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PM Modi apologises to his deity, Shivaji Maharaj



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Maharashtra Governor CP Radhakrishnan and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde during laying of the foundation stone of Vadhvan Port and launching of development works, in Palghar district, on Friday

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In an apparent bid to blunt the Opposition's full-fledged campaign against the BJP-led MahaYuti Government and the Centre over the collapse of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's imposing statue at Rajkot fort in Sindhudurg district ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday apologised to Chhatrapati Shivaji whom he described as not just "a revered king or great personality but a deity".

Maharashtra's Palghar district and kick-starting other developments, Modi recalled that the first thing he did after he was nominated by the BJP as the Prime Ministerial candidate in 2013, was to visit Raigad Fort to offer his prayers to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at the latter's Samadhi. He said he was blessed with the same 'bhakti bhav' with which he revered his master and embarked on the new journey to serve the nation.

Alluding to the collapse of a 35-tall statue at Malvan in Sindhudurg district, the Prime Minister tendered his humble apology to the legendary Maratha king by saying: "Shivaji Maharaj is not merely a name, a revered king or a great personality but a deity". Indirectly hitting out at the leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi of the Congress for showing disrespect towards freedom fighter Veer Savarkar, Modi said that his upbringing and his culture made him different from those "who intend to disrespect the great son of the land Veer Savarkar and trample the feeling of nationalism".

In an unmistakable criticism of Rahul Gandhi ahead of the State Assembly polls, Modi said: "People of Maharashtra should remain wary of those who disrespect Veer Savarkar and feel no remorse for it". The Prime Minister said that his reverence towards Chhatrapati Shivaji should be seen in the context of the fact that the first thing he did after visiting Maharashtra was to apologise to his deity Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. He also sought forgiveness from all those who worship Shivaji Maharaj. Averring that his government had taken major steps for the growth of Maharashtra in the last 10 years as "a Viksit Maharashtra is the most crucial element of the resolution of a Viksit Bharat", Modi said that the state had the potential and resources to grow due to its coastal proximity, holding immense possibilities for the future.

The Vadhvan Port will be the country's largest container port and will be counted among the world's deep water ports. It will become an epicenter of trade and industrial development for Maharashtra and India," the Prime Minister said. Being built at a cost of ₹76,000 crore, Vadhvan Port — located near Dahanu town in Palghar district — is expected to be one of India's largest deep-water ports and will provide direct connectivity to international shipping routes, reducing transit times and costs. Vadhvan Port aims to establish a world-class maritime gateway that will boost the country's trade and economic growth by catering to large container vessels, offering deeper drafts, and accommodating ultra-large cargo ships. Modi, who also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 218 fisheries projects worth around Rs 1,560 crore and launched Rs 360 crore National Roll Out of Vessel Communication and Support system, said there was a time when Bharat used to be counted among the most strong and prosperous nations due to its maritime capabilities. "People of Maharashtra are well-versed in this potential. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj took India's maritime capabilities to new heights with his policies and strong decisions for the development of the country," Modi said, adding that even the entire East India Company could not stand in front of Darya Sarang Kanhoji Yaganti.

Dialogue a bygone theme, EAM warns Pakistan of action

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday sent out a stern message to Pakistan declaring that the era of "uninterrupted dialogue" is over. He also warned that "actions have consequences" in an apparent reference to Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Making these assertions at a book launch event here, he reaffirmed New Delhi's position that terror and talks cannot go together. The Minister's comments on dialogue with Pakistan came in the backdrop of elections in Jammu and Kashmir in less than 20 days. "The era of uninterrupted dialogue with Pakistan is over. Actions have consequences," Jaishankar said. "So far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, Article 370 is done with. So, the issue is what kind of relationship we can contemplate with Pakistan," Jaishankar said, making it clear that there would be no compromise on this matter. He also stressed that India would not remain passive in its dealings with Pakistan. "What I do want to say is that we are not passive, and whether events take a positive or a negative direction, either way, we will react," the Minister added. On a suggestion that India is content with the relationship to continue as it is, he said, "Maybe yes, maybe no... but what I do want to say is that we are not passive, and that whether events take a positive or negative direction... either way we will react." In his address, Jaishankar also said for any country in the world, neighbours are "always a



conundrum", and so are "major powers". Major powers will be a conundrum because they are major, because of the breadth of their interests. They will always have an agenda, which will overlap with us, but to differing degrees, also diverge, he said. In the case of China, you have a "double conundrum", because it's a neighbour and a major power. So, the challenges with China fits this double definition, he added. The book "Strategic Conundrum: Reshaping India's Foreign Policy" by former diplomat Rajiv Sikri talks about India's relationship with its neighbouring countries and the accompanying challenges. The Minister also said there is a debate in the neighbourhood about SAARC and BIMSTEC, and "all of you know the difference". That is a contrast which illustrates some of the challenges and opportunities of "regionalisation", he said.

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Jagdish Tytler to be framed for 1984 riots and murders

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Holding that there was sufficient evidence to put him on trial, a Delhi Rouse Avenue Court on Friday ordered framing of charges for murder and other offences against Congress leader Jagdish Tytler in a case related to alleged murder of three people in the North Delhi's Pul Bangash area, almost 40 years after the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Special CBI judge Rakesh Sial said there was sufficient evidence against him to put him on trial. "Sufficient ground is there to proceed against the accused person," the Special CBI judge said, posting the matter for September 13 for formally framing the charges when Tytler would be asked if he would like to plead guilty or face trial. Tytler was discharged under the Indian Penal Code (IPC)'s Section 148 (rioting armed with deadly weapons) as the special judge Rakesh Sial listed the matter for the next hearing on September 13. Welcoming the development, BJP national spokesperson RP Singh wrote on X, "Albeit delayed, it appears justice is being done." The case relates to the burning to death of Badal Singh, Sardar Thakur Singh, and Gurbachan Singh and setting ablaze Pul Bangash Gurudwara a day after the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination on November 1, 1984.

Helpless Mamata Banerjee writes to PM a second time

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Within a week of writing a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking enactment of stringent laws in rape cases — all in the backdrop of the nationwide protests against the rape and murder of a postgraduate lady doctor at RG Kar Medical College Hospital in Kolkata — Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday shot him off a second letter reiterating the earlier demand and expressed her dismay at the alleged lukewarm response her first missive found in South Block. "You may kindly recall my letter number 44-CM dated August 22, 2024," Mamata wrote, adding with a tinge of discontent that though such issues warranted immediate attention she is yet to receive any reply from him. "No reply was received from your end on such a sensitive issue," the Chief Minister wrote in her second letter mentioning, however, that she had indeed received a general letter from the Minister of Woman and Child Development which, she said, was a "generic reply" concerning a serious issue. "I am of the thought that the seriousness of the subject



and its relevance to society has not been adequately appreciated as this generic reply reflects," Mamata wrote providing details of the measures her Government has taken to prevent such offences. Mamata's back-to-back express communications come in the wake of tremendous pressure her Government is facing from the community of doctors, the civil society and general public as a whole with streets of the State getting flooded with huge rallies demanding justice for the 31-year-old lady doctor who was brutally raped and murdered in the wee hours of August 9 even as she was taking rest inside a seminar hall of the hospital after completion of 36 hours of non-stop duty.

Mamata's letter also comes in the wake of her Government announcing amendments in the Central laws through a special Assembly Session summoned for that purpose on September 2. The State Government has convened a Special Assembly Session on September 2 for placing an amendment Bill and passing a stringent law against rape, senior Bengal Minister Chhattopadhyay earlier said. The State Cabinet has already given clearance to the tabling of the Amendment Bill, he said. Mamata had a couple of days ago told a students' rally that she had requested Modi to pass stringent laws in these cases. "But if the Centre cannot pass stringent laws... then we will pass it in the State by convening a Special Session of the Assembly... we want a strong law so that the accused can be tried in a fast-track court and given death sentence in 15 days' time," she said. Meanwhile, Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Friday met Home Minister Amit Shah at his residence where they apparently discussed the situation arising out of the rape and murder of the lady doctor at RH Kar Hospital, sources said.

Assam cancels Jumma break for Muslim MLAs

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam Assembly will do away with a two-hour break provided on Fridays to facilitate Muslim legislators to offer namaz, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. The rule will be implemented from the next Session, an Assembly official said. In a social media post, Sarma said, "By doing away with the 2 hour Jumma break, @AssamAssembly has prioritised productivity and shed another vestige of colonial baggage. This practice was introduced by Muslim League's Syed Saadulla in 1937."

Champai Soren joins BJP, Jharkhand feels the tremors

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

On a day when Ghatshila OMLA Ramdas Soren replaced him in the Jharkhand Cabinet taking oath as a Minister, former Chief Minister Champai Soren, popularly known as the 'Kolhan Tiger', joined the BJP on Friday, marking a significant change in the State's political landscape just ahead of the Assembly elections. Champai along with a large number of his supporters crossed over to the saffron camp in the presence of Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa



Former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren with Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan waves to supporters after joining BJP during a ceremony, in Ranchi, Friday

Sarma at a ceremony in Ranchi while Jharkhand Governor Santosh Gangwar administered the oath to Ramdas in the presence of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, senior leaders of the JMM-led coalition Government, and top bureaucrats. Though Ramdas's portfolio is yet to be announced, he would likely be given similar portfolios as Champai held. Champai's induction into BJP is seen as a shot in the arm of the saffron party, looking to establish a foothold in the tribal belt of Jharkhand, where Scheduled Tribes make up about 26 per cent of the electorate.

Construction threatens Sultanpur Park's fragile biodiversity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking exception to the flagrant disregard for environmental regulations at the Ramsar site and Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of Sultanpur National Park in Gurugram, Haryana, a high-level central panel chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, has sought action against the offenders.



It has also called for a comprehensive action taken report from the State Government in the matter. At a meeting held recently, the members of the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) led by the Union Minister deliberated in detail on the observations made in the report prepared under the supervision of Inspector General

(Wildlife). The report was particularly alarming to the extent that it "leaves much to be desired." The report said despite the national park being enclosed by a boundary and its habitats largely preserved due to the proactive measures of the Forest and Wildlife Department, the governance and management practices within the ESZ are found to be seriously deficient.

Nation salutes historic gold and bronze medalists at Paris Paralympics

PTI ■ CHATEAUX

The incredible Avani Lekhara became the first Indian to claim successive Paralympic gold medals with a record-shattering top finish in the women's 10m air rifle (SH1) shooting competition and had a bronze-winning Mona Agarwal for company on the podium in a historic double for the country here on Friday. Winner of the Tokyo Paralympics gold three years back, Avani, 22, shot a superb 249.7 to erase her own Paralympic record of 249.6 set in the Japanese capital three years back. The 37-year-old Mona, who dabbled in several sports

including shot-put, powerlifting and wheelchair volleyball before settling on shooting, notched up 228.7 for the third-place finish. This is the first time in India's Paralympic history that two shooters have pulled off medals in a single event. Avani, who hails from Jaipur, endured a tough buildup to the Paralympics. She grappled with a host of health issues, including a gallbladder surgery, which forced her to take a recovery break of one and half months. But the committed shooter, who is an assistant conservator of forest with the Rajasthan Government, did not let health concerns distract her from her aim of



Avani Lekhara during the national camp at the Karni Singh ranges, where she worked hard on regaining her strength and mentally steeling herself for Paris.

"I am happy to win a medal for my country. I am thankful to my team, my coaches and my parents," said Avani after the match. The SH1 category is for athletes who have movement affected in their arms, lower trunk, legs or have no limbs. The youngster, who is wheelchair bound after a car mishap left her paralysed below the waist as an 11-years-old, had become the first woman shooter from the country to win medals in shooting at the Tokyo Paralympics in 2021. In a nerve-racking final, Avani was trailing her rival Lee Yunri by a few decimal points but the South Korean wilted under pressure and

had an awful last shot of 6.8, while Avani kept her cool to shoot a superb 10.5 to clinch the gold with a Paralympics record. The success will come as a huge boost for Avani ahead of the 50m rifle 3-positions event, where she is also a firm favourite for a medal after winning bronze in the previous edition of the Games in Tokyo. Earlier, Avani came up with another sterling performance by qualifying for the final in second place, while Mona, who too has been in sublime form in the last one year, also made it to the eight-shooter summit clash in fifth place. While Avani shot a 625.8 to be placed second behind

Ukraine Iryna Shchetnik, who broke the Paralympic Qualification Record with a score of 627.5, Mona, the two-time World Cup gold medalist, shot 623.1. Avani had credited the "positive environment" in the national camp for helping her overcome her fitness worries. "I think we have been in a very positive environment throughout. We are just focussing on the process rather than the outcome. "There, obviously, will be expectations but those expectations only motivate me and inspire me more to give my best. I am also more mature in my technique," she had said before leaving for Paris.

22 held during police recruitment exams

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Police recruitment exam was successfully conducted across all 67 districts of the state on Friday with foolproof security in place.



Candidates being frisked at an exam centre in Jankipuram on Friday

This transparent and fair approach ensured that solver gangs and exam fraudsters kept their distance. On the fourth day of the exam, 691,936 candidates appeared at 1,174 centres.

During checking, 94 candidates were identified as suspicious. The police, determined to ensure a smooth and cheating-free examination, registered 19 FIRs and arrested 22 suspects.

Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board Chairman Rajeev Krishna reported that on Friday, 691,936 candidates took the examination. In the first shift, 344,590 candidates appeared in the exam while 401,870 had downloaded their admit cards.

