welcomes Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer in Berlin on Wednesday. AP/PTI

be wide-ranging, covering trade, the economy, defense and many other issues," he told reporters. The two leaders are among Ukraine's biggest military backers and stressed their commitment to keeping up that support. Starmer said that the two countries also plan to draw up a "joint action plan to tackle illegal migration". His government still faces pres-

sure to stop migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats, though it scrapped the Conservatives' contentious plan to send them on a one-way trip to Rwanda. Migration is also an issue on which Scholz's government has long been under heavy pressure, even more so since Friday's attack in Solingen in which a suspected extremist from Syria who had avoided

being deported is accused of killing three people. The proposed UK-Germany treaty is modelled in part on agreements that Britain struck in recent years with France on defense, security and closer law enforcement cooperation against people-smuggling gangs. Starmer sent a signal by visiting Berlin early in his term — unlike predecessor Rishi Sunak, who took 18 months. But his talk of starting anew with the EU has its limits. "I'm absolutely clear that we do want a reset ... with Europe, a reset with the EU," Starmer said in Berlin. However, "that does not mean reversing Brexit or reentering the single market or the customs union, but it does mean a closer relation on a number of fronts — including the economy, including defence, including exchanges, but we do not have plans for the youth mobility scheme".

## Telegram CEO freed, to appear in court

AP ■ PARIS

French prosecutors on Wednesday freed Telegram CEO Pavel Durov from police custody after four days of questioning over allegations that the platform is being used for illegal activities. Durov was detained on Saturday at Le Bourget airport outside Paris as part of a judicial inquiry opened last month involving 12 alleged criminal violations. "An investigating judge has ended Pavel Durov's police custody and will have him brought to court for a first appearance and a possible indictment," a statement from the Paris prosecutor's office said. Other allegations against Durov, who is a French citizen, include that his platform is being used for child sexual abuse material and drug trafficking, fraud and abetting organized crime transactions, and that Telegram refused to share information or documents with investigators when required by law.

## Traders observe day-long strike across Pak to protest new taxes

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Traders across Pakistan observed a nationwide strike on Wednesday to register their anger against the reforms that aimed to widen the tax net in the cash-strapped country. The strike was held on the call of Markazi Tanzeem-e-Tajran Pakistan and All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajran, the two leading associations of the trading community, against the Tajir Dost Scheme introduced by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in March this year. The FBR had launched the scheme to bring traders and wholesalers into the formal tax structure as required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The higher cost of living and tax hikes have triggered widespread discontent and drawn protests. The strike is aimed at forcing the government to reverse the recent hikes in the controversial tax that followed the recent talks with the IMF, which wants to see Pakistan broaden its tax base. The rightwing Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) also joined the strike to press for its demand to reduce the

prices of electricity in the country while supporting the traders' demands. Responding to the call, traders shut their shops and businesses in various parts of the country, including the major cities of Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Quetta and Peshawar. Rallies in various cities were also held. JI Karachi chief Monem Zafar told the media that the Tajir Dost Scheme (trader-friendly scheme) was a "Tajir Dushman scheme" (traders' enemy scheme). "The people do not accept this (taxes) and we once again demand that the politicians stop using delay tactics and giving 'lollipops' to the traders and the business community," Zafar said. The FBR chief hinted at setting up a market-level review mechanism with representation from tax officers and traders to ensure that no shopkeepers face unfair tax rates. Under the scheme, tax rates will be collected from shopkeepers in 42 cities across the country at a fixed rate of Rs100 to Rs 20,000 per month, based on the fair market value of their stores.

## Chinese official gets death sentence in corruption case

PTI ■ BEIJING

A former Chinese Communist Party official, accused of embezzling a staggering USD 421 million - the largest-ever corruption case in China's history, was sentenced to death by a court in Inner Mongolia. The Higher People's Court of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on Tuesday turned down the appeal by Li Jianping, who was sentenced to death in September 2022 for corruption, bribery, embezzlement and engaging in organised crime. He was found guilty by an intermediate court for pocketing a staggering 3 billion yuan (USD 421 million) in illegal gains — the largest sum involved in a single corruption case in China's history, Chinese news portal Caixin Global reported. The ruling would be submitted to the Supreme People's Court for final examination and approval, said the court.

## Trying to identify culprits in alleged 'financial coup': Maldivian cops

PTI ■ MALE

Maldivian police on Wednesday said that they are working on identifying the possible culprits in an alleged 'financial coup', two days after President Mohamed Muizzu accused the opposition of plotting to topple his government using a decision by the national bank to suspend foreign transactions from Rufiyaa cards. On Sunday, the Bank of Maldives (BML) suspended foreign transactions for existing debit cards, as well as new debit and credit cards linked to MVR (the Maldivian rufiyaa) accounts. It also lowered the monthly standard and gold credit card limit to USD 100. However, it reversed the decision within hours, saying it was based on instructions from its regulator, the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA). The police opened a criminal investigation on Monday, citing there's room to believe the opposition had attempted to topple President Muizzu's administration by stoking up fears of a financial crisis and inciting people to take to the streets.

In a statement on Wednesday, the police said they are working on "collecting all necessary information and conducting a detailed review of everything that needs looking into" in their investigation, the Sun news portal reported. "We are also identifying the people who possibly need to be taken action against and all other works pertaining to the investigation," said the police. Speaking at a party meeting of the ruling People's National Congress (PNC) on Monday night, President Muizzu said that he had worked to find a resolution for the Bank issue alongside his ministers as soon as he had become aware of the situation. He asserted that the bank's decision had been against his advice. Muizzu said that many had raised questions as to why a government-majority holding bank had made such a decision against government advice. However, most people were unaware that BML's Board of Directors does not have a government majority at this time, he said. Muizzu, known for his pro-China leanings, was sworn in as the President in November last year.

# Over 24,000 Indian-Americans sign up for PM Modi event in NY

PTI ■ NEW YORK

More than 24,000 members of the Indian diaspora have signed up to attend a mega community event that will be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here next month. The 'Modi & US' Progress Together event will be held on September 22 at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, which has a capacity of 15,000. The Indo-American Community of USA (IACU) said Tuesday that over 24,000 Indian-Americans have signed up to attend the mega event, a community gathering that will be addressed by Modi. Prime Minister Modi is sched-

uled to address the high-level UN General Assembly session here on September 26, according to a provisional list of speakers issued by the UN. The IACU said in a statement that registrations for the event in Uniondale, Long Island have come through 590 community organisations, all of whom have signed up as 'Welcome Partners', from across the United States. While Indian Americans from at least 42 states are expected to attend, the response has been particularly strong from the tri-state area, it said. "We're committed to ensuring as many people as possible can participate in this historic event," said a key organiser of