During this shift, 61 suspicious individuals were identified but allowed to take the exam, though they will be monitored by the Police Recruitment and Promotion Board.

In the second shift, 347,346 candidates appeared in the exam while 401,972 had downloaded their admit cards. In this shift, 33 suspicious individuals were identified but allowed to take the exam, with ongoing monitoring by the board.

To ensure a cheating-free and peaceful examination, police were stationed at every centre, with candidates undergoing three rounds of checking before entering the examination hall.

According to an official communication released by the director general of the police office, 22 persons were arrested on Friday in connection with impersonation or other charges mainly to conceal their original date of birth.

Many arrested candidates had taken their high school board exam twice to qualify the age eligibility. The release said that those arrested included four in Saharanpur, followed by three in Meerut, two each in Etah and Jaunpur, and one each in

Fatehpur and Kanpur districts respectively. The exams are being held amidst tight security arrangements to ensure fair examination, officials said. The five-day exercise, which began last week, will conclude on Saturday.

The fresh recruitment exercise to fill over 60,000 posts was necessitated after the exams which were supposed to be held on February 17 and 18 were cancelled following allegations of paper leak.

UP State Road Transport Corporation is providing free bus services to candidates, including complimentary travel on electric buses in several districts.

The Cantment police on Friday claimed to have worked out the Kaushik murder case after seven months. The accused, identified as Ravindra Pal Singh, a head constable in the traffic police from Shahjahanpur, is currently undergoing interrogation.

The police reported that Ravindra Pal Singh confessed to the murder after intensive questioning by a team led by the Cantment ACP. According to the investigation, Singh had used an app to seek out homosexual encounters.

He met the 22-year-old victim, Kaushik, through the app. On January 20 this year, Singh laced Kaushik's alcohol with poison because he was upset over latter's involvement with other people.

Following the murder, Singh transported Kaushik's body to Sadar Cantt crossing and abandoned it there. Singh and Kaushik had met on January 13 via the app, and Kaushik had visited Singh's rented accom-

STF nabs gang member for rigging exam

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A team of the Special Task Force (STF) on Friday claimed to have apprehended a member of a gang involved in rigging the Uttar Pradesh Police Sub-Inspector, Civil Police and equivalent recruitment examination for 2020-21. The rigging was reportedly carried out in collusion with some examination centre employees.

The accused arrested was identified as Shashikant Ram from Ballia, who had a reward of Rs 25,000 for his capture in a case registered at the Hussainganj police station in Lucknow. He was detained in Delhi.

A mobile phone was recovered from him during the arrest. Reports said that a candidate named Ritesh Yadav was selected through the Uttar Pradesh Police Sub-Inspector and equivalent recruitment examination for 2020-21.

Following his selection, the Uttar Pradesh Police Promotion and Recruitment Board requested verification of his original documents. However, Ritesh Yadav failed to produce these documents, leading to the cancellation of his appointment by the board.

Ritesh Yadav subsequently filed a writ in court against this decision. The court instructed him to present his original documents to the Uttar Pradesh Police Promotion and Recruitment Board within a month, but he failed to do so within the stipulated time.

6 held for defrauding doctor of ₹2 crore

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The STF team recovered eight mobile phones, eight pass-books, and nine HDFC banking kits from them. The doctor was defrauded after being 'digitally arrested'. The accused revealed that their gang operated by calling people while posing as police or CBI officers.

They threatened victims and collected personal details to gain unauthorised access to their bank accounts. The gang used an app called USD* for making these calls via P2P (peer-to-peer) connections.

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that after the announcement of the Uttar Pradesh Police exam, Ajay Chauhan and VK Singh, who were not actual Secretariat employees, falsely posed as such to facilitate cheating.

Shashikant disclosed that he had instructed Ritesh Yadav to arrange Rs 15 lakh to pass the exam. Ritesh Yadav passed on this information to Atul Yadav, who contacted the gang and began collecting money from other candidates, purportedly to pass the exam, in order to save his own funds.

Despite this, Ritesh Yadav's original documents were in possession of Ajay Chauhan. Atul Yadav collected substantial amounts from various candidates and distributed the money among gang members.

Atul Yadav himself, despite being a candidate trying to pass the exam, was unsuccessful because his examination centre was outside the gang's influence.

Cop arrested in 7-month-old murder case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Cantment police on Friday claimed to have worked out the Kaushik murder case after seven months. The accused, identified as Ravindra Pal Singh, a head constable in the traffic police from Shahjahanpur, is currently undergoing interrogation.

The police reported that Ravindra Pal Singh confessed to the murder after intensive questioning by a team led by the Cantment ACP. According to the investigation, Singh had used an app to seek out homosexual encounters.

He met the 22-year-old victim, Kaushik, through the app. On January 20 this year, Singh laced Kaushik's alcohol with poison because he was upset over latter's involvement with other people.

Following the murder, Singh transported Kaushik's body to Sadar Cantt crossing and abandoned it there. Singh and Kaushik had met on January 13 via the app, and Kaushik had visited Singh's rented accom-

modation in Sadar locality, where they engaged in a homosexual relationship. Tensions arose when Kaushik refused to adhere to Singh's demands to avoid meeting other individuals, leading to the fatal altercation.

Initially, an FIR was lodged against four individuals, including Kaushik's girlfriend and his friend Sooraj Yadav, based on the complaint from Kaushik's father. This FIR was filed on January 14 after the body was discovered at the railway crossing. However, after a

thorough investigation, it was determined that these individuals were not involved and were cleared of suspicion. The investigation was subsequently reopened, focusing on Kaushik's connections through the app. This led the police to Singh's mobile number.

Using a combination of human sleuthing and scientific evidence, the police gathered sufficient information to confront Singh. Under pressure from a team led by the Cantment ACP, Singh confessed to the crime.

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Chaos in LMC House over GSI survey, encroachments

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Lucknow Municipal Corporation House meeting descended into chaos on Friday, leading to its adjournment until Monday. Discussions covered several critical issues, including door-to-door garbage collection, city cleanliness, the GSI survey for house taxes, and encroachments.

At the outset, Mayor Sushma Kharakwal proposed addressing issues from each ward. However, this suggestion faced opposition from her own party's councillors. It was decided instead to first confirm the status of unresolved issues from the previous meeting and the actions taken before moving forward.

Councillor Nagendra Singh Chauhan demanded a separate allowance for councillors, insisting that no funds from the councillor quota should be allocated to the LMC building. Congress councillor Mamta Chaudhary alleged that oppo-



Uproarious scenes were witnessed during the Lucknow Municipal Corporation House meeting on Friday

sition voices were being stifled during discussions on the GSI survey for house taxes. She claimed that BJP's male councillors were misbehaving, a point supported by a Samajwadi Party's female councillor. Regarding the GSI survey, councillors questioned whether any action would be taken against the company for inaccurately assessing house taxes.

Municipal Commissioner Inderjit Singh assured that while errors had been corrected, the issue would be further investigated. Encroachment issues in Aminabad and Guru Nanak Market were also raised. Councillors reported that some shops were being run by individuals other than the allottee.

Councillor Anurag Mishra highlighted that encroachments were widespread across all markets in Lucknow, including Chowk. Councillors Ranjeet Singh, Munna Mishra, Rajesh Singh, and Prithvi Gupta raised con-

cerns about Ramki company. They noted discrepancies in the road length measurements and poor performance in door-to-door garbage collection. Officials from LMC and Ramki assured that the road length survey would be revisited and that the company would be

paid only Rs 16 crore, with work monitored over six months. A significant uproar occurred when Congress corporator Mukesh Chauhan accused certain councillors of claiming that Bangladeshis were picking up garbage. Mukesh argued that the pres-

ence of Bangladeshis reflected failures of both the Central and the state governments in controlling migration. He clarified that the garbage collectors were Assamese. The municipal commissioner announced that each ward would receive five additional employees and necessary resources to combat dengue.

He requested corporators to submit their requirements. The mayor also pledged 25 new streetlights for each ward and promised to build boundary walls around land reclaimed from encroachments. She expressed disappointment over the absence of Jalkal and Jal Nigam heads, reprimanding engineers for roadwork conducted during the rains.

Corporator Rekha Singh inquired about illegal dairies in her ward. Additional Municipal Commissioner Arvind Rao responded that while the dairies would be removed, the police department was responsible for ongoing enforcement.

6-year-old girl molested by school van driver

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A school van driver was accused of inappropriately touching a lower KG girl student while on way to her school in Gudamba police station area. After the parents of the girl filed a complaint on Thursday, police registered a case and arrested the accused.

DCP (North) Abhijeet R Shankar, in a video statement, said that the van driver, Vimlesh Kumar Verma, was arrested by a police team and presented before the court. Earlier on Thursday, the girl accused the bus driver of touching her inappropriately while ferrying her to school.

On her revelation, her parents were stunned and could not decide what to do. The girl is a student of a private school in Gayatripuram. According to family members, for the past one month, 52-year-old Vimlesh Verma, a private van driver, who is a resident of Kalyanpur, used to take ferry the girl to school and from the school.

The girl reached home on Thursday afternoon and told her mother that the driver misbehaved with her. The 6-year-old girl told her parents that while returning from school, the driver dropped all the children and molested her when she was alone with him. The couple then filed a case with the police. The DCP said the police had also booked the accused under POCSO Act.

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2 held in Dalit girls' suicide case

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Farrukhabad police finally arrested two youths in connection with the alleged suicide of two Dalit girls after a case was registered against them on charges of abetment to suicide.

The accused, Pawan and Deepak, were detained following a complaint from the family members of the girls, aged 15 and 18, who were found hanging from a tree last Tuesday. Their arrests were registered after interrogation. According to the FIR, the girls, who were close friends and lived in the same neighbourhood, used to talk to Pawan and Deepak. They left their homes on August 26 around 10 pm to visit a near-by temple on the occasion of

Janmashtami but did not return. Later, their bodies were found hanging with two stoles (dupattas) tied together. The police recovered a SIM card from the clothes of the younger girl, and the investigation revealed that it belonged to Deepak.

According to the police, the girls used to talk to the accused for hours using this SIM card and would remove the SIM and format the call log after the calls. In the complaint, the father of the girl alleged that both boys used to harass his daughters. The post-mortem confirmed that the girls died by suicide, dismissing the family's allegation of murder.

Senior police officials have confirmed that no injury marks were found on the

bodies of either girl. However, the police are yet to find out the reason for the suicide. Meanwhile, the badly decomposed body of a woman missing since last Saturday was found in Ayodhya Friday morning. Reports said the body of Savita, daughter of Kamala Devi, was found in the ruined railway dak bungalow in Ayodhya and prime facie it seems that she was murdered on the day she went missing and the body was dumped in the secluded bungalow to conceal the crime.

Reports also confirmed that only the hands and legs of the victim were intact, as most of the body had decomposed. The police are waiting for the autopsy report before heading with the investigation.

3 held for issuing fake birth certificates

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad has arrested three members of a syndicate involved in creating fake birth certificates on a large-scale using the Citizen Registration System (CRS) portal. The arrests were made in Azamgarh following intelligence reports indicating that a network was exploiting authorised IDs on the CRS portal to generate fake birth and death certificates to illegally amass substantial sums of money.

The ATS investigation led to the discovery of a syndicate operating in the Azamgarh

district. This group had been misusing authorized IDs from the CRS portal to produce fake certificates. The investigation revealed that Anita Yadav, a contractual employee at the chief medical officer's office in Azamgarh, was the mastermind behind this operation. She manipulated the district administrative IDs and coordinated with Anand Yadav, also known as Nanhe Yadav, to assist in this fraudulent activity. The syndicate's activities also involved Shivanand, who was provided IDs by Anita Yadav and Anand Yadav to create fake certificates. Evidence obtained from Shivanand's electronic

devices showed transactions of illegally obtained funds and proof of the production of fake certificates. Shivanand revealed that Anita Yadav and Anand Yadav provided him with IDs for creating these certificates in exchange for money. It was also found that Ravikesh, a mastermind from Darbhanga, Bihar, was also linked to this syndicate. Further investigations are underway to identify other members of the syndicate and those involved in modifying and creating new IDs on the portal. The ATS had earlier unearthed a similar racket in Rae Bareilly.

LDA signs pact for transition to solar power at its offices

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): The Lucknow Development Authority on Friday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Energy to transition power connections to solar energy at its head office and the Lalbagh office. This shift is expected to reduce electricity bills at both locations by up to 70%.

Vice-Chairman Prathmesh Kumar noted that the switch to solar energy is being implemented under the Prime Minister Surya Ghar Yojana. Launched in 2021, this initiative aims to facilitate the transition to solar energy in residential and commercial properties, including government and private offices, to alleviate the reliance on conventional power sources. The LDA has been planning this transition since 2018, guided by the Ministry of Energy, which has been promoting the use of non-conventional energy sources. The head office requires a 300 kW solar system, while the Lalbagh office will need a 200 kW system. All electronic devices, including air-conditioners, will operate on solar power.

Launched in 2021, this initiative aims to facilitate the transition to solar energy in residential and commercial properties, including government and private offices, to alleviate the reliance on conventional power sources. The LDA has been planning this transition since 2018, guided by the Ministry of Energy, which has been promoting the use of non-conventional energy sources. The head office requires a 300 kW solar system, while the Lalbagh office will need a 200 kW system. All electronic devices, including air-conditioners, will operate on solar power.