the event. "We're going to do our best to expand seating arrangements and coordinate with our Welcome Partners to prioritise final seat allocations to those who will confirm they expect to attend." The IACU said the 'Modi & US' event "promises to be a significant gathering celebrating the interconnected diversity of the Indian-American community." Attendees and participating organisations will include a wide range of religious communities, including members of the Jewish, Zoroastrian, Jain, Christian, Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu communities. They also represent a significant cross-

section of India's diverse languages, including Hindi, Telugu, Punjabi, Tamil, Bengali, Malayalam, Gujarati, and others, IACU said. In addition to an address by Prime Minister Modi, the event will showcase cultural performances and appearances by prominent Indian-Americans in business, science, entertainment, and the arts. A not-for-profit organisation, the Indo-American Community of USA (IACU) fosters understanding of and unity within the Indo-American community through cultural events and public programmes. Earlier this month, sources told PTI that preparations are in full swing for the communi-

ty event in Long Island, coming 10 years after Modi addressed a massive community gathering at the famed Madison Square Garden in New York in September 2014 just months after he had first taken charge as Prime Minister and visited the city to attend the high-level annual General Assembly session. In 2019, Modi addressed the mega community event 'Howdy Modi' at the NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas, where he was joined by former President Donald Trump. This year's visit to the US comes just weeks before the country goes to the presidential polls in November with a race to the top office between

Trump and Democratic Presidential nominee Kamala Harris, the first woman of Black and Indian heritage. This year, the high-level General Debate of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly will take place from September 24-30. As per the provisional list of speakers for the General Debate issued by the UN on Monday, India's "Head of Government" is scheduled to address the high-level session in the afternoon of September 26. The list is not final and the UN releases updated provisional lists of speakers in the weeks leading up to the high-level session to reflect any modifications in attendance, schedules

and speaking slots of leaders, ministers and ambassadors. Modi took oath in June as India's Prime Minister for a historic third term and last addressed the annual high-level UNGA session in September 2021. Prime Minister Modi also visited the UN headquarters on June 21 last year, leading the historic Yoga Day commemoration at the North Lawn of the world body's headquarters before heading to Washington DC for a State Visit hosted by former President Joe Biden. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will present his report before the start of the General Debate, followed by an address by the President of the 79th ses-

sion of the General Assembly. Guterres is also convening the ambitious Summit of the Future at UN Headquarters during the high-level week, with the action days slated for September 20-21 and the Summit scheduled on September 22-23. World leaders will convene at the United Nations to adopt the Pact for the Future, which will include a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations as annexes. "The Summit is a high-level event, bringing world leaders together to forge a new international consensus on how we deliver a better present and safeguard the future," the UN has said.

# Nifty gains marginally to hit lifetime high

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Nifty rose marginally to hit a fresh lifetime high of 25,052 and Sensex gained over 70 points on Wednesday, helped by buying in IT stocks amid a largely positive global market. Recent foreign fund inflows and lower global crude oil prices also strengthened investor sentiments, traders said. Rising for the tenth straight session, the NSE Nifty went up by 34.60 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,052.35. The benchmark surged 111.85 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day all-time peak of 25,129.60. Extending its winning run to the seventh day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 73.80 points or 0.09 per cent to settle at 81,785.56. During the day, it jumped 327.5 points or 0.40 per cent to 82,039.26. Among the 30 Sensex firms,



Bharti Airtel, Infosys, IndusInd Bank, Sun Pharma, Tech Mahindra, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance and JSW Steel were the biggest gainers. Asian Paints, Maruti, Nestle, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Axis Bank and UltraTech Cement were among the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul and Tokyo settled higher while Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower.

European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended with marginal gains on Tuesday. "The market has entered a consolidation phase with low volatility and this trend is likely to continue in the near-term. Falling bond yields in the US have restrained FII selling and they have even turned marginal buyers. Going by previous trends, DIIs are likely to sell if FIIs

continue to buy. "This trend will keep the market within a range with a slight upward bias. This is a desirable and healthy trend, given the elevated valuations in the market," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,503.76 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 604.08 crore. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.82 per cent to USD 78.90 a barrel. After oscillating between highs and lows, the BSE benchmark eked out a marginal gain of 13.65 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 81,711.76 on Tuesday. The NSE Nifty ended almost flat, up 7.15 points or 0.03 per cent, at 25,017.75 — its ninth straight session of gains.

# SBI MD hopes market correction over time will get funds back to banking system

PTI ■ MUMBAI

SBI Managing Director Ashwini Tewari on Wednesday said a correction in the equity markets "over time" can help banks get back the deposits it has ceded. He also said the country's largest lender is betting on the small-ticket Prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts to drive deposit growth. Speaking on the sidelines of the GFF, he told reporters that the capital markets rally has seen a shift of money away from the banks to the higher yielding alternatives. "As the market corrects over time, some of the money that was earlier with us, will come back," he said. Interestingly, he said the bank is also looking at the small-ticket deposits from the decade-old PMJDY across its vast network as well to drive its deposit growth. "We are focusing on the small-value, small ticket accounts to raise deposits. Jan Dhan is something we have not focused on (previously), which we will do," he said. It can be noted that for nearly



18 months, the credit growth has been racing ahead of the deposit growth, forcing lenders to raise rates and compromising margins, and has also led to fears of banks being forced to temper loan growth. The Indian markets have witnessed an impressive rally in the last few months and the banking system has been complaining about the shift of funds being one of the reasons for slower deposit growth. Tewari on Wednesday said the regulator's moves on higher risk weights on unsecured loans and proposals on higher provisioning for project loans

are a "signal" for tempering deposit growth. He also said if the market demands, the bank will have to raise deposit rates. The MD of the bank said nearly 90 per cent of the funds fuelling credit for the banking system used to come from deposits, and the share is coming down as the banks are forced to go for other instruments like infrastructure bonds. Meanwhile, Tewari said the bank is not seeing any higher delinquency on the micro loans portfolio. He also said there is a scope for the volumes on central bank digital currency to go up.

# Family Offices AUM growth projected at 14 per cent over three years: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Family Offices in India projected for 14 per cent growth in Asset Under Management (AUM) and a 5 per cent increase in alternative investments over the next 3 years, a report said. AUM for mid to large-sized family offices in India will grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 14 per cent over the next three years, potentially increasing by 1.5 times, a report by Sundaram Alternates titled 'From Legacy to Leadership' said. This report highlights the significant evolution of family offices as they transition from wealth preservation to a growth-focused mindset. Indian family offices are increasingly embracing alternative investments, with a projected 5 per cent increase in allocations to 18 per cent over the next three years, it said. This aligns with a global trend, where family offices allocate more than 50 per cent of their assets to alternatives, it said.