Joint, knee pain awareness camp

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): Senior orthopedic surgeon Dr Saurabh Shukla said that joint and knee pain, which is no longer restricted to the elderly but is increasingly affecting children and young adults as well, can be managed through proper nutrition, regular exercise, and medical treatment.

Addressing an awareness camp hosted by a Joint Care Foundation at a city hotel on Friday, Dr Shukla emphasised that irregular routines, poor eating habits, and incorrect sitting and sleeping positions contribute to the disease's spread. If left untreated, it can progress to a serious stage, often necessitating joint replacement surgery. Dr Shukla stressed the importance of early intervention and consulting an orthopedic surgeon for appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

HDFC BANK. Department for Special Operations : 2nd Floor, Experio Building, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226010. POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)] Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC Bank Ltd. under the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 24.03.2022 calling upon the borrower(s) f. MS SHY KHAD BHANDAR (BORROWER) 2. MR. NEERAJ KUMAR GUPTA S/O SH. RAJAJAN LAL GUPTA (GUARANTOR & MORTGAGOR) 3. MR. DHEERAJ KUMAR GUPTA S/O SH. RAJAJAN LAL GUPTA (GUARANTOR) 4. MRS. MITHEESH KUMARI GUPTA W/O SH. RAJAJAN LAL GUPTA (GUARANTOR & MORTGAGOR) to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs. 1,66,22,777/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Six Lakh Twenty Two Thousand Seven Hundred And Seventy Seven Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the Act on the read with rule 8 & 9 of the said Rules, on this 21-08-2024. 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. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of HDFC Bank Ltd. for an amount of notice Rs. 1,66,22,777/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Six Lakh Twenty Two Thousand Seven Hundred And Seventy Seven Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc. less amount paid, if any.

ARYAVART BANK आर्यावर्त बैंक. (A Joint Undertaking of Govt. of India, U.P. Govt. & Bank of India) (भारत सरकार, उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार एवं बैंक ऑफ इण्डिया का संयुक्त उपक्रम) Regional Office: C-930, 931, Civil Lines, Dewa Road, Barabanki-225001. Possession Notice Under Rule-8(1) for (Immovable Properties) Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized officer of ARYAVART BANK, under the Secularization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the securities interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand notice in the account mentioned hereunder on the dates mentioned before the names calling upon the borrower and guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notices along with interest within 60 days from the date of receipt said notices. The borrower/legal heirs of borrower and guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notices are hereby given to the Borrower/legal Heirs of borrower and guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealing with the under notice property will be subject to the charge of ARYAVART BANK for the amount with interest and other charges etc. thereon. The Borrower's/Guarantors attention is invited to provisions of section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. Details of Properties whose possession has been taken are as follows:-

e-commerce platforms catalyst for new era of opportunities: Yogi

Virtually inaugurates Flipkart's warehouses in Unnao, Varanasi



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday virtually inaugurating Flipkart's warehouses in Unnao and Varanasi

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, highlighted the transformative impact of e-commerce platforms, describing them as a catalyst for a new era of opportunities. He emphasised how these platforms are fostering healthy competition and empowering every citizen, whether in urban or rural areas, to reach global markets. Speaking at a programme where he virtually inaugurated Flipkart's new warehouses in Unnao and Varanasi, the chief minister said, "We focused on enhancing packaging and export capabilities by leveraging design, technology, and market access. However, the work of giving it more momentum happened when Flipkart Group joined us." He mentioned that the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme gained worldwide recognition when the Flipkart Group started providing services as an e-commerce platform. During this, he also called upon the companies to take advantage of the warehousing policy of Uttar Pradesh and work on the immense possibilities in this sector. Chief Minister Yogi extended his best wishes on the inauguration of state-of-the-art Flipkart warehouses in Unnao and Varanasi. He reflected on

the state's rich history of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which have been a cornerstone of the economy for centuries. However, he noted that over the past few decades, the sector had struggled due to a lack of adaptation to evolving demands in technology, design and packaging, coupled with the absence of a concrete action plan. "When our government assumed office in 2017, we received guidance from Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi, which led to a comprehensive mapping of the MSME sector in the state. This initiative paved the way for the promotion of local products under the One District One Product scheme," he said. The chief minister shared that the vision behind ODOP was to create a platform that would not only preserve Uttar Pradesh's traditional products but also make them appealing to the broader public. He emphasised the transformative role of technology in expanding market access. He stated that what once seemed an impossible challenge — delivering products to global markets — has now been made possible, thanks to technological advancements. He mentioned that the newly established warehouses in Unnao, connected to the Lucknow commissionerate, and in Varanasi, the spiritual

capital of the state, represent a significant step forward. Chief Minister Yogi underscored the potential for job creation these facilities bring, highlighting how the presence of such warehouses ensures the provision of quality services, thereby meeting customer expectations and curbing black marketing by breaking monopolies. He also stated that these developments foster healthy competition and open doors to numerous opportunities, reducing the risk of fraud and enhancing market fairness. The chief minister praised the effectiveness of the platform, pointing out that from a single location, products can now reach across the city, the state, the country, and even the world. He acknowledged Flipkart's large-scale operations in Uttar Pradesh, facilitated through state policies and a memorandum of understanding (MoU), as a testament to the success of this collaborative approach. He then highlighted the positive impact of recent initiatives aimed at empowering women and promoting self-reliance in Uttar Pradesh. He mentioned that the state government had signed agreements with three major groups to advance these goals, and the results are now becoming evident. The chief minister praised the efforts of women like Radhika

in Lucknow, who, through the Self-Employed Women's Association, has not only expanded the business of chikan kurtas and sarees but also significantly increased the income of every female worker involved. Similarly, Shivani Verma has made strides in providing market access to handmade jewelry and home decor through e-commerce platforms, with Flipkart playing a significant role in this success, he added. The chief minister extended his congratulations to Flipkart for its contribution. "Uttar Pradesh, with the highest number of MSME units in the country — between 90 to 96 lakhs — has been at the forefront of supporting small businesses. The state is also the first to provide a security insurance cover of Rs 1 lakh to entrepreneurs associated with each MSME unit," Yogi added. Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that the Mukhya Mantri Yuva Udyami Scheme is paving the way for the establishment of 10 lakh new enterprises, with Flipkart now acting as a trusted partner to bring these products to market. The inauguration of these two warehouses, he noted, is a certified assurance of this commitment and will help instill new confidence among entrepreneurs in Uttar Pradesh, while also creating new job opportunities.

Investment: UP gov't has turned impossibility into reality, says CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Taking a swipe at the opposition, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, said that those who once considered investing in Uttar Pradesh an impossible task should now recognise how his government has turned that impossibility into reality. The chief minister distributed incentives worth Rs 1,333 crore to 32 industrial units and Letters of Comfort to 10 industrial units for investment of over Rs 4,500 crore, in a programme organised at Lok Bhavan. "Before 2017, UP was plagued by chaos, anarchy and crime due to the narrow-minded approach of the previous government, which lacked vision. But today, the state enjoys the rule of law and has created a favourable environment for investment, making Uttar Pradesh India's dream destination for investors," the chief minister said. He highlighted the success of the Global Investors Summit held in February 2023, where the state received investment proposals exceeding Rs 40 lakh crore. "Of this, proposals worth over Rs 10 lakh crore have already been realised through the groundbreaking ceremony," he added. The chief minister

criticised the previous administration for its handling of law and order, stating that the state was plagued by daily riots and extended curfews, leaving residents, including the state capital, unsafe. He noted that under the previous government, the youth faced an identity crisis. In contrast, Chief Minister Yogi highlighted the significant improvements in Uttar Pradesh under the current administration and the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He pointed out that the state has made strides in both ease of doing business and ease of living. He also detailed the implementation of 27 sectoral policies in Uttar Pradesh, developed with input from stakeholders. He emphasised that these policies were crafted with consideration of valuable suggestions while adhering to governance parameters. "Our government has no hesitation in implementing the commitments it has made to investors. Under the policy of governance, the double-engine government will break all barriers to provide convenience to investors," he said. Chief Minister Yogi said that if industry and institutions joined hands, then an excellent platform for skill devel-

opment was created. He encouraged entrepreneurs to leverage these connections to access skilled manpower. He also mentioned that under the PM and CM Incentive Schemes, the government will provide half of the honorarium to youth engaged in skill development. He said that the government had taken forward the process of setting up the new industrial city of BIDA between Jhansi and Kanpur on 36,000 acres of land. He also mentioned the construction of an international airport in Jewar, with the promise of providing similar facilities in BIDA

(Bundelkhand Industrial Development Authority) once the city is established. Chief Minister Yogi further mentioned that the State Capital Region is being formed by connecting Lucknow and its surrounding six districts. He emphasised that electricity is now available in all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh without discrimination and industries have been granted open access to energy, including renewable sources. He also noted significant improvements in the state's infrastructure over the past seven and a half years, highlighting enhanced expressway, highway, and air connectivity.

चौधरी चरण सिंह विश्वविद्यालय, मेरठ
Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut
(NAAC ACCREDITED with A++ Grade)

36वाँ दीक्षांत समारोह
अभिनन्दना

चौधरी चरण सिंह विश्वविद्यालय, मेरठ का 36वाँ दीक्षांत समारोह मंगलवार, दिनांक 03 सितम्बर, 2024 को होना सुनिश्चित हुआ है। दीक्षांत समारोह की अध्यक्षता माननीय कुलाधिपति एवं श्री राज्यपाल श्रीमती आनंदी बेन पटेल जी करेंगी। समारोह के विशिष्ट अतिथि उत्तर प्रदेश के माननीय उच्च शिक्षा मंत्री श्री योगेन्द्र उपाध्याय जी तथा मुख्य अतिथि डॉ. नल्लाथामी कल्लेसेल्वी, महानिदेशक, सीएसआईआर (काउंसिल ऑफ सांख्यिकी एण्ड इंडस्ट्रियल) तथा सचिव, डीएसआरआईआरएण (वैज्ञानिक और औद्योगिक अनुसंधान परिषद्), नई दिल्ली होंगी। दीक्षांत समारोह में पदक, प्रमाण पत्र एवं विभिन्न पाठ्यक्रमों की उपाधियों प्रदान की जाएगी। समारोह का कार्यक्रम तथा अन्य विवरण विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट www.ccsu.ac.in पर पृथक से अपलोड है।

कुलसचिव

Pramod questions Yogi's claims on industrialisation

Lucknow (PNS): Veteran Congress leader and deputy leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha, Pramod Tiwari on Friday questioned claims of Yogi Adityanath over rapid industrialisation of UP, alleging that instead the locks on several mills and factories was a severe blow to the industrial sector in the state. In a press release issued on Friday evening, Tiwari alleged that the state government adopted step-motherly treatment towards the mills and factories built during the Congress regime in the state. According to Tiwari, all these mills and factories, whose foundation stones were laid and inauguration took place during Congress regime, have been locked today due to the BJP government.

Industrial giants praise Yogi gov't's visionary policies

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Leading industrial giants have praised the Uttar Pradesh government's visionary policies and the favourable industrial environment under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership. They noted a remarkable transformation in Uttar Pradesh over the past seven years, highlighting the state's emergence as a prime investment destination. During an event at Lok Bhavan here on Friday, where Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath distributed incentives and Letters of Comfort to industrial units, prominent industrial groups affirmed that Uttar Pradesh is now setting new standards as an investment hub. The state has established a conducive environment for industries, implemented effective policies and improved law and order, leading to significant current and future investment opportunities, they added. Senior officials from Samsung, JK Group, Birla Corporation, Gallant, HCL and Hinduja Group expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Yogi and shared their plans for further investments in Uttar Pradesh. JB Park, President and CEO of Samsung Southwest Asia, said, "Samsung has a very deep connection with UP. When we first came here in 1996, no one could have imagined that Samsung would establish one of the largest mobile manufacturing factories in Noida. In 2018, it became a reality when we inaugurated East Mobile Manufacturing Facility. I am confident that we will continue to get the same support in the future from the UP government. Samsung remains committed to investing in UP." Raghavpati Singhania, Managing Director of JK Cement, stated, "Over the past six years, JK Cement has estab-

lished three cement units, the most recent of which was in Prayagraj in 2024. Remarkably, this unit was completed in just nine months and 28 days. This is the first state where the authorities actively monitor industry progress and enquire how they can assist." Sandeep Ghosh, MD and CEO of Birla Corporation, stated, "Following 'roti and kapda', 'makaan' is a universal aspiration. Every 100 bags of cement we produce go towards constructing homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. The Uttar Pradesh government has acknowledged this contribution. The cement industry generates over ten times more employment compared to other sectors, also fostering skill development. Over the past five years, we have received an incentive of Rs 600 crore, which is substantially more and has been granted much more swiftly than in other states." Gallant Steel Chairman CP Agarwal said, "Gallant has invested more than Rs 1,500 crore in Gorakhpur since 2006 and more than half of this investment has been made during the Yogi government." HCL CFO and President Pawan K. Dankar stated, "Uttar Pradesh is home to HCL. We are one of India's top three companies, and one of our headquarters is located in UP. Our most recent investment in the state was in Lucknow, where we invested Rs 800 crore." Ashok Leyland MD Shenu Agarwal stated, "Ashok Leyland and the Hinduja Group have a presence in nearly every part of the country, but in recent months, the support, guidance, inspiration and encouragement we have received from the Uttar Pradesh government has been unparalleled."

AKY hits back at Yogi for 'kale karnamein' jibe

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, on Friday, hit back at Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for his "cap is red but deeds are black" jibe, saying "those who lack love in their lives have ill-will towards red colour". The SP chief's remark came a day after Yogi Adityanath said, "Everyone is familiar with the misdeeds of the SP. If you turn the pages, the SP's history is full of black deeds. The SP's cap is 'laal' (red) but its 'karnamein kale hain' (deeds are black). They are repeating their history." Akhilesh Yadav said no colour was good or bad, it was about perspective. He delved into the issue of colours and their significance at length in a post on X, and said those who lack love, union and harmony in their lives often have ill-will towards the red colour. "Colours have a deep relation with mind and psychology. If a colour is liked by someone in particular, then there are special psychological reasons for it and if someone gets angry on seeing a colour, then there are some negative psychological reasons for that too," he said. "The truth is that every colour is obtained from nature and positive people do not consider any colour to be negative." Akhilesh Yadav asserted.

FORM NO. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1 University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-226 007

(Area of Jurisdiction - Part of Uttar Pradesh)

Summons for filing Reply & Appearance by Publication
O.A. No. 408 of 2024

Summons to Defendant Under Section 19(3), of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)

O.A. No. 408/2024

BANK OF MAHARASTRAApplicant
VERSUS
MIS HNT MANPOWER SERVICES PVT.LTD. AND ORS ...DEFENDANTS

To Rakesh Sharma, aged about adult, Director of HNT Manpower Services Pvt.Ltd., Add. 284, Kotvan-2 Mathura-281403
Also at LIG 258, Awas Vikas Colony, Rudrapur, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand-263153

...Defendants

In the above noted Application, you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in Two sets alongwith documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the Applicant or his counsel/Idly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Presiding Officer on 03/09/2024 at 10.30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal,
Lucknow

HDFC BANK Branch Office : **HDFC Bank Ltd, 2nd Floor, Experio Building, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226010.** DEMAND NOTICE

DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SEC 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002. The following borrowers & co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from HDFC Bank Ltd. the loans of below mentioned borrowers & co-borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms & conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loans were classified as NPA's as per the RBI guidelines. Amounts due by them to HDFC Bank Ltd are mentioned in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be payable as applicable and the same will be charged with effect from their respective dates.

Name Of Borrowers & Co-Borrowers/ Mortgage	Schedule of Immovable Property & Security
1. M/s Shubham Satyam Bhujal Kendra (Borrower) Through its Proprietor Mr. Babulal Gupta (Since Deceased) Through his Legal Heirs Mr. Prady Kumar, Mr. Dilip Kumar & Mrs. Shailu Devi Gupta Address: At - Garaundi, Garaundi Adalhat Chunar, Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh - 231302. 2. Mr. Babulal Gupta (Co-Borrower) S/o Mr. Manuza Garud, Pargana Bhuli, Tehsil Agaru Through its Legal Heirs Mr. Prady Kumar, Mr. Dilip Kumar & Mrs. Shailu Devi Gupta Address: Chunar, District Mirzapur. (Property Garaundi, Garaundi Adalhat Chunar Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh - 231302. 3. Mr. Prady Kumar (Co-Borrower) Owned By Mrs. Shailu Devi Gupta) S/o Mr. Babulal Gupta Add: Garaundi, Garaundi Adalhat Chunar Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh - 231302 4. Mrs. Shailu Devi Gupta (Co-Borrower & Mortgagee) W/o Mr. Babulal Gupta Add: Garaundi, Garaundi Pappu West: House Of Lakshmi Devi Adalhat Chunar Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh - 231302 5. Mr. Dilip Kumar (Legal Heir's) S/o Mr. Babulal Gupta Add: Garaundi, Garaundi Adalhat Chunar Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh - 231302	5. Gomi Nagar Yona, Ward-Rajni Gannodi-II, Lucknow 226010, Uttar Pradesh. 3. Mr. Harshit Panday (Co-Borrower & Mortgagee) S/o Mr. Ashok Kumar Panday, Address: -2/174, Viram Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow 226010, Uttar Pradesh. Also, At - Mr. Harshit Panday, S/o Mr. Ashok Kumar Panday, Address: - House No.21, Viram Khand-5, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow 226010, Uttar Pradesh

Loan Number / Product	Outstanding as per 13(2) Notice Date	Date of NPA
85734190 / COMMERCIAL VEHICLE LOAN	Rs. 26,82,494.50/- as on 03/05/2024 / Notice Date: 29-05-2024	06.02.2020

Name Of Borrowers & Co-Borrowers/ Mortgage	Security
Haseeb Ahmad (Borrower) Add: House No 15 Madyaon Chaudhari Purva Lucknow-226016 Mobile No. 9335192557 Mahvish Akeel (Guarantor) House No 15 Madyaon Chaudhari Purva Lucknow UP 226016	1. Vehicle Type / Asset Description on Model make - TATASIGNA4225 TBS V1. 2. Vehicle No.-UP32PN5933. 3. Engine No.-B6 786A25002112F64156926 4. Chassis No.-MAT783017M1F1327 5. Security type:- Hypothecation Charge

Type Of Loan Facility and A/c No.	Outstanding as per 13(2) Notice Date	Date of NPA
Dropline Overdraft Facility A/c No. 50200067809434	Rs. 1,72,17,966.00/- as on 21-06-2024 / Notice Date: 26-06-2024	03/06/2024

Since the notices sent to you in the address in which you originally reside / carry on business / personally works for gain has not returned to us, we are constrained to cause this notice published. You are hereby called upon us 13(2) of the above Act to discharge the above mentioned liability with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc. within 60 days of this notice failing which the Bank will be exercising all or any of the rights u/s 13(4) of the above Act. You are also put to notice that as per terms of Sec 13(13) of the above Act, you shall not transfer by sale, lease or otherwise the aforesaid secured assets.

Date: 31.08.2024, Place: Uttar Pradesh Authorised Officer, For HDFC Bank Ltd.

ARYAVART BANK आर्यावर्त बैंक
(A Joint Undertaking of Govt. of India, U.P. Govt. & Bank of India) (मिाल सरकार, उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार एवं बैंक ऑफ इंडिया का संयुक्त उपक्रम)

Regional Office: Lucknow, Aryavart Bhawan, 569/20/K/1, Sneh Nagar, V.I.P. Road, Opp. Awadh Hospital, Alambagh, Lucknow

Notice Under Section-13(2) Of The Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. (SARFAESI Act.)

Authorized Officer, Aryavart Bank, Regional Office - Lucknow, has issued Demand Notice under Section-13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 through Registered /Speed post. The contents of the same are inter alia the defaults committed by you in the payment of outstanding amount including principal interest and other charges etc. The outstanding dues are mentioned here-in-below:

Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrowers/Guarantors/Branch	Description of the property	Date of Demand Notice	Amount of Notice
1.	Borrower: Shri Rajesh Kumar Srivastava s/o Raj Kumar Srivastava, ED-367 Sec-Q Aliganj Lucknow-226024 Guarantors: 1. Mr. Satish Chandra Tripathi s/o Raj Kumar Tripathi, 643A/168 Paltan Chawani Sitapur Road Scheme Jankipuram Lucknow-226021 2. Mr. Navneet Baranwal S/o Anil Baranwal, 10, Pushpanjali Enclave Keshavnagar Lucknow 226020 Branch: Vikas Nagar	Residential Property: House No. ED-367 situated at Sector-Q Aliganj Yojna, Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Rajesh Srivastava s/o late Rajkumar Srivastava, Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 05.03.2013, Boundaries: East: House No-363, West: House No-371, North: House No-365, South: Path Area: 26.31 sq.mt	13.08.2024	Rs. 6,91,426.06 + Interest & Expenses etc.
2.	Borrower: M/s Sai Fruit Traders, Prop: 1. Shri Gyan Prakash Awasthi S/o Sri Radhey Shyam Awasthi, 538K/1230, Yogi Nagar, Triveni Nagar Lucknow-226020 2. Mr. Praveen Kumar Mishra S/o Devi Dayal Mishra, Khasra no.178, Gazipuram Balram ward-Faizullaganj Jankipuram Lucknow-226021 Mortgagor/Guarantor: Smt. Neelam Mishra w/o Shri Praveen Mishra, 538K/1230, Yogi Nagar, Triveni Nagar Lucknow-226020 Borrower: 1. Mr. Gyan Prakash Awasthi s/o Radhey Shyam Awasthi, 538K/230 Yogi Nagar Triveni Nagar Lucknow 226020 2- Mr. Praveen Kumar Mishra S/o Devi Dayal Mishra, Khasra no.178, Gazipuram Balram ward-Faizullaganj Lucknow-226020 Guarantor: Mr. Anil Kumar Bajpai s/o Shiv Prakash Bajpai, House no.616/114 Basant vihar police station Madyon Lucknow-226024 Branch: Vikas Nagar	Residential Property: Plot Khasra No.178, Gazipur Balram Ward-Faizullaganj Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Smt. Neelam Mishra w/o shri Praveen Mishra, Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 08.08.2012, Boundaries: East: Bhoomi Deegar, West: Plot Smt. Maneesha Lal, North: Bhoomi Deegar, South: Rasta 20 feet wide Area: 62.732 sq.mt	27.08.2024	Rs. 6,08,966.17 + Interest & Expenses etc.
3.	Borrower: 1. Mr. Ram Prakash s/o Badlu Ram, 2/293 Sec H, Gaytri Mandir Jankipuram Lucknow-226021 2. Mrs. Sarojni Devi w/o Ram Prakash, 2/293 Sec H, Gaytri Mandir Jankipuram Lucknow-226021 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Sunil Singh s/o Rajendra Prasad Singh, Plot No.10 Vastara Puram Jankipuram Vistar Lucknow-226021 2. Mr. Sunil Kumar s/o Sundar Lal, 85-C Jankipuram Extension near Overhead water tank sec-9 Lucknow 226021 Branch: Gudamba	Residential Property: MLI:G-2/294 Sector H, Jankipuram Yojana, Ward- Jankipuram Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Ram Prakash s/o Badlu Ram & Sarojni Devi w/o Ram Prakash, Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 12.06.2017, Boundaries: East: House No-2/314, West: 7.5 Mt Wide Road, North: House No-2/292, South: House No. 2/294 Residential Property: MLI:G-2/294 Sector H, Jankipuram Yojana, Ward- Jankipuram Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Ram Prakash s/o Badlu Ram & Sarojni Devi w/o Ram Prakash, Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 16.11.2017, Boundaries: East: House No-2/314, West: 7.5 Mt Wide Road, North: House No-2/293, South: House No. 2/295 Both Boundaries: East: House No-2/313 & 314, West: 7.5 Mt Wide Road, North: House No-2/292, South: House No. 2/295 Area: 104 Sqmt	08.08.2024	Rs. 22,51,499.84 + Interest & Expenses etc.
4.	Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr. Ramesh Kumar Sharma S/o Shri Jagdish Chandra Sharma, Village - Narauna, Post - Kakori, Lucknow-227107 Co-Borrower/Mortgagor: Mrs. Suman Sharma W/o Ramesh Kumar Sharma, Village- Narauna, Post- Kakori, Lucknow-227107 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Arnar Pal Yadav S/o Mr. Shiv Mangal Yadav, Salempur Pataura Post-Kakori Lucknow-227107 2. Mr. Deep Chand S/o Mr. Chandumal, House No. C-4414, Sector-6 Rajajipuram Lucknow Branch: Khushhalganj	Residential Property: Plot part of Khasra No. 432, Narauna Pargana- Kakori, District- Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Mr. Ramesh Kumar Sharma S/o Late Jagdish Chandra Sharma & Mrs. Suman Sharma W/o Mr. Ramesh Kumar Sharma, Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 15.05.2019, Boundaries: East: House of Jitendra Pal, West: Rasta 20 Wide, North: Plot Satish Sharma, South: Rasta 20' Wide Area: 92.936 Sqm.	20.08.2024	Rs. 11,49,232.66 + Interest & Expenses etc.
5.	Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr. Sabhajet S/o Shri Ram Laut, Madarpur, Chitwai, Ambedkar Nagar, Iltifatganj Uttar Pradesh-224145 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Arnar Bahadur S/o Mr. Ghanshyam, New-6, Salempur Pataura Post-Kakori Lucknow-227107 2. Mr. Vijay Gautam S/o Mr. Devta Prasad, Village- Narauna Post-Kakori Lucknow-227107 Branch: Khushhalganj	Residential Property: Plot part of land, Khasra No. 426 SA, Narauna Pargana-Kakori, District-Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Mr. Sabhajet S/o Mr. Ram Laut, Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 16.05.2018, Boundaries: East: Rasta 20' Wide, West: Plot Ashok Kumar Yadav, North: Plot Pushpa Kumari, South: Plot Phulwasa Area: 74.349 Sqm.	20.08.2024	Rs. 10,71,629.51 + Interest & Expenses etc.
6.	Borrower/Mortgagor: Mr. Ghanshyam S/o Late Raghunath, New E-6, Salempur Pataura Post- Kakori Lucknow-227107 Guarantor: 1. Mr. Kanhaiya Lal S/o Mr. Nanhe Lal, Village- Narauna Post- Kakori Lucknow-227107 2. Mr. Laxmi Devi S/o Ghanshyam, Village-Salempur Pataura Post- Kakori Lucknow-227107 Branch: Khushhalganj	Residential Property: Plot part of Khasra No. 426 sa, Narauna, Pargana- Kakori, Tehsil & District-Lucknow, TITLE HOLDER- Mr. Ghanshyam S/o Late Raghunath, Details of Property As Per Sale Deed Dated 12.12.2017, Boundaries: East: Aaraji Seller, West: Rasta 20 Wide, North: Plot Manisha, South: Plot Vinod Kumar Area: 185.873 Sqm.	20.08.2024	Rs. 14,23,435.71 + Interest & Expenses etc.