# GAIL says LNG under new pacts to flow from 2026, gets one more ship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd will start importing LNG under two new contracts from 2026 and has added one more ship to transport the fuel, its Chairman Sandeep Kumar Gupta said on Wednesday. The company had in January this year signed back-to-back deals to import liquefied natural gas (LNG). It first signed deal to import 1 million tonnes of LNG from Dutch energy trader Vitol for 10 years and then another agreement to buy 0.5 million tonne per annum of LNG from UAE's ADNOC-Gas. "As a leading natural gas player, your company

recognises the importance of ensuring supply security. In this direction, we have signed two 10-year LNG supply agreements, starting in 2026: 1 million tonnes from Vitol Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore and 0.5 million tonnes from ADNOC Gas, UAE," he said at the company's annual general meeting. LNG is natural gas, extracted from below the surface, that has been cooled down to liquid form for ease and safety of non-pressurised storage or transport. GAIL will import LNG in cryogenic ships and turn it back into its gaseous state before piping it to users that may include power plants for generating electricity,

fertiliser units for producing crop nutrients or city gas operators for selling to automobiles as CNG or piping to household kitchens for cooking, India imports roughly half of its gas needs as local production is insufficient to meet demand. GAIL operates a 5 million tonnes a year LNG import facility at Dabhol in Maharashtra and has leased space at terminals in Gujarat and Odisha. It is scouting for a 26 per cent stake in a US-based LNG plant to source 1 million tonnes-a-year of LNG for 15 years. "Additionally, GAIL's volume of 4.5 million tonnes per annum is now renewed under LNG SPA signed between Qatar Energy LNG

and Petronet LNG Ltd, with supplies commencing in 2028 for a period of 20 years," he said. GAIL has hired the long-term LNG vessel, GAIL Urja, and has entered into a 14-year time charter party agreement for a newly built LNG carrier. "The time charter for this LNG carrier will begin in early 2025," he said, adding that GAIL's fleet of five LNG carriers will enable the company to meet the requirement of transporting contracted LNG volumes to India. Gupta said GAIL, which is India's largest gas transportation and marketing firm, is also solidifying its position as a

key player in the Indian petrochemical industry by establishing a diverse range of product offerings. "GAIL's 500,000 tonnes PDHPP project at Usar (in Maharashtra), 60,000 polypropylene plant at Pata (Uttar Pradesh), 1.25 million tonnes PTA plant at GMPL, Mangaluru and 50,000 tonnes Isopropyl Alcohol (IPA) Project at Usar will diversify and expand GAIL's existing petrochemical portfolio and provide robust growth in years to come," he said. "GAIL is also exploring the feasibility of setting up a world scale greenfield ethane cracker." It is also working on feasibility of coal gasification

project in a joint venture with Coal India Ltd to produce synthetic natural gas. Stating that GAIL was well-positioned to become a leader in the energy transition, he said the company board has approved the advancement of the net zero carbon emission target by five years from the earlier 2040 to 2035. "Advancing its endeavours to reduce its carbon footprint, GAIL has installed the country's first MW scale green hydrogen electrolyser in Vijapur, Madhya Pradesh," he said, adding that the firm was also working on setting up of 500 kilo litres per day 1G ethanol plant.

# Govt to soon launch scheme to train adolescent girls for non-traditional jobs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government will soon launch a scheme to train 14-18 years old girls in non-traditional job roles, a move aimed at increasing women's participation in the labour force, a top official said on Wednesday. The pilot of the scheme will be launched in the next 2-3 weeks, Secretary in Ministry of Women and Child Development Anil Malik said. The scheme, which is being launched in 27 districts in the pilot phase, will eventually be expanded to cover 218 districts across the country, he said. A non-traditional career is generally defined as a certain

role that has less than 25 per cent of a specific gender, either men or women. As part of the 'Introduction of Special Project for Empowering Adolescent Girls & Women, 14-18 years old girls would be provided training near their schools and homes while they continue their education. The secretary shared that the pilot will be launched in 2-3 weeks under which training in non-traditional job roles will be provided along with digital skilling, digital marketing and general personality orientation. This programme would ultimately lead to higher participation of women in the labour force, he added.

# Rupee falls 3 paise to close at 83.96 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated 3 paise to close at 83.96 (provisional) against the American currency on Wednesday, amidst strong dollar demand from importers particularly oil companies. Forex traders said a positive trend in domestic equities, foreign fund inflows and overnight decline in crude oil prices cushioned the downside. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.94 and touched an intra-day low of 83.97 against the US dollar. The domestic currency finally settled at 83.96 (provisional), 3 paise lower from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee depreciated by 6 paise to close at 83.93 against the American currency. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight negative bias on recovery in the US dollar and month-end dollar demand from oil marketing companies (OMCs) and



importers," said Anuj Choudhary -- Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas. Choudhary further noted that rise in global risk sentiments amid dovish Fed speak and rising expectations of a rate cut by the US Fed in September may support the rupee. "Traders may remain cautious ahead of US GDP and core personal consumption expenditures (PCE) data from the US this week. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of

six currencies, was trading 0.36 per cent higher at 100.91. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 0.93 per cent to USD 78.81 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex rose 73.80 points, or 0.09 per cent, to close at 81,785.56 points. The Nifty closed 34.60 points, or 0.14 per cent, up at 25,052.35 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Tuesday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,503.76 crore, according to exchange data.

# Fast cross-border payments to make it difficult to check money laundering, terror funding: Fed official

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Days after RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das sought to bring greater efficiency to trans-border transactions, a senior US Fed official on Wednesday said that frictionless cross-border payments will make it difficult to check money laundering and terror funding. Speaking at the Global Fintech Fest 2024 here, Christopher J Waller, a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, made it clear that "not all frictions that slow payments down are bad". The US Fed official overseeing payment systems said slowing down the speed at which payments are cleared and settled helps banks prevent money laundering and counter the financing of terrorism, detect fraud, and recover fraudulent or misdirected cross-border payments. He said unless new solutions are found, interlinking fast payment systems "might



increase" the risk-management burden for banks that participate in them. Acknowledging that consumers and businesses want cheaper and faster cross-border payments, Waller expressed his reservations. "I am not entirely convinced that interlinking arrangements will necessarily deliver," he said. Delivering a lecture in India's tech capital Bengaluru on Monday, Das advocated a faster interlinking of domestic payment systems to overcome the concerns of high costs and delays. "With the emergence of Fast

Payment Systems across countries and experimentation around CBDC, new possibilities are opening up to bring in greater efficiency to cross-border payments. Maximum efficiency gains in such initiatives would come from ensuring inter-operability as a key design element," Das had said. Waller, however, said that it may not be easier. "There is no silver bullet that increases speed and efficiency without tradeoffs," he added. He said certain frictions are built "purposely" into the global payment system for compliance and risk-

management reasons. The professor of economics said legal, compliance and operational considerations will have to be looked at, along with governance, oversight, data privacy and settlement arrangements when thinking about interlinking. He said the right incentives for the sender in a cross-border payment is essential, and also conceded that it exists in remittances. However, these are very small value transactions, he said, wondering whether the senders need to be incentivised at all. "We need to ask ourselves whether banks would find a central bank interlinking service more effective than their existing arrangements for cross-border payments, and if they would actually use it," Waller said. He also made it clear that having strong domestic networks is a necessity before one can embark on interlinking and added that the US Fed's system will take two years to be ready.

# Gold prices remain steady; silver declines ₹400



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices remained flat at Rs 74,350 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday in scattered deals even as it weakened in the overseas markets. Silver prices, however, declined Rs 400 to Rs 87,800 per kilogram. It had ended at Rs 88,200 per kg in the previous session on Tuesday. Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also ruled flat at Rs 74,000 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the fall in silver price due to poor uptake by industrial units and global influences. In the international markets, comex gold is trading at USD 2,542.20 per ounce, down USD 10.70 per ounce or 0.42 per cent. "Gold prices were slightly lower during European trading hours on Wednesday, due to a rebound in the US dollar," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. According to Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, comex gold is trading above USD 2,500 per ounce, supported by the FOMC meeting minutes, which reinforced expectations of a September rate cut. Rising geopolitical tensions, particularly the escalating Israel-Hezbollah conflict, also bolstered gold prices as a safe-haven asset, Chainwala said. Silver was also quoting lower at USD 29.93 per ounce in the global markets.

# Shipping Ministry approves wage structure revision for workers of major ports

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has approved wage structure revision for workers at major ports, an official statement said on Wednesday. According to the statement, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Bipartite Wage Negotiation Committee (BWNC) and the Indian Port Association (IPA), averting an indefinite strike that was set to disrupt operations across 12 major ports in India. The MoU facilitates the revision of the wage structure and addresses other service conditions, including

pensionary benefits, it added. It was also agreed that the fitment benefit of 8.5 per cent on the aggregate amount of basic pay as of December 31, 2021, plus 30 per cent VDA (variable dearness allowance) as of January 1, 2022, will be granted. "The periodicity of the settlement is set for five years, from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2026. "The new pay scales, effective from January 1, 2022, will be formulated according to existing practices," the statement said. Both parties agreed to consider aligning the periodicity of future wage revisions for both officers and employees, starting from

January 1, 2027, to avoid any potential anomalies, the ministry said. Additionally, the statement said, a special allowance of Rs 500 per month will be provided to working employees during the operative period of the settlement, from January 1, 2022, until December 31, 2026, or until the date of the employee's superannuation, whichever comes first. Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said the timely resolution of these issues reflects MoPSWs commitment to fostering a harmonious and productive working environment across all Indian ports.

A draft committee meeting, scheduled to convene on August 28, 2024, will prepare the settlement within ten days. This committee will include one representative from each federation as well as management representatives appointed by the IPA Chairman. "The management assured that the BWNC proceedings will be concluded, with the final settlement reached within 15 days," the statement said, adding that considering this development, the six federations have unanimously decided to defer the strike previously planned for August 28, 2024.

# UPI transaction volume expected to rise to 439 bn by FY29: PwC India report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The total transaction volume on UPI is expected to increase to 439 billion by 2028-29 from about 131 billion in the last financial year and account for 91 per cent of overall retail digital payments, said a PwC India Report. The report titled "The Indian Payments Handbook -- 2024-29" also said India's digital payments landscape has witnessed remarkable growth over the past eight years and the industry is projected to expand more than three times in volume, from 159 billion transactions in 2023-24 to 481 billion by 2028-29. In terms of value of payment transactions, the market



growth is expected to double, from Rs 265 lakh crore to Rs 593 lakh crore over the same period. The PwC India report said UPI continues its remarkable growth trajectory with a year-on-year growth in transaction volume of 57 per cent, it said. "In FY 2023-24, the total transaction volume was slightly over 131 billion and is

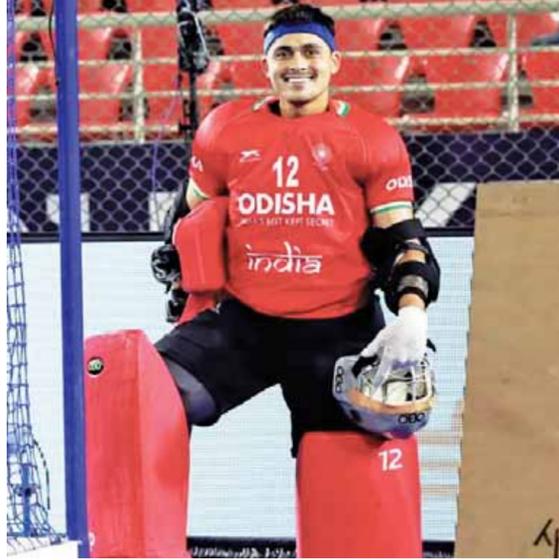
expected to grow to 439 billion by 2028-29. UPI now accounts for over 80 per cent of the overall retail digital payments in India and is expected to contribute to 91 per cent by 2028-29," the report said. It further said credit cards have witnessed a formidable growth in 2023-24 with the industry adding more than 16 million new ones. With the addition of new cards, the industry has also seen 22 per cent and 28 per cent surge in transactional volume and value, respectively. On the other hand, debit cards have seen a dip in both transactions volume and value owing to the shift in preferences by cardholders.

# PATHAK NAMED INDIA GOALKEEPER IN ASIAN CHAMPIONS TROPHY SQUAD

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Krishan Bahadur Pathak, on expected lines, was on Wednesday named the main goalkeeper after the retirement of PR Sreejesh in the Harmanpreet Singh-led 18-member Indian team for the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy. The tournament will see defending champions India vie for top honours alongside Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and hosts China at Hulunbuir from September 8-17. Sreejesh announced his retirement after India won a second successive Olympic bronze medal in Paris earlier this month. Pathak, who was India's standby goalkeeper at the Paris Olympics and in many tournaments prior to that, will now be the man in charge at the post, while Suraj Karkera will be the reserve custodian. Experienced midfielder Vivek Sagar Prasad has been made the vice-captain in place of Hardik Singh who has been rested along with Mandeep Singh, Lalit Upadhyay, Shamsher Singh and Gurjant Singh. The tournament will also be a big opportunity for India's promising drag-flicker Jugraj Singh who travelled to Paris Olympics as

standby and will look to prove his credentials alongside the brilliant Harmanpreet. A power-packed drag-flicker, Jugraj has proven his worth in the limited opportunities he got in the Pro League, and it will be up to him to cement his place in the side. Arajjeet Singh Hundal is the third drag-flicker in the team. The defence will be manned by Jarmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Harmanpreet Singh, Jugraj Singh, Sanjay and Sumit. Raj Kumar Pal, Nilakanta Sharma, Manpreet Singh, and Mohammed Raheel will form the midfield, while a young forwardline featuring Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Hundal, junior India captain Uttam Singh, and debutant Gurjot Singh will lead the attack. Ten players from the Paris Olympics bronze medal-winning squad are part of this team. "This is an important campaign for us to ensure we build on our ranking points. The team has just returned to the camp after all the celebrations following our performance in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games," chief coach Craig Fulton said in a Hockey India statement. "The past few weeks have truly been incredible with all the love and



adulation for the team and we hope this support will continue all through our future campaigns. "The new Olympic cycle for us begins with the Asian Champions Trophy and we are ready for the challenge. "While we have rested a few players

from the squad that played in Paris, we have brought in a few youngsters who have done well in training and have earned the opportunity to play in Asian Champions Trophy. "We will have Gurjot making his international debut, and I believe this is a great opportunity for youngsters who have received a call-up to shine," Fulton added. The Indian team will begin its campaign against China on September 8, followed by a match against Japan the next day. After a day's rest, India will take on Malaysia on September 11 and play Korea the next day. Then, the Indian side will take on arch-rivals Pakistan on September 14. The semi-finals and final are slated on September 16 and 17 respectively.