Further with reasons, we believe that you are avoiding the service of said Demand Notice issued under the Act hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of demand notice, as required u/s-13(2) of said Act, the Rule-3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are hereby called upon to pay Aryavart Bank, within a period of 60 days from the date of publication of this Demand Notice with the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, incidental expenses, charges etc., failing which, we Aryavart Bank will take necessary action under the provisions of Section-13(4) of sale thereof. Further, you are prohibited u/s-13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale/lease etc. and encumber in any other way, the aforesaid secured asset.

Date : 31.08.2024 Place : Lucknow Authorised Officer

Varanasi becomes India's largest GI facilitation centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Varanasi has become India's largest Geographical Identifications (GI) facilitation centre as 80 GI applications were submitted by the local NGO, Human Welfare Association (HWA) from 12 states and union territories in just five months under the guidance of GI expert and Padma Shri awardee Dr Rajnikant who broke his own record especially on Indian Small Industries Day on Friday. This record was made when on the website of GI Registry Chennai, five GI applications from Arunachal Pradesh were posted with the technical support of HWA on the day, increasing the number to 80 in this financial year from April to August 2024, in which GI



Traditional products seeking GI certification.



applications of 12 states like 7 from UP, 10 from Rajasthan, 3 from Chhattisgarh, three from Gujarat, 9 from Tripura, 4 from Assam, 6 from Jharkhand, 3 from Haryana, 20 from Jammu Kashmir, 6 from Madhya Pradesh, 3 from Bihar and 6 products from Arunachal Pradesh have been sent to GI Registry Chennai and they all have been accepted. Some of the major products are

Banaras Clay Craft, Lucknow Clay Craft, Meerut Bugul, Rajasthan's Ravanhatta, Jodhpur Wood Craft, Jaipur Marble Craft, Bastar Stone Craft, Chhattisgarh Panika Saree, Jharkhand Dokra, Panchhi Parhan Saree, Jadu Patia Painting, Tripura Cane Craft, Tripura Bamboo Craft, Tripura Painting, Tripura Binni Rice, Harinarayan Rice, Kalikhasa Paddy, Gujarat Patan

Mashru Saree, Saurashtra Beads Work, Ladakh Thanka Painting, Ladakh Chilli Metal Craft, Leh Likhri Pattari, Leh Chal Textile, Kashmiri Amri Sev and Maharaji Sev, Walnut, Kashmiri Nadru, Kashmiri Hawk, Kishtwar Chilgoza, Gurez Rajmash, Kishtwari Blanket, Samba Calico Print, Haryana Bahadurgarh Wooden Craft, Hisar Mangali Wooden Beads, Udaipur Thikri and Danka Craft, Darbhanga Terracotta, Patna Kalam Painting, Tawang Yak Churkum, Yak Hat, Yak Blanket, Kaman Digaro Mishmi Textile, Wanchon Beads Craft, Karbi Anglong Handloom, Deori Handloom, Assam Bamboo Craft from Assam have been included in this GI registration process. Earlier in the Amrit Mahotsav

year of Independence, 75 GI applications were made in a year with the technical support of the HWA and now with this achievement, it has been left behind. It is known that Varanasi and the surrounding districts still have the pride of having the highest number of GIs in a land area not only in India but in the entire world with 34 GI tags, in which about 20 lakh people directly and indirectly do an annual business of ₹25,500 crore. Dr Rajnikant's efforts to protect and enhance India's rich heritage started in the year 2007 and with the technical support of HWA, 303 GIs have been filed in 20 states so far in which 148 GI tags have been granted and all the rest will be included in India's intellectual property within a year.

Grim flood situation in Ballia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The flood situation in downstream UP-Bihar border district of Purvanchal (eastern UP) Ballia has turned grim again. The Ganga was flowing in Ballia at 58.02 metres at 8 am on Friday against the danger mark of 57.615 metres and is expected to reach 58.65 metres by Saturday morning. However, the rising trend is likely to be checked soon as the river was recorded steady at upstream Phaphamau, Prayagraj and Mirzapur but it continued to rise in Varanasi on Friday. As per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC), at 8 am the Ganga was recorded at 68.23 metres and it continued to rise at a speed of 10 mm



A submerged temple following the rise of Ganga's water level after rains at Dashashwamedh Ghat in Varanasi on Friday

per hour and during the last 24 hours, the water level increased by 41 centimetres, rising from 67.82 metres to 68.23 metres. Besides, in downstream Ghazipur the river was recorded at 61.56 metres against the warning level of 62.105 metres.

LIC presents dividend cheque of ₹3662.17 cr to Sitharaman

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

CEO & MD, LIC of India, Siddhartha Mohanty, presented a dividend cheque of ₹3662.17 crore to Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, as the Government of India's share of dividend, approved by the shareholders in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on August 22. Dr MP Tangirala, Additional Secretary, GOI, Ministry of Finance, Department of Financial



Services was present along with officials of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, M Jagannath, MD, Tablesh Pandey, MD, Sat Pal Bhanoo, MD, R Doraiswamy, MD and JPS Bajaj, ZM(I/C), Northern Zone. The LIC also paid interim dividend of ₹2441.45 crore on March 1 thus totalling to ₹6103.62 crore paid as dividend to Government of India for the year 2023-24. The LIC is completing 68 glorious years since its incorporation and as on March 31, 2024, has an asset base of over ₹52.85

lakh crore. It continues to be the market leader in the Indian life insurance market. **2 DIE IN ACCIDENT:** A man and his nephew were killed while two others injured when a speeding truck hit an auto collecting the passengers on GT road, Rawatpur, under Swaroop Nagar police station area. Both the injured, including the auto driver, were admitted to the LLR (Hallet) hospital for treatment. Police has started a probe in this matter after lodging an FIR against unidentified truck driver.

Three killed in mishaps

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Three persons, including a man and his grandson, were killed in separate road accidents in Soroan police station area. Police have taken the bodies for the post-mortem examination and started searching for the vehicles that hit them. Reports said that Rakesh Kumar (55), a resident of Noorpur village, was taking his daughter Aarti and her two children Aman (4) and Arpita (2) on his bike when a tractor

carrying bricks hit it in Akbarpur Saraidina village. As a result Rakesh Kumar and his grandson Aman Kumar died while Aarti and her daughter Arpita were seriously injured. People sent both of them to hospital for treatment. Meanwhile Sanjay Kumar Patel (17), son of Rakesh Kumar, a resident of Puranpur in Soroan police station area, was preparing for competitive exams along with completing his graduation. He was going to the coaching centre on a bicycle on Friday morning when a speed-

ing car coming from Pratapgarh side hit his bicycle from behind on Prayagraj-Pratapgarh highway near Mewalal Intermediate College in Soroan as a result of which he died. A crowd of passersby gathered at the spot. On being informed police reached the spot and sent Sanjay's body for the post-mortem. The driver managed to escape with the car. Police is searching for him. Soroan Station House Officer (SHO) Brijesh Tiwari said police reached the spot and informed the family members.

भारतीय स्टेट बैंक State Bank of India **POSSESSION NOTICE** (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY) **Branch-Sandila Distt. Hardoi**

Whereas, [Under Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002] The under signed being the authorised officer of the State Bank of India Sandila Branch, Distt. Hardoi U.P. under the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (No. 3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice, Calling upon the borrower to repay the amount as mentioned in notice been loan amount plus interest and other expenses within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrowers, guarantors and the public in general that the under signed has taken possession of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said act read rule under 8 of the said rules, on the date mentioned. The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with property will be subject to charge of the State Bank of India Sandila Branch, Distt. Hardoi U.P. for an amount Rs. 2,40,175.00 and further interest form 01-12-2023 (Date), Cost etc. thereon.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower	Description of Mortgaged Property and Boundary	Over due Amount
1	Smt. Ranjana W/o Mr. Gyan Prakash	Property on part of gata No. 692, Mahatwana, Sandila and measuring area 92.94 Sq. Mtr. bearing Sale Deed registered in Sub Registrar office 04-02-2009 in Book No. 1, Khand No. 2454, Page No. 29-50, Serial No. 1135 Property Owned by : Smt. Ranjana W/o Mr. Gyan Prakash, Boundaries : East: Plot of Poonam Devi, West: Plot of Gangaram, North: Plot of Devendra Kumar Shukla, South: 20 Ft. Wide Rasta.	Rs. 2,40,175.00 + Interest + Other Charges Date of Notice 02-03-2024 Possession Date : 27-08-2024

Date: 30.08.2024 Authorised Officer, State Bank of India, Sandila Branch, Distt. Hardoi

NIA team raids INM member's house

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A team of National Investigation Agency (NIA) raided the room of Inquilabi Naujawan Morcha (INM) member Devendra Azad on the suspicion of urban Naxal funding here on Friday. Devendra lives in a lodge located in Govindpur Salori under Shivkuti police station area. A large number of local police was also present with the NIA team. Six members were included in the team. A large number of local police also reached here and Devendra's room was searched for a long time. It is said that after this he has been taken into custody. The NIA, which is investigating the case of promoting activities related to the Urban Naxal Movement and attempting to revive the banned organisation CPM, raided Prayagraj on Friday. The team reached the house of Devendra Azad, searched it and interrogated him for several hours. During this, some documents found in his possession were also seized. The NIA team reached Prayagraj in the afternoon and this action continued till around 2 pm. Last year also, a

search operation was conducted at four places in the city, including the house of PUCL state president Seema Azad in Shivkuti. Devendra Azad is originally from Bhalokhara, Agra. Currently, he is preparing for the exam by staying in a lodge in Govindpur Salori in Shivkuti. He is also said to be a student of Allahabad University. The NIA team interrogated Devendra for about six hours and collected some documents and literature found in his room. However, the local police refused to tell anything over the issue. Police said NIA may hold a press conference in Delhi about this action. If sources are to be believed, NIA is conducting raids at other places on the directions of the youths detained from Prayagraj and Maharajanji. Shivkuti Station House Officer (SHO) Sanjay Gupta said the matter is confidential. The NIA team has taken the suspect with them for questioning. Meanwhile police are preparing to invoke NSA on the accused who printed fake notes in Jamiya Habibiya Masjid-e-Azam Madrasa located in Atarsuiya.

Police officials said that action will be taken after investigation. In the case of printing fake notes in the madrasa, the police arrested the accused Mohammad Tafseerul Arifin, Zahir Khan, Mohammad Shahid and Mohammad Afzal on Wednesday. Note printing material was also found from the accused. Civil Lines police station has registered a case against the accused under five sections. Now the police is investigating the details of the accused's bank account, Aadhaar card, PAN card and passport. Police suspect that the accused may have links to foreign countries. Apart from this, histories of those who transact in the accounts are also being taken out. The NIA has sought information from the police about the madrasa and the fake notes. Apart from this, Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has also sought a report. DCP (City) Deepak Bhukar said that the arrested accused were working to weaken the country's economy, so preparations are being made to invoke NSA against them. The accused will be taken on remand for interrogation. Further action will be taken thereafter.