## SQUAD:

**Goalkeepers:** Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Suraj Karkera; **Defenders:** Jarmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Harmanpreet Singh (c), Jugraj Singh, Sanjay, Sumit; **Midfielders:** Raj Kumar Pal, Nilakanta Sharma, Vivek Sagar Prasad (VC), Manpreet Singh, Mohammed. Raheel Mousen; **Forwards:** Abhishek, Sukhjeet Singh, Arajjeet Singh Hundal, Uttam Singh, Gurjot Singh.



# Gukesh draws with Giri; Praggnanandhaa holds Caruana

PTI ■ SAINT LOUIS (USA)

India's Grandmasters D Gukesh and R Praggnanandhaa played out their eighth draw in as many games at the Sinquefeld Cup, which is a part of the Grand Chess Tour. While World Championship challenger Gukesh signed peace with Anish Giri of Holland in just 23 moves, Praggnanandhaa too followed suit and drew with local favourite Fabiano Caruana in 28 moves. With all the games ending in draws in the eighth round, Alireza Firouzja of France won the Grand Chess Tour with one round to spare here and became entitled to a USD 100,000 bonus after his successful stint throughout. In the eighth round, Firouzja played out the longest game that also ended peacefully after 80 moves against Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi. In the two other games of the day in the ten-player double round-robin tournament, Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan split the point with Ding Liren of China and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France drew with Wesley So of United States. Alireza took his tally to an unassailable 5.5 points out of eight games and Caruana is the only player who can catch him on points table provided Alireza loses his final bout against Praggnanandhaa and

the American himself beats Giri. Even if he loses, Alireza will win the tour for the first time thanks to his superior points tally overall. "It's very tough to win a tour. Any tour is tough to win, but this is the strongest tour in the world. Very happy, but it's very tiring and feeling exhausted but, I'm very happy," Alireza noted. The third place is still shared by five players on four points apiece. They are Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, Vachier-Lagrave, So and Abdusattorov. Nepomniachtchi and Liren come in next on 3.5 points, a half point clear of Anish Giri who is at the last spot. Gukesh had to work quite less out of a routine Ruy Lopez as black as Giri went for a couple of pawn grabs in the early middle game to shake hands vide repetition of moves. Praggnanandhaa started off with the English opening and faced one of Caruana's pet variation. The result here was a draw also through repetition of moves. Results round 8: Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fid, 3.5) drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 5.5) Ding Liren (Chn, 3.5) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Usa, 4); R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 4) drew with Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 4.5); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 4) drew with Wesley So (Usa, 4); Anish Giri (Ned, 3) drew with D Gukesh (Ind, 4).

AP ■ SAO PAULO (BRAZIL)

Uruguayan soccer player Juan Izquierdo died Tuesday at a hospital in Brazil five days after collapsing during a game at Sao Paulo. He was 27. Hospital Albert Einstein in Sao Paulo said in a statement that the National defender died at 9:38 p.m. Local time following "cardiorespiratory arrest associated with his cardiac arrhythmia." Izquierdo was taken to the hospital after he collapsed late in a Copa Libertadores soccer match between Nacional and Sao Paulo at the Brazilian city's Morumbi Stadium last Thursday. The Uruguayan club posted a statement on social media saying Izquierdo's death is felt "in deep pain and impact in our hearts" and "all Nacional is in grief for his irreplaceable loss." South American soccer's governing body also posted a tribute. CONMEBOL Alejandro

# Uruguayan soccer player Juan has died, days after collapsing during a game in Brazil

Dominguez said he's "deeply sorry about the early departure of Juan Izquierdo. "South American soccer is in mourning," he said. Other federations, including Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina, also expressed their condolences. In a statement Monday, doctors at the hospital said Izquierdo was put into neurological critical care because of increased intracranial pressure. He had been on a ventilator since Sunday. Uruguayan media said Izquierdo's parents and Nacional executives were at the hospital in Sao Paulo. Izquierdo was married and had two children - the youngest, a boy, was born earlier in August.



Uruguayan national team players were among those expressing their condolences. "Pain, sadness, it is hard to explain," Inter Miami striker Luis Suárez said. "May he rest

health. Sao Paulo players wore a shirt in support of the Uruguayan footballer before the team's 2-1 Brazilian league win against Vitoria on Sunday. The Brazilian club also posted a message after Izquierdo's death. "We had days of prayers, union and hope, and today we are in deep sadness with the news of the death of Juan Izquierdo," Sao Paulo's club statement said. "Our condolences to family, friends, teammates, Nacional fans and all the Uruguayan people in this moment of grief." Izquierdo's professional career began in 2018 at local club Cerro. He joined Peñarol the following year, but didn't get much playing time. "Peñarol is deeply sorry about the passing of Juan Manuel

Izquierdo. We express our heartfelt condolences and we embrace his family, his friends and Nacional in this moment of so much pain," Peñarol said in its social media channels. After leaving Peñarol, Izquierdo moved to Montevideo Wanderers. His athletic form and sharp tackles caught the attention of Mexico's San Luis in 2021, but he quickly returned to the Montevideo Wanderers. Izquierdo was signed by Nacional in 2022, played one match and then was transferred to the local Liverpool club. The defender was one of Liverpool's best players in the campaign that led to a Uruguayan league title in 2023, the club's first in more than a century. Izquierdo returned to Nacional this year and was vying for a position in the starting lineup with veteran Sebastián Coates, who played for Uruguay's national team. He played 23 matches this year and scored one goal.

# US OPEN 2024

## Naomi gets her first top 10 win in more than four years by defeating Ostapenko

AP ■ NEW YORK

A year ago, still on maternity leave and still unsure when she would play elite tennis again, Naomi Osaka visited the U.S. Open to appear with Michael Phelps for a discussion about mental health. While at the site, she sat in the stands to watch one of Coco Gauff's matches. Osaka also already was thinking about being back on a court at Flushing Meadows, so much so that she was pondering what she might want to wear to compete. And there she was Tuesday at Louis Armstrong Stadium, overpowering No. 10 seed Jelena Ostapenko 6-3, 6-2 while decked out in the bows on her back and attached to her shoes, in lime green - the color of this "Brat" summer, as it happens (YKYK) - and playing very much like a two-time champion at the place and a former No. 1-ranked star. "I feel like being able to be a part of (designing) my tennis outfits gives me, I would say, a different strength, especially the U.S. Open outfits. I feel like they are a little bit more flamboyant. When I was putting on my outfit today, I was, like, Ah, I hope this isn't too much," Osaka said with a smile. "Because I had the tutu, and then I had the bow jacket and it was green. I feel like everyone was staring at me." Another player asked for a photo, Osaka said, adding: "I hope it was a positive picture (and) it wasn't, like, Oh, my God, look at her! For me, when I put on the outfit, it's almost like a super suit, so I try to channel that." Did that well enough Tuesday to register her first victory against a top-10 opponent in more than four years. Osaka claimed titles in New



York in 2018 and 2020, along with a pair of trophies at the Australian Open in 2019 and 2021, and her matchup against 2017 French Open champion Ostapenko marked the first time two past major champs faced off in the opening round at the U.S. Open since Serena Williams defeated Maria Sharapova five years ago. Another such contest came Tuesday night, when 2020 Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin beat 2021 U.S. Open winner Emma Raducanu 6-1, 3-6, 6-4. "Having two wins here means a lot, and I think for me, I've been struggling with confidence throughout the year," said Osaka, who returned to action at the Australian Open in January, her first Grand Slam appearance in nearly 1 1/2 years because of mental health breaks and time away to have a baby. "This time now forces me to look in the mirror and say, Hey, you've done really well here. There's no reason why you can't do well again." How's this for doing well? Osaka did not make a single unforced error in the first set and finished with only five, 16 fewer than Ostapenko. "I do remember thinking, I need to win this match so I can wear my other color. That was very important to me," said Osaka, who is ranked 88th and

## Evans outlasts Khachanov over 5 hours, 35 minutes in match that sets US Open record for length

AP ■ NEW YORK

A few hours into a match that eventually set a U.S. Open record for length, Dan Evans glanced over at the scoreboard. Not to see how he was doing, but to clarify exactly how long he had been playing. "In the fourth set, I had to check the set to see what set we were in," Evans said. "I wasn't entirely sure what set we were in." More than an hour later, Evans won the

longest match at the U.S. Open since tiebreakers were introduced in 1970, beating Karen Khachanov 6-7 (6), 7-6 (2), 7-6 (4), 4-6, 6-4 on Tuesday in 5 hours, 35 minutes. Evans trailed 4-0 in the fifth set before running off the final six games. The final point, fittingly, was a marathon 22-shot rally, with Evans on the defensive for much of the point before hitting a hard shot to the corner that the No. 23-seeded Khachanov couldn't get back over the net with his backhand. The previous record was 5 hours, 26



minutes, when Stefan Edberg beat Michael Chang in a five-setter in the 1992 semifinals. "I was hurting all over, really," said the

34-year-old Evans, who was grabbing at his lower legs and resting his hands on his knees in the final set. "I don't think I've played five hours, that long, in a day, ever - in two sessions, never mind in one. I was actually thinking that on the court. I've never practiced two hours, two hours. It's normally an hour and a half." Evans improved to 5-0 against Khachanov, a semifinalist at the 2022 U.S. Open, by emerging in a match in which the sets lasted 68, 67, 72, 67 and 61 minutes.

## Jannik starts poorly at US Open but wins his first match since his steroids case emerged

AP ■ NEW YORK

If there were any boos directed Jannik Sinner's way at the U.S. Open, they were imperceptible amid the polite applause from the sparse crowd at Arthur Ashe Stadium when he was introduced Tuesday before the No. 1-ranked man's first match since his doping case emerged a week ago. After a sloppy and slow opening set, Sinner pulled away for a 2-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-2 victory against Mackie McDonald of the United States to reach the second round at Flushing Meadows. "The response from fans, I feel it has been great. Also throughout, when the news came out, in the practice sessions, there was a lot of support, which I'm very glad and happy about," Sinner said. "It is still a little bit not easy. You have to go through, day by day." There were no apparent signs in the stands or disparaging shouts making reference to what no one knew about for



months: Sinner tested positive twice for trace amounts of the anabolic steroid Clostebol in an eight-day span in March. Nothing was announced publicly until last week, when word came that the 23-year-old Italian was docked prize money and ranking points from the tournament where the first result appeared, but he escaped a suspension because it was ruled he was not at fault and the drug entered his system unintentionally, through a massage from his physiotherapist.

In his first public comments on the matter, at a pre-tournament news conference Friday, Sinner said he had fired the fitness trainer who bought an over-the-counter spray containing Clostebol in Italy and the physiotherapist who used it for a cut on his finger before treating the player and transferring the substance to his body. During a brief on-court interview in Ashe, Sinner wasn't asked about the case, which has drawn some criticism from other players, including Novak Djokovic, about the way it was handled and questions about whether certain athletes are treated differently than others when it comes to the process for determining punishments related to doping. "I cannot really control what they think and what they (say). I cannot control the players' reaction," Sinner said. "If I have something to say to someone, I go there privately, because I'm this kind of person. But, look, overall, it has been not bad. So I'm happy about that."

## 2021 champion Emma loses in first round to Sofia

AP ■ NEW YORK

Emma Raducanu wiped away tears at her post-match news conference after losing to Sofia Kenin 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 in the first round of the U.S. Open, keeping the 2021 champion winless at the tournament since her title. "I feel down. I feel sad," Raducanu said, pausing to find her words. "Obviously this is a tournament I really want to do well in." Three years ago, Britain's Raducanu was 18 at the U.S. Open when she became the first qualifier to claim any Grand Slam singles championship. She was eliminated in the first round by Alizé Cornet in 2022, then missed the trip to Flushing Meadows last year after having surgery on both wrists and an ankle. This time, Raducanu was outplayed down the stretch by Kenin, an American who won the Australian Open in 2020. "I'm mentally super tough, and I feel like that's something that I've always had," said Kenin, who had lost six of her past seven matches heading into the



U.S. Open. "I had confidence going into the match today, and of course I believed I could win." Kenin finished with 45 winners, nearly twice as many as Raducanu's 24. "She's a Slam champion for a reason. ... Credit to her," said Raducanu, who hadn't played a match on tour since a loss in Washington on Aug. 2. The lack of action might have been a mistake but was a result of a "collective" decision by her team, Raducanu said. Her next event will be the Korea Open, which starts in Seoul on Sept. 16.