Farmer bitten by snake, dies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A farmer died after being bitten by a snake in the field in Shitalpur village under Gajner police station area of Kanpur Dehat late on Thursday evening. After exorcism his kin took him to Kanpur for treatment where he died late at night. Chandan Singh (45) of Shitalpur, Gangrauli, had gone to work in the field late on Thursday evening and his condition started deteriorating after he was bitten by a snake. Outpost incharge Rajendra Kumar rushed to the spot and sent the body for an autopsy after investigation. **DRIVER KILLED:** A loader driver Annu Chaudhary (24) of Phulwari under Devendra Nagar police station, Panna (Madhya Pradesh), was killed after he rammed into a stationary truck on Lucknow-Kanpur highway in Nawabganj late on Wednesday night. The incident took place when he was going to Kanpur along with Deepak (26) of Chinhat, Lucknow, and Shivam (28) of Parampur,

Pilibhit. After sustaining serious injury, all the three were rushed to the CHC where Annu was declared dead by the doctors. Deepak and Shivam were referred to the district hospital due to their serious condition. Kotwali incharge Avaneesh Singh said on receipt of autopsy report, an FIR will be lodged and action will be taken in the matter. After the incident, truck driver escaped with the vehicle from the spot. Meanwhile a property dealer, Mohd Hussain alias Raja, missing since August 25, was found dead in Bhojpur in Kanpur Dehat. After identifying the body, kin informed that he had gone to Parsauli village in Sen Pashchimpara police area on August 25 for a property deal and thereafter went missing. His kin had lodged a missing complaint with the police in this connection. On Wednesday, his body was found floating in a pond in Jagdishpur village under Bhojpur police station area of Kanpur Dehat. Brother Mohd Hasan and kin identified the body on Thursday.

verka **THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.** SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66 **Notice Inviting Tender** www.verka.coop

e-Tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Head office, Chandigarh Hiring of milk powder plant having conversion capacity in the range of 2.00 to 4.00 LLPD for conversion of liquid milk into extra grade SMP and WMP for Verka Dairies.	Annual
2.	For Verka Mohali Dairy Hiring of Agency for packaging of Dahi pouch/ Cups/Matkas, Lassi pouches, Kheer cups, Ghee, Paneer, and Yoghurt, Packaging and recombination of White Butter and Reconstitution of SMP.	As per day to day requirement of Market
3.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy Hiring of insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products in Bathinda Milkshed area.	One year with extension upto one year
4.	For Verka Sangrur Dairy a) Refrigeration Machinery Scrap. b) MS Scrap. c) Ammonia Compressor 7x7. d) Ammonia Compressor 9x9. e) Copper Wire Scrap f) Outsourcing activities i.e. packing of products, loading/unloading etc.	25 Ton 05 Ton 01 Ton 01 Ton 300 kg Annual
5.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy Hiring of:- i. Toyota Innova Crysta without driver for minimum running of 2000 kms per month on lump sum basis. ii. Deep Freezer (cold store) for storing White Butter Approx 2000 MT including storage, loading/ unloading at cold store and transportation charges(to and fro) of White Butter per M.T per month. iii. Road Milk Tankers for transportation of milk all over Punjab, Chandigarh, U.P Delhi & Haryana. iv. Insulated Road Milk tankers for Transportation of milk from BMC/Mcc etc. v. Vehicles (Tempo) for Cattle feed/ Milk products / Technical services. vi. Vehicles (Tempo) for transportation of Milk through cans. vii. Passenger Car (Swift Dzire, Toyota Etios or Equivalent) and Jeep Camper Type.	01 complete job Annual 04 No's 45 No's 07 No's 40 No's Cars/18 No's & Camper 01 No's
6.	For Verka Gurdaspur Dairy a) Operation repair & maintenance of pouch packing machines (milk, lassi and Dahi), online coding machines photocell sensors and crate washers. b) Hiring of:- i. Insulated Vehicle for city supply. ii. Car (Dzire or its equivalent). iii. Diesel Car (5 seater Bolero camper or its equivalent). iv. Milk powder plant having conversion LPD for conversion of liquid milk into standard grade SMP for Verka Gurdaspur Dairy c) Advertisement Material backlit glow Sign Board, double sided glow sign board, non lit flex board, flex change, flex banner, wall painting/shop painting, vehicle painting, umbrella, A-Type standing flex board and vinyl stickers. d) Allotment of Milk booth (Civil Hospital Pathankot, Civil Hospital Batala, Civil Hospital Gurdaspur, Kotli Surat Mahli and Sardar Beant Singh State University).	30000 Itr to 50000 Itr per day 02 years 01 No. 01 No. 50000 Itr to 100000 Itr per day 01 year 02 years
7.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Lifting/Sale of paneer whey from Verka Jalandhar Dairy. b) Hiring of vehicles for transportation of Panjiri to C.D.P.O.'s of Punjab and other milk products to Punjab and other states. c) Advertisement Material flex board, flex banner, star flex banner, vinyl board, glow sign board, gum sheets stickers, pamphlets, danglers, sun board, wall painting, vehicle painting, standies, canopies.	Annual Annual Annual
8.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy a) Hiring of:- i. Powder plant for conversion of skimmed milk into SMP. ii. Deep Freezer (cold store) for storage of white Butter at-18°C or below. iii. Godown for storage of Skimmed Milk Powder.	09 Months 01 No. 01 No.
9.	For Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy Allotment of Milk booth: i. Municipal Corporation office, Hoshiarpur. ii. Udarn Singh Park, Hoshiarpur.	03 years 03 years
10.	For Verka CFP, Bhattian (Khanna) Hiring of Five-Seater AC car model less than 7 year old.	02 No's
11.	For Verka Mega Dairy, Bassi Pathana Hiring of 5-Seater Bolero camper (AC) - 01 no's & Passenger Vehicle Bolero/ swift Dzire/ Etios (Platinum) or equivalent (AC)-2 no's along with drivers.	03 No's

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

NA/12/25103/2023/37175 Dated CHD :- 8/30/2024

Protest against supply of contaminated drinking water

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In protest against the supply of contaminated drinking water in various areas of the city, the Samajwadi Party (SP) workers under the leadership of party's former city president Vishnu Sharma met the newly appointed General Manager (GM) of Jalkal department Anoop Singh and handed over a memorandum. The SP workers said the local residents are facing health and other problems due to the supply of contaminated drinking water in various areas of the city. Sharma alleged that the Jalkal department officers are misleading the public by completing the paperwork in the name



SP workers handing over a memorandum to Jalkal GM in Varanasi on Friday.

of Smart City. Raising the issue of supply of contaminated drinking water in all the assembly constituencies of the city, he had lodged several complaints regarding supply of contaminated drinking water in

Baghada, Ramnagar, Nagwa, Tulsipur, Saraiya, Konia, etc areas in the past and drew the attention of the GM to the difficulties being faced by the general public due to non-supply of drinking water in the

Panchkoshi area of Nagwa for many days. Former party candidate from Cantt assembly constituency Pooja Yadav, national general secretary Satya Prakash Sonkar and Vivek Kahar said the world famous Ramlila of Ramnagar is about to start but due to the open manholes at different places, the people will have to face difficulties. Regarding the complaint of the SP workers, the Jalkal GM assured that the problem will be resolved soon. The delegation comprised Dilip Kashyap, former corporator Shambhu Nath Batul, city president of backward class cell Vivek Kahar, newly appointed city president of Baba Saheb Ambedkar Vahini Aman Yadav, Amir Ahmed, Pradeep

Modanwal, Govind Yadav, Sanjay Yadav, Akash Vishwakarma, Pappu Yadav, Ravidas, Suraj Bindam, Ashish Yadav, Shailendra Singh, Umesh Yadav, Bhola Patel etc. **NEW INITIATIVE:** Prioritising student well-being, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has launched a new initiative to support students' needs. The university has started a student counselling initiative to assist students in identifying their strengths, overcoming obstacles, and setting themselves on a path to success. As part of the Student Well-Being Initiative, the programme features 15 counsellors assigned across various faculties.

Players awarded on Sports Day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Rich tribute was paid to Great hockey player Padma Bhushan Major Dhyana Chand on his birth anniversary at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) on Thursday which was celebrated as the National Sports Day. On the occasion a football match was organised at BLW Central Sports Stadium. The general secretary of BLW Sports Association and Chief Mechanical Engineer (Production) Suneel Kumar met the players and awarded the players of various sports by giving them certificates and cash prizes. In the programme organised on the day, the chief guest Suneel Kumar threw light on the contribution of Major

Dhyana Chand and said that in recent years, the players of BLW players have hoisted the country's flag high. He highlighted the benefits of sports in daily life and said that by playing sports, a person remains physically fit and also mentally healthy. Principal of Technical Training Centre Jitendra Agarwal, Deputy Chief Manager (Headquarters) Nitesh Sharma, Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer (Plant) SK Singh, Deputy Chief Marketing Manager Manoj Shukla, Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer (Spare Parts) MP Singh, Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer Mukesh Karidhal, Senior Materials Manager (Loco) Ankit Jain, Senior Sports Officer &

Arjun Awardee Bahadur Prasad, Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar, Staff Council members Naveen Sinha and Amit Yadav along with coaches and players were also present. The programme was conducted by Deepika Patel. On the occasion on BHU the final of the badminton competition organised by University Sports Board (USB) was held in Vibhuti Narayan Sabhagar in which about 100 men/women players of the university participated. USB vice-president Prof SVS Raju and Prof AP Singh were present as the guests and they were welcomed by USB general secretary Prof BC Kapri. The vote of thanks was proposed by the organising secretary Dr Rajiv Kumar Singh.

Volleyball match held at IFFCO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A volleyball match was organised between the teams of IFFCO employees and Newgen Security Guards at IFFCO Ghiyanagar Phulpur to mark the birth anniversary of world famous hockey wizard Major Dhyana Chand and National Sports Day. The game was played in a friendly atmosphere at RK Krishnan Stadium in which Newgen Security team emerged victorious. The programme was conducted by Bablesh Mishra. A large number of people enjoyed the

match. To promote sports, IFFCO organises sports competitions and activities every year in various sports like swimming, cricket, lawn tennis, badminton, athletics, volleyball etc. Apart from this, summer sports training is also organised for employees and their dependents in various sports. **General Manager Production Sanjay Bhandari, HOD Human Resource Shambhu Shekhar, representative of IFFCO Officers' Association & IFFCO Employees' Sangh were present during the match.**

Mamata a liar, says BJP

Has done nothing to protect women in West Bengal: Malviya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday slammed West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee calling her a "liar" and asked her to explain why she has not done anything to ensure implementation of existing "stringent" rules and regulations to protect women in her state. This came after Mamata wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reiterating her request for stringent central legislation and exemplary punishment on heinous crimes like rape and murder. She also sought mandatory provision for time-bound disposal of cases of rape/rape and murder. "It is incumbent on Mamata to explain why the West Bengal Government hasn't done anything for implementing the stringent rules and regulations, which exist for protecting women and girls," BJP co-incharge for West Bengal Amit Malviya said in a social media post. "Stop writing letters. Answer the questions. You are accountable," he said.



In her letter, Mamata said she was yet to receive a reply from the Prime Minister on the issue that she had flagged in her previous letter to him. The Chief Minister, however, said she received a communication from the Union Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister Annapurna Devi. Maintaining that the letter by the WCD Minister "barely attends the gravity of the issue" raised by her, Banerjee wrote, "The seriousness of the subject and its relevance to the society have not been adequately appreciated while

sending out this generic reply." Banerjee, in her letter to the Prime Minister, mentioned that 88 fast-track special courts and 62 POCSO-designated courts are already functioning in West Bengal on State funding. Reacting sharply, Malviya said, "Mamata is a liar." "Annapurna Devi, Union Minister of Women and Child Development, responded to West Bengal Chief Minister on August 25, 2024. In her letter, in point 4, she (the WCD Minister) specifically mentions West Bengal Government not

setting up even a single fast track Court for addressing rape and POCSO related cases," the BJP Leader said. He also posted on social media a copy of the WCD Minister's letter to the West Bengal Chief Minister. Malviya said as many as seven cases of rape, mostly of minors, and in some cases murders too have been reported in West Bengal in the last 48 hours. "But in the last 48 hours, Mamata has been engaged in every deplorable act — that a civilised Chief Minister would be ashamed of — from issuing open letters to clarifications, from threatening and abusing doctors to inciting nationwide arson," he said in another social media post. He called Mamata a "failed Home and Health Minister" of the State and alleged that she is preoccupied with suppressing evidences of her corruption and incompetence in the RG Kar Hospital rape-and-murder case. "But, enough is enough. The awakened conscience of Bengal now calls for accountability," the BJP leader added.



PM Modi to visit Brunei, Singapore in September: MEA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Brunei and Singapore in the first week of September, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday. The Prime Minister will travel to Brunei on September 3-4, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal announced at his media briefing. This will be the first bilateral visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Brunei, he said. This visit will also mark 40 years of the establishment of the diplomatic ties between India and Brunei, Jaiswal said. From there, Prime Minister Modi is slated to visit Singapore on September 4-5 at the invitation of his Singaporean counterpart, the MEA said.

JPC hears views of Muslim organisations on Waqf Bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Joint Parliamentary Committee met here for the second time on Friday to hear the views of Muslim bodies on the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill which seeks to reform the registration process for Waqf properties through a centralised portal. During the day-long meeting, the panel headed by BJP's Jagdambika Pal will hear the views of stakeholders, including the All India Sunni Jamiyatul Ulama, Mumbai, and Delhi-based Indian Muslims for Civil Rights (IMCR). The Bill is the first major initiative of the BJP-led NDA Government aimed at reforming the registration process for Waqf properties. Besides this, establishing a Central Waqf Council alongside State Waqf Boards with representation to Muslim women and non-Muslim representatives are also among the proposed reforms. A contentious provision of the Bill is the proposal to designate the district collector as the primary authority in determining whether a property is classified as Waqf or Government land. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 8 and referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament after a heated debate with the Government



asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques and the opposition calling it a targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution. In its marathon first meeting earlier this month, opposition MPs flagged objections over a host of provisions as the Union Minority Affairs Ministry made a presentation in the proposed law. Sources said BJP members in the meeting lauded the proposed amendments, including the provisions which seek to empower women. Meanwhile, the Joint Committee on Friday sought suggestions from stakeholders, experts and other institutions on the proposed law. The Bill seeks to reforming the registration process for Waqf properties through a centralised portal. According to a statement issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the committee led by BJP's Jagdambika Pal has

asked for "views/suggestions from the public in general and NGOs, experts, stakeholders and institutions in particular" considering the "wider implications" of the Bill. People have been asked to share their suggestions in writing in the next 15 days. The memoranda and suggestions submitted to the committee would form part of the records of the Committee and would be treated as "confidential", it said. Those who wish to appear before the committee, besides submitting views in writing, have been asked to specifically indicate so in their correspondence. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 8 and referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament after a heated debate with the Government asserting the proposed law did not intend to interfere with the functioning of mosques and the opposition calling it a targeting of Muslims and an attack on the Constitution.