# KOHLI, JAISWAL MOVE UP IN TEST RANKINGS, ROHIT DROPS TO 6TH



PTI ■ DUBAI

Senior India batter Virat Kohli moved up two rungs to eighth place while his captain Rohit Sharma dropped a spot to sixth in the latest ICC Test rankings released here on Wednesday. Joining Rohit and Kohli in the top 10 is young Yashasvi Jaiswal, who has moved up a spot to seventh. Veteran England batter Joe Root maintained his place as the top ranked Test batter in the world following their success in the opening Test

against Sri Lanka in Manchester. But Root's teammate Harry Brook has made a massive jump on the back of scores of 56 and 32 during that Old Trafford contest. The 25-year-old has risen three places to fourth overall, leaping past Pakistan's Babar Azam, Australia's Steve Smith and Rohit. Babar has dropped a whopping six places to fall from shared third to ninth following a rare failure in the first innings of Pakistan's Test against Bangladesh in

Rawalpindi. But teammate Mohammad Rizwan gained seven spots, achieving a new career-high rating by moving inside the top 10 at a shared 10th following his century in the same match. Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim has achieved a career-high rating as he climbed seven spots to move to 17th. Seasoned India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin continues to hold the top spot among bowlers while pacer Jasprit Bumrah and left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja have maintained their third and

seventh spots respectively. England seamer Chris Woakes, who is up four rungs to 16th, and Sri Lanka's Asitha Fernando (up 10 spots to 17th) have gained some ground while Pakistan's right-arm pacer Naseem Shah (up four spots to 33rd) and England's Gus Atkinson (up four places to 42nd) have attained career-best ratings following good returns from their recent appearances. Among all-rounders, Jadeja and Ashwin continue to occupy the top two spots while Axar Patel is ranked sixth.

# LLC returns with Season 3 Takes legendary cricketers to Kashmir after nearly 40 years

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Legends League Cricket, featuring retired swashbucklers like Shikhar Dawan and Dinesh Karthik among others, will return for a third season on September 20, criss-crossing Jodhpur, Surat, and Jammu before finally bringing the high-profile cricketers to Srinagar after close to 40 years. The league will kick off at the Barkatullah Khan Stadium in Jodhpur on September 20. A total of 25 matches will be played among six teams and the last two sides standing will play the final on October 16. The franchise-based tournament, which features a pool of over 200 players, will have its final at the Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar. "Legends League Cricket is back for another season and we are very excited to also be playing in Kashmir this season. This is a huge opportunity for the people of Kashmir to come to the stadium and



watch live cricketing action for the first time in almost 40 years," said Raman Raheja, Co-Founder, Legends League Cricket. "It also presents a unique opportunity for the cricketers to experience the beauty of Kashmir and enjoy the hospitality and

love of the wonderful people of Srinagar." The organisers stated that the league attracted a massive audience of 180 million across India during the previous season, spanning 19 matches. "With an extended schedule and a star-studded lineup, including the recently retired Dhawan and Karthik, the upcoming season is poised to surpass previous records," the organisers stated. In the previous edition held in India, former international stalwarts such as Suresh Raina, Aaron Finch, Martin Guptill, current India head coach Gautam Gambhir, Chris Gayle, Hashim Amla, Ross Taylor, and many others played alongside 110 other legendary cricketers. The league will kick off in Jodhpur and then make its way to the Lalbhai Contractor Stadium in Surat. The third leg will be played at the Maulana Azad Stadium, Jammu. The players' auction for the event will be held here on Thursday.

# Dawid Malan, former top-ranked T20 batter, retires from England cricket

AP ■ LONDON

Dawid Malan, the former top-ranked T20 batter who scored centuries for England in all formats, has announced his retirement from the international arena. The 36-year-old Malan told British newspaper The Times of London that he exceeded expectations with his success in the white-ball game but was disappointed that he couldn't

handle the intensity of Test cricket. Malan, a top-order batter, played 22 Tests as well as 30 ODIs and 62 T20 internationals. It was in the T20 game where he excelled, becoming No. 1 in the batting rankings in 2020 and winning the T20 World Cup in 2022. Malan was left out of the squad for the upcoming white-ball series against Australia and hasn't played for England in any format since the 50-over



World Cup last year. It was his inability to forge a career as a Test batter that leaves him with most regrets. "I took all three formats extremely seriously but the intensity of test cricket was something else - five days plus the days building up," Malan told the Times. "I'm a big trainer; I love hitting lots of balls and I'd train hard in the build-up, and then the days were long and intense. You can't switch off. "I found it very mentally draining, especially the long test series that I played, where my performances dropped off from the third or fourth test onwards.

# Impact Player rule gives little more value for strategy and makes game fairer: Ashwin



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seasoned India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin feels that the IPL's Impact Player rule has made the game fairer and added "value for strategy" in the event. Senior India players like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have been critical of the rule as they feel it holds back development of Indian all-rounders and upsets the balance between bat and ball. However, Ashwin feels the rule, introduced in the 2023 season which allows all IPL teams to substitute a player -- batter or bowler -- during their respective innings as per the demands of the match, makes the game fairer. "Why I think the Impact Player rule is not so bad is because it gives a little more value for

strategy," 'ESPNcricinfo' quoted Ashwin as saying on former India captain Krishnamachari Srikkanth's YouTube show, which is in Tamil. "The other side of that argument is it doesn't encourage all-rounders. But no one is stopping them. In this generation, they don't do it (batters bowling and vice-versa). "It's not like they're discouraged because of the Impact Player rule. Look at Venkatesh Iyer, he's currently rocking for Lancashire. There's an opportunity for innovation and it makes the game fairer," Ashwin added. The 37-year-old backed his stance by citing the Qualifier 2 match in which Sunrisers Hyderabad replaced opener Travis Head with spinner

Shahbaz Ahmed against Rajasthan Royals at this year's IPL. Ahmed went on to become the player of the match, claiming three wickets including Ashwin's. "Sunrisers brought in Shahbaz Ahmed as an Impact Player (after hitting 175 for 9 batting first). He went on to become a match-winner. Ashwin argued that the rule can play a significant role in balancing matches when there is dew. "When dew has the potential to make games one-sided, teams bowling second get an extra option as a counter. If you're batting second, you can tactically make a substitution by off-loading the extra bowler for a batter," he said. "Games are tighter, an extra player is getting to play. Barring Kolkata or Mumbai, where scores skyrocketed, they haven't been a drastic change elsewhere. Like at Punjab Kings' home venue (Mullanpur), they were all 160-170 games." On the other hand, the rule has helped several players advance in their careers, even earning spots in the national team, reckoned Ashwin. "Shahbaz Ahmed, Shivam Dube most importantly, Dhruv Jurel... If not for the Impact Player rule, he may have never gotten the chance. So the emergence of a lot of players has happened. I'm not saying that's the only way for players to emerge, but it's not so bad," he said.