Five billion people globally consume less iodine, vitamin E, calcium: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A recent study published in The Lancet Global Health journal has revealed people across all age groups in India and globally, both men and women, are consuming inadequate amounts of micronutrients critical for health, including iron, calcium and folate. The study is the first to provide estimates of insufficient consumption of 15 micronutrients across 185 countries, taken through diets without the use of supplements, according to an international team, including researchers from Harvard University, US. The findings suggested that around the world, almost 70 per cent, or over five billion, people do not consume enough iodine, vitamin E, and calcium. The researchers also found that within a country and an age group, more women were consuming inadequate amounts of iodine, vitamin B12 and iron, compared to men, whereas more men were consuming inadequate amounts of magnesium, vitamin B6, zinc and vitamin C, compared to women. In India, while more women consumed insufficient

amounts of iodine, compared to men, more men consumed inadequate amounts of zinc and magnesium, compared to women, the team found. While analyses over the past 10 years have looked at micronutrient deficiencies, the researchers said large data gaps remain for many micronutrients and population groups. In the study, the authors used publicly available data from the Global Dietary Database to estimate the prevalence of insufficient nutrient intakes for 99.3 per cent of the global population. Men and women aged 10-30 years were most prone to low-levels of calcium intake, especially in South Asia, Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the team pointed out. The authors said the findings could be used by public health professionals to target populations in need of dietary interventions. They added that since they did not account for intake of fortified foods or supplements, the results could possibly be an overestimate for some key nutrients in particular locations where people consume high amounts of fortified foods and supplements.

Sharad rejects proposal to step up security at his Delhi house

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Nationalist Congress Party-SP (NCP-SP) chief Sharad Pawar, accorded Z-plus protective cover recently, is learnt to have turned down certain measures suggested by security agencies. The Centre accorded him the Z-plus cover of the Central Reserve Police Force's (CRPF) VIP security wing after a threat assessment review by central agencies. However, Pawar is learnt to have conveyed to them that he has not been told why his security is being beefed up. The 83-year-old former Maharashtra Chief Minister is learnt to have rejected the proposals to deploy additional security personnel inside his house in the national Capital, change the vehicle he uses to travel within the city and that he be escorted by two security personnel inside his vehicle. Pawar was also amenable to increasing the height of the boundary walls of his house in Delhi as part of the enhanced security measures. The former Defence Minister is learnt to have conveyed this to the representatives of security agencies the CRPF and the Delhi Police at a meeting here on Friday. Besides them, representatives of the Delhi Fire Service, the Central Public Works Department, the New Delhi Municipal Council and the Union Home Ministry were also part of the meeting. Sources had said after the assessment recommended a strong security cover for Pawar, the Union Home Ministry asked the CRPF to give him Z-plus protection.

Graduation degree must for pharmacist position within CGHS

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

To elevate professional standards for pharmacists in the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) and address the sector's longstanding demands, the Modi Government has implemented new recruitment rules mandating a graduation degree as the minimum educational qualification for pharmacist positions within CGHS. A notification in this regard was issued by the Union Health Ministry recently. Till now, the qualification required for the pharmacist post in CGHS was a 12th class pass with science subjects (Physics, Chemistry, and Biology) and a Diploma in

Pharmacy from a recognized institution. Additionally, the age limit for candidates applying for the post has been increased from 25 to 27 years, according to a recent notification from the Union Health Ministry. This adjustment is intended to provide a broader age range for potential candidates, making the recruitment process more inclusive. Baldev Kumar, a senior pharmacist and central council member of the Pharmacy Council of India, welcomed the new RR, noting that they represent a significant shift in qualification requirements and age limits. He highlighted that candidates holding a



Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D) degree from a recognized Central or State Government university or institute are now also eligible for pharmacist positions in CGHS. This inclusion acknowledges advanced qualifications and may attract highly skilled professionals. Vikas Jain, General Secretary of the All India CGHS Employees Association, echoed similar sentiments.

He stated that the direct impact of this change will be on the CGHS department. With the new rules, only graduate and experienced pharmacists will be eligible for positions. He called the decision a significant victory for the pharmacist community, which has long sought more respectable positions and salary scales commensurate with their qualifications and experience. While the qualification requirement has been increased, the salary scale remains unchanged. However, Jain pinned hopes that a future pay commission may revise the salary scale to align with the new qualifications, leading to

potential salary improvements. Overall, these new rules are a positive development for the pharmacist community, aligning job qualifications with industry standards and potentially enhancing the professional status of pharmacists in the CGHS, said the pharmacists. CGHS facilities providing a range of healthcare services, including outpatient and inpatient care, diagnostics, and medicines are utilized by central Government Employees, pensioners, Central Government Autonomous Bodies, Central Government Undertaking Employees and Certain State Government Employees.

Joint Commanders' meet to begin soon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The first Joint Commanders' Conference (JCC) is set to take place at the Headquarters Central Command, Lucknow from September 4, 5. Themed 'Sashakt aur Surakshit Bharat: Transforming the Armed Forces', the conference will be attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and will serve as the pivotal platform for undertaking internal process reforms within the armed forces, Defence Ministry said here on Friday. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan will inaugurate the convocation on September four, which brings together the apex level hierarchy from the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. The two-day deliberations

will focus on analysing the impact of regional and global geo-political disruptions and the commensurate demands that are likely to be placed upon the reforms being undertaken by the armed forces. Preparing for Future Wars, Jointness and Integration among the constituent services and technology absorption, riding on the Government's 'Atmanirbharta' initiative to achieve self-reliance in Defence, will be areas receiving prime emphasis. The JCC is planned to be developed as a crucial forum for exchange of ideas, strategies and best practices among India's top military leadership, reinforcing the country's commitment to a strong and safer future and achieving strategic autonomy in defence.

SC terms recovery agent firm as 'group of goons'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Termining a recovery agent firm of a bank as a "group of goons" who did not return the vehicle seized from a man despite one time settlement of the loan amount, the Supreme Court has directed the West Bengal Police to file charge sheet against the company within two months. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan, which directed for payment of compensation to one Debasish Bosu Roy Chowdhury who took a loan of Rs 15.15 lakh for purchasing a bus for plying in Kolkata, directed Bank of India to recover the amount from the recovery agent. "Given the observations made by the High Court and the plea taken by the petitioners, we find that respondent No. 4, a recovery agent, in actuality appears to be a group of goons, who use their muscle power to harass loanees on behalf of the petitioner-bank," the bench said in its recent order. It noted an FIR was lodged against the recovery agent firm M/s City Investigation and Detective for failing to return the vehicle in proper condition and said, "The Commissioner of Police of the concerned area is directed to ensure that investigation of FIR dated July 5, 2023, registered at Police Station Sodepur in West Bengal, under Sections 406, 420 and 471 of the IPC, is taken to its logical conclusion without any delay, and charge sheet is filed within a period of two months." The recovery agent firm, however, later returned the vehicle but in a damaged condition, with chassis and engine numbers changed. "The petitioner-bank shall be entitled to recover the compensation amount paid to



respondent No. 1 (Chowdhury) from respondent No. 4 (recovery agent firm), or any other person found to be responsible for the damage caused to the vehicle," the bench said. It directed that thereafter, the trial Court would take cognisance of the charge sheet and proceed in accordance with law. The bench further directed, "If there is any license/authority letter granted by a competent authority to respondent No. 4 to act as recovery agent, the petitioner-bank is directed to make a separate complaint to that authority, regarding cancellation of such permission/authority letter." The top Court refused to interfere with the Calcutta High Court order of May 16 by which the bank was asked to pay Chowdhury Rs 5 lakh interim compensation for its conduct in not returning the vehicle to him. The High Court had granted liberty to the loanee to approach the civil Court for higher compensation. Chowdhury had approached the bank for a loan of Rs 15.15 and upon satisfaction of his credentials, his loan was sanctioned and to be repaid along with interest in 84 equated monthly installments of Rs 26,502 commencing from December 2014. The vehicle (bus) in question was hypothecated to the bank. It was contended by the bank

that from January 2018, Chowdhury started defaulting in payment of monthly installment and his account was declared a Non-Performing Asset (NPA) on May 31, 2018. The outstanding amount of loan as on date of NPA stood at Rs 10.23 lakh. The top Court noted that the bank hired the services of M/s City Investigation and Detective, the so-called recovery agent, who was aided by the Government authorities in seizing Chowdhury's vehicle for and on behalf of the bank. The bank claimed in the High Court that the market value of the vehicle as on July 31, 2019 was only Rs 2.37 lakh and the distress sale value was only Rs 1.66 lakh. In March 2021, Chowdhury approached the bank for One-Time Settlement (OTS) of Rs 1.8 lakh towards the entire outstanding. The bank agreed to the proposal to accept the OTS offer though it was only 17.75 per cent of the outstanding dues. "For reasons best known to the officers of the bank, a one-time settlement (OTS) was executed between the bank and respondent No. 1 (loanee) for a paltry sum of Rs 1,80,000. The said amount was admittedly deposited by respondent No. 1 (loanee) with the Bank," the top court noted in its order. It said the vehicle, however, was not released to the loanee, even though the bank was bound to do so, having accepted the OTS. "After great efforts, the vehicle/bus was recovered, but by that time its chassis number and engine number were changed and some of the spare parts were also removed. Also, the vehicle was not in working condition," the bench noted.

Women doctors feel insecure on night shifts, some carry weapons: IMA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A study by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has highlighted alarming safety concerns among doctors, with a significant number, particularly women, reporting feelings of extreme insecurity during night shifts so much so that some have begun carrying weapons for self-defence. This comprehensive survey, involving 3,885 respondents across 22 States, was conducted in the wake of the alleged rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. It said about one-third of respondents felt "unsafe" (24.1 per cent) or "very unsafe" (11.4 per cent)

during night shifts. Around 45 per cent of doctors reported not having access to a duty room during night shifts. Those with duty rooms generally felt safer. However, many duty rooms were overcrowded, lacked privacy, and had inadequate facilities, such as missing locks and no attached bathrooms. There were infrastructure issues also. Duty rooms were often located far from patient care areas (53 per cent), and one-third lacked attached bathrooms, requiring doctors to venture outside late at night. The study has recommended enhanced Security, improved infrastructure and legislative measures. These suggestions come amid the Union Health



Ministry's directives to the States urging them to increase the number of trained security personnel, install CCTV cameras, improve lighting, and implement alarm systems. It has also asked to ensure duty rooms are secure and equipped with basic amenities, and address overcrowding and privacy issues. Some doctors reported carrying weapons for self-

defense due to unsafe conditions. Issues like verbal and physical threats from patients under the influence, and inappropriate contact in crowded emergency rooms were noted. The study highlights the urgent need for policy changes to enhance security and infrastructure in healthcare settings. Dr. Siddharth Tara, Convener of the Progressive Medicos and Scientists Forum, emphasised the urgent need for the survey, highlighting that the Indian healthcare system relies heavily on women, including ASHA workers, female nurses, and doctors. He asserted that these professionals deserve to work with dignity and called for the National Medical

Commission to derecognise medical colleges that fail to ensure the safety of their trainee doctors, citing a lack of administrative accountability. Dr. Shweta Sharma, a psychologist and head of Mansa Global Foundation, described the IMA survey as revealing and critical. She underscored the severe mental trauma experienced by female doctors following the tragic incident at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. Noting that similar incidents have been reported in the media, she stressed the need for an urgent and comprehensive safety network to ensure doctors can perform their duties without fear or undue pressure. Ends



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The dark side

Sexual exploitation in the Kerala film industry revealed by the Hema Committee report sends shockwaves across the country

It is a "me too" moment of the Kerala film industry. The image of the Kerala film industry has touched the rock bottom after Hema committee has reported rampant sexual abuse, lack of basic amenities for women and more. It is all the more shocking as it is happening in the state which has given the most progressive films to the country. The Kerala film industry, known for producing some of India's most critically acclaimed and beloved films, is now under the shadow of a severe crisis. A landmark report from the Hema Committee has exposed the deep-rooted gender issues and sexual exploitation that plague this vibrant film hub, revealing a shocking underbelly that contradicts the industry's artistic achievements. The 290-page report, prepared by a three-member panel headed by retired Kerala High Court Justice K. Hema, offers a scathing indictment of the Malayalam-language film industry. It paints a grim picture of a workplace where sexual harassment is rampant and systemic, and where a "mafia of powerful men" wields control, leaving women vulnerable to exploitation. The Hema Committee was established by the Kerala government in 2017, in the aftermath of a high-profile case that sent shockwaves through the industry. The Hema Committee's findings have laid bare the systemic problems that have long been ignored or downplayed. The report uncovers a litany of abuses, from the lack of basic amenities like toilets and changing rooms for junior artists to the frequent demands for sexual favors by powerful men in the industry. It describes the harrowing experiences of women who have been forced to endure long hours without access to toilets, leading to severe health issues. The panel also found that sexual harassment is not only widespread but often goes unchecked and unreported due to the fear of retaliation. As expected, the Kerala film fraternity has vehemently denied all the allegations. Despite the damning findings, the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA), a prominent industry body, has denied the accusations. The organization's general secretary, Siddique, dismissed the claims, stating that conditions for women on film sets have improved in recent years and that the industry is not controlled by a small group of powerful men. However, the report's release has sparked widespread outrage, with activists and opposition leaders demanding immediate action against those implicated. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has vowed to take action if any woman who testified before the committee comes forward to file a complaint. As the industry grapples with these revelations, there is hope that this moment of reckoning will lead to lasting change. The Kerala film industry has long been celebrated for its artistic achievements; now, it must also become a beacon of respect, safety, and dignity for all who work within it.