# Five-wicket burst from Aayush secures Purani Dilli 6's win over North Delhi Strikers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pacer Aayush Thakur's five-wicket haul powered Purani Dilli 6 to a 20-run win over North Delhi Strikers at the Delhi Premier League here. Aayush (5/27) wreaked havoc, blowing away NDS's top-order as they were restricted for 172/7 in their chase of 193. Aayush struck in his first over dismissing opener Sarthak Ranjan for a duck. He returned to get rid of Yash Dabas in the third over followed by Kshitiz Sharma in the fifth over. Opener Vaibhav Kandpal (57) and Yajas Sharma (41) stitched a 55-run partnership for the fourth wicket and looked on course to chase the target but the latter was run out.



Kandpal along with Vaibhav Rawal then took on the responsibility of chasing the target. The duo started finding boundaries at regular intervals keeping the run rate in their control.

However, Purani Dilli 6 got back in the game as Rawal was run out at a crucial time leaving NDS needing 58 runs off 32 balls. But Aayush swung into action get the key wicket of Kandpal. Aayush completed his five-wicket haul, dismissing Pranshu for a duck. Earlier, Purani Dilli 6 captain Arpit Rana (42) and Sanat Sangwan (47) put up a 94-run opening stand. With Rana back in the pavilion, Sangwan was next to take the long walk back as he was dismissed by Manan Bhardwaj. Arnab Bugga (39) and Lalit Yadav (9) stitched a 38-run partnership before Mayank Gusain blazed away to 40 off just 12 balls with the help of one boundary and five sixes to provide the final flourish.



# Zaheer Khan set to join LSG as team mentor

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Lucknow Super Giants are set to appoint former India speedster Zaheer Khan as their mentor ahead of the IPL mega auction. The appointment marks the return of the 45-year-old left-arm pacer to the IPL fold after two years, having been associated with five-time champions Mumbai Indians from 2018-2022. A formal unveiling is scheduled at the RPSG Group Headquarters here on Wednesday. "Zaheer has been appointed as team mentor and the unveiling will happen later today," sources told PTI. Zaheer will thus take up the role left vacant by Gautam Gambhir last year when he went to join his former franchise Kolkata Knight Riders and guided them to the IPL title in 2024. Gambhir is now the Indian head coach. At Mumbai Indians, Zaheer first served as the director of cricket before taking on the role of head of global development. LSG currently do not have a bowling coach after the departure of South African speedster Morne Morkel, who has joined Gambhir's coaching staff. It is learnt that Zaheer will also be involved in scouting and player development programme during the off season. Before his coaching career, Zaheer played for three IPL teams -- Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore, and Delhi Daredevils. Over 10 seasons, Zaheer appeared in 100 matches for these teams, claiming 102 wickets with an economy rate of 7.58. His final appearance in the IPL was in 2017 when he captained the Delhi Daredevils, after which he retired from all forms of cricket.

# Will ensure Test cricket remains priority as it forms bedrock of game: ICC chairman Jay Shah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Newly-elected ICC Chairman Jay Shah says he will look to ensure that Test cricket forms the "bedrock" of the game in his tenure during which he will also try to "dismantle barriers that have hindered cricket's progress". The 35-year-old will relinquish his current position of BCCI secretary to succeed incumbent Greg Barclay on December 1 as the youngest ICC Chairman for a term of two years. "While the T20 is a naturally exciting format, it is equally important that Test cricket

remains a priority for everyone as it forms the bedrock of our game," Shah said in a statement issued by the BCCI on Tuesday. "We must see to it that cricketers are driven to longer format and our efforts will be channelised towards this goal," he added. Shah said he would also like to work towards setting up a separate program for talent search. He emphasised on lifting the standard of the game across the globe. "I want to assure you that I will do everything possible to elevate the standard of our game across the globe. As I



step into this pivotal role, I am resolutely committed to meeting your high expectations and dedicating myself to the beautiful game of cricket," he said. Shah, who is the son of union home minister Amit Shah, will

relinquish his position as the BCCI secretary at the board's Annual General Meeting likely to be held towards the end of next month or in October. Shah became the fifth Indian after the late Jagmohan Dalmiya, Sharad Pawar, N Srinivasan and Shashank Manohar to be elected for the high-profile job. "With cricket poised to make its historic debut at the Olympics in 2028, we stand at the precipice of a transformative era. This juncture is not merely a milestone, it's a clarion call for all of us involved in this magnificent sport.

# West Indies beat South Africa by 8 wickets in 3rd T20, sweep series 3-0

AP ■ TAROUBA (TRINIDAD)

Nicholas Pooran blasted 35 runs from 13 balls to lead the West Indies to an eight-wicket win over South Africa in the rain-shortened third Twenty20 cricket international, securing a 3-0 series sweep. Rain delayed the start of play by an hour and returned in the fifth over of the South Africa innings, reducing the match to 13 overs per innings. South Africa was 23-0 when the rain started and Tristan Stubbs dashed 40 from 15 balls to help the visitors post 108-4 after a slow start. Stubbs hit five fours and three sixes for 38 runs from boundaries. He finished the series with 144 runs at a strike-rate of 178. Pooran almost matched him, hitting two fours and four sixes. The West Indies was 60-2 when Pooran was out to the fifth ball of the fourth over

and coasted to victory with 22 balls remaining. Shai Hope made an unbeaten 42 from 24 balls and Shimron Hetmeyer scored 31 from 17 deliveries in an unbroken partnership of 56 for the third wicket. "Obviously coming out on top is what we wanted. We wanted to win the series 3-0," West Indies captain Roston Chase said in a television interview. "Before the match, at the team meeting after everyone had spoken, I just asked the boys to give me the victory because you want to start well and I just want to thank the guys for the support and the way they played with their heart today." No overs were lost when rain delayed the toss. The West Indies eventually won the toss and chose to bowl, with an eye on the threat of



further rain. South Africa began cautiously in humid conditions and the first boundary of its innings didn't come until the fourth over, hit by Ryan Rickelton from the bowling of Matthew Forde. The first six of the innings came from the next ball. The rain returned and forced the players from the field for 70 minutes, leaving South Africa on the back foot when it resumed. Reeza Hendricks was out three balls after the resumption, but that brought Stubbs to the crease and he did his best to blast South Africa to a competitive total. Stubbs hit 6, 4, 6 from consecutive balls in the 11th over bowled by Obed McCoy and 4, 6, 4 in the final over bowled by Forde. He was out with two balls left in the innings. Pooran then blasted the West Indies into an winning position with his brilliant 13-ball cameo. He finished

with a strike rate of 269. Hope hit four sixes in his innings and Hetmeyer hit four fours and a six as the West Indies completed a comprehensive win. The West Indies beat South Africa 3-0 in a Twenty20 series prior to this year's T20 World Cup, which it co-hosted with the United States, and now has swept South Africa again. But in between, South Africa eliminated the West Indies from the World Cup. "It was a tough one today. Obviously it was stop-start with the rain which hurt us quite a bit," South Africa captain Aiden Markram said. "Conditions changed quite a bit throughout the game as well. "I think we got the tougher of the conditions. That being said I think there are several areas we can improve on as a team to play better cricket in tough conditions.

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