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PICTALK



Aukhara Nimbarika Peeth Mahanta Asthal, a 250-year-old Mutt in East Bardhaman

Environment: A casualty of overtourism



KOTA SRIRAJ

The future of India's tourism sector depends on a delicate balance between ecological integrity and economic growth, but it needs to be addressed now

Recently the Mayor of the picturesque Santorini Island in Greece had to declare an emergency as 17000 tourists descended on the island in one day. The beleaguered residents of the island were advised to stay indoors as swarms of tourists took over the hapless location putting immense stress on infrastructure, accommodation and the local environment including the verdant beaches. This has triggered protests by the locals who took out rallies holding placards that read "no more mass tourism."



Overtourism is characterised by increased pollution and strain on resources like water and energy in a destination that is overwhelmed by an excessive number of tourists, to a point where it negatively affects the local environment, biodiversity, and infrastructure. The telling impact of overtourism is evident in India too. Every year the popular hill stations of north India such as Kullu, Manali and Mussoorie witness serpentine tourist traffic jams that extend over many kilometres to gain entry to these towns.

Thanks to this excess footfall the average ambient temperatures have gone up in many of the Himalayan tourist hot spots. The rising temperatures in these locations have in turn altered the weather patterns. Over the last two decades, the Indian Himalayan region has experienced a consistent decline in snowfall days, severely affecting destinations such as Gulmarg and Auli, which have seen a decrease in skiing tourists and shorter seasons, resulting in lower revenue and local economic strain. Even far-flung religious destinations such as Joshimath have not been immune to this heavy tourism torture with over 10 crore people visiting this revered Himalayan town every year resulting in ecological issues such as land subsidence and crumbling biodiversity. Down south popular tourist states such as Kerala are experiencing the painful consequences of rampant tourism. The above-normal rainfall combined with indiscriminate human activity in the form of

tourism resulted in a change in land use patterns in the plantation areas across Kerala. The God's on Country became a victim of human greed as over-tourism led to increased demand for hotels, restaurants and related businesses. Consequently, indiscriminate building activity on hillsides, exploitation of land and deforestation took place leading to irreversible damage to the environment besides terrain instability issues. The recent tragedy in Wayanad is an unfortunate example that consumed 500 lives and left 400 people injured besides causing immense loss of property. The unfortunate impact of tourism is accurately captured by the findings of the French start-up Murmuration specialising in monitoring the environmental impact of tourism using satellite data. The firm has stated that 80% of tourists visit just 10% of the world's tourist spots leading to bigger crowds in fewer locations. If this trend continues, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) estimates that by 2030, the number of world-wide tourists, which peaked at 1.5 billion in 2019, will reach 1.8 billion. Furthermore, by 2030 the transport-related carbon emissions from tourism are expected to grow by 25% from 2016 levels. Some countries like Australia have taken



THANKS TO THIS EXCESS FOOTFALL THE AVERAGE AMBIENT TEMPERATURES HAVE GONE UP IN MANY OF THE HIMALAYAN TOURIST HOT SPOTS. THE RISING TEMPERATURES IN THESE LOCATIONS HAVE IN TURN ALTERED THE WEATHER PATTERNS

broad steps to address the issue. The Australian eco-certification programme for instance promotes minimal environmental impact tourism, which helps tourists make responsible travel choices. South Africa on the other hand supports ethical tourism through its fair-trade tourism certification, which ensures fair wages and working conditions in tourism enterprises. Closer home, Bhutan has adopted a "high value, low volume" policy, which serves a dual purpose and involves a daily fee paid by tourists, which helps fund local community services and limits tourist numbers to prevent over-tourism. However, India has unique problems and needs more specific and aggressive measures to rein in the issue of over-tourism. The beginning point can be the tourism supply chain sector comprising travel companies, cruise companies, ticketing firms and package tour providers. These entities must bear a fair share of responsibility for ensuring a balanced tourist traffic flow across the destinations in India. This can be done by abstaining from overselling usual tourist destinations and redirecting travellers to other locations. This will prevent overcrowding of a few traditional tourist hot spots and bring

down environmental stress. The tourism ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of environment working in tandem can employ innovative initiatives to protect the ecology and biodiversity of popular tourist destinations. This partnership can start by first regulating the tour and ticketing companies. This can be ended by registering each tourist operator and weeding out illegal entities. The dual ministry partnership can usher in a new era of environmentally conscious tourism. As a part of this, both the ministries can provide unique and non-transferable registration IDs to tourism companies and then periodic workshops can be held for these bonafide members to sensitise them about ecology, biodiversity and climate change issues. As a part of this partnership, the ministries can also develop algorithm-based software for the tourism sector companies that helps in automatically limiting the tourist flow to popular destinations by limiting hotel and transport availability after a certain quota of tourists are accommodated. This can go a long way in reducing the tourist burden on the environment in these destinations. (The author is a policy analyst. The views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CAN GENDER JUSTICE BE ENSURED

Madam — With the revelations of the Hema Committee, the masks of many prominent figures in the Malayalam film industry are falling apart. This is a good start. But are such degradations only in Malayalam cinema? Is this not the case in Kollywood and Bollywood? Aren't ordinary women more or less humiliated in many public places except in the government sector? Isn't this the reason for the age-old awareness of the society towards gender justice? How do organized religions treat their women? Do women have their own voice? After the Hema Committee's revelations, will the beleaguered creeps examine the condition of the women around them? It is not rituals and prayers that children should be taught from an early age. Rather, the ability to react like the heroine in Jaya Jaya Jaya should be developed. Only then will society, the society's copies and remakes of cinema and its workers, especially actresses, be saved. Which party will take the initiative? Which religion will come forward? Unnikrishnan Mangalasseril | Malappuram

ARE DOCTORS' PROTESTS PEACEFUL?

Madam — This is in response to the news report titled "Doctors on strike refuse to listen to Mamata" (August 29). Junior Doctors of government medical colleges of West Bengal, who are on cease-work for around 3 weeks, have not only condemned the violence and mayhem unleashed by a political outfit in the guise of "students" on the 27th day of August in Kolkata; but also gone to the hilarious extent of terming their own "protests" as "peaceful"! While goons and lumpens are directly tormenting the innocents through muscle-flexing and physical assaults resulting in wounds of the victims; the Doctors are tormenting the innocent vulnerable patients, suffering from "wounds" in heart lungs kidney brain liver stomach eyes through the "non-violent" path of refusal of medical

Let us have eco-friendly festivals



India is a country where festivals are celebrated with immense joy and enthusiasm. However, these celebrations also bring forth significant challenges. Every year, Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated with great fervor, and this year will be no different, with festivities reaching new heights. But alongside the excitement, one of the most pressing challenges we face is environmental health.

Our past experiences have shown that festivals often lead to severe water pollution, particularly due to the disposal of idols and ritual remains. These materials, often containing silicon dioxide and sodium carbonate, are harmful to aquatic life, leading to their deaths and causing significant water contamination. This, in turn, affects the quality of life, disrupts food chains, and threatens the balance of our ecosystems.

To address this issue, people across the country must adopt the practice of making idols from clay and soil. This eco-friendly approach could be a significant asset in preserving environmental health. With many species of flora and fauna already endangered or on the brink of extinction, it is crucial to embrace new, innovative methods to celebrate festivals. By doing so, we can protect life on Earth while maintaining the same energy and enthusiasm in our celebrations.

Sarthakj Sharma | Ujjain

treatment!

Less said about the worst woes of patients, rushing from towns and villages several hundred kilometers away, suffering from cancer or requiring dialysis and operations the better! Yes, unlike the muscle-flexing stone-hurling violent goons, the "protests" by the "sacrosanct" Doctors are "peaceful" indeed

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

BENGAL GOING DOWN THE HILL

Madam — To the one of the kind gesture, recently the Indian Air Force launched the comic book to inspire youngster for joining Air Force. So far, joining the air force is been a sort of privilege for the men and women. But after the case of Agniveer is troled so much politically by the opposition parties and there were rumours of dismantling this particular scheme, one established in the governance, the craze of joining force got a little hurt. Although patriotism is always a biggest inspiration for all the young people to

serve their motherland with utmost honesty and integrity.

But the novel idea of comic book to share the valour and patriotism of our exuberant commanders and officers. The nation is safe on the clutches of brave hands, we hope that more and more valour loving people come from the society to serve the nation's cause. In conclusion, while the Agniveer scheme has faced political scrutiny, the spirit of patriotism remains a driving force for many young people eager to serve their motherland. By showcasing the courage and dedication of our commanders and officers, this novel approach helps reignite the passion for joining the Air Force. The nation's safety lies in the hands of these brave individuals, and we hope to see more valiant citizens stepping forward to serve the nation with honor and integrity.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Automation vs authenticity: Can AI replace the writer's soul?

Will the essence of storytelling — the reflection of genuine human experience — be lost in the rise of machine-generated content?

Way back in the early 2000s, when I started writing my debut novel, it seemed like a daunting task that would take an entire lifetime to complete. Driven purely by my literary instincts and an eagerness to create something authentic, I took four years to finish the story and become an author. To be an author in those days meant a lot. Not many people ventured to do it given the time and effort that one had invested in the process. Cut to the new times, and becoming an author is as easy as blowing bubbles, thanks to the emergence of AI. Someone I know recently said that they have a target of publishing 10 books this year, and I wasn't surprised. But can AI-assisted writing be a patch on creative writing that comes from the inner realms of a writer filled with genuine emotions and subjective thought? As a creative writing coach for children, I have often wondered if children will ever need to learn to write in future, and if even readers will stop caring if a piece of writing has come from AI's backyard or the annals of original human contemplation and creativity.



I have floated this question to people and the responses have been divided. Some believe that in a world that is pressed for time, the source of thought is not as important as the thought itself. If served in an easily digestible manner, it doesn't matter where it comes from — man or machine. While this view has resulted in the spawning of authors around the world, what remains a cardinal truth is that a story or a piece of writing can be resonant with readers only when it is generated in human consciousness. The chief purpose of art and literature is to be able to strike a chord with readers and not to just disseminate information. The reader is

looking for a part of herself in the stories, a reflection of common human experiences and the books they read to be echo chambers of their own lives in parts or whole. Authentic storytelling brings with it a chunk of the writer's soul and it seeks to merge with the soul of the readers. Anything that is generated by a vast reservoir of ready-made ideas will be too perfect to evoke responses. Students may be able to produce perfect sentences and passages that will answer a question, but they will not reflect the personality and character of the writer. What makes a genuine piece of writing enduring and endearing is the voice of the writer and their ability to draw on personal experiences, intuition and a strong need to connect with the audience. No matter how the concepts are laid out in an artificial piece of story, they will be less distinctive and more formulaic and impersonal. Maybe, our hustling world needs only quick fixes, and as we discover newer methods to replicate human thought, our spirit will also capitulate and settle for

the synthetic form of writing. It's again about what the audience chooses that will determine the future of creativity. If AI can satiate the population, then why would original writers spend time and energy on creating something from the core of their hearts? It is a scary outlook to hold, as a writer and creative writing coach. While a part of me still refuses to believe the doomsday scenario, I am still betting on ethical and moral considerations to deter people from going all out and claiming themselves to be authors and writers without much intellectual investment. I am under no illusion that writing will remain sacrosanct as it used to be. It will soon become generic and predictable. Or maybe, going forward, AI will be able to generate stylised texts that mimic the voice of a particular writer and erase the distinction between the real and the unreal. It's a scary and depressive scenario, but one that we, as authentic writers, must brace ourselves for. (The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR



FIRST COLUMN

RELATIONSHIPS AND SPIRITUALITY

We must learn to see others as souls like ourselves, worthy of respect and understanding



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Yes, spirituality can help in maintaining good relationships. I will cite several examples, where solutions are available in spirituality. Beginning with the common fault of seeing fault in others, don't we have faults? Therefore, others must have too. How should we deal with this problem? Lord Krishna guides in the Bhagavad-Geeta, "We should not cause confusion in the minds of ignorant persons, rather should pacify." (3.26) Let us assume that our assessment of other person is right.

Then, accept it and somehow manage the situation. We should be able to do so if we indeed are wise. Another common flaw is to get angry with someone and maintain anger. What benefit is there in doing so? All we will do is to cause harm to ourselves. The Geeta illuminates, "From anger, foolishness results; from foolishness, bewilderment results; from bewilderment, loss of intelligence occurs; and by the loss of intelligence, a person is doomed." (2.63) This sequence is repeated in the lives of all those who harbour anger. How does spirituality help? Forgive and be done with it. What benefit will be derived by harbouring anger?

Rather one can be a happy person. (5.23) Thoughts of illicit acts are another common problem. Who can claim that he or she doesn't get them: The only exceptions are highly advanced devotees like Swami Vivekananda. What is the spiritual solution? Lord Krishna has drawn the line when He stated, "I am passion in beings, according to religious principles." (7.11) Otherwise, get ready to burn as warned in this verse, "By this insatiable fire in the form of lust, which is the eternal enemy of a knowledgeable person knowledge is covered." (3.39) Close relationships



like marriage require special attention. In spiritual terms, we are packages with both good and bad. Our natures are parts of these. When we are born we bring them into our present lives. These are parts of our fate and don't change much in our lifetime, mainly the major factors. This is the solution for marriage partners. We must accept them as they are. Disliking would not help; acceptance will, as long as there is no violation of dharma like maintaining illicit relationships. From the Geeta we learn that even a man of knowledge endeavours according to his nature; persons follow nature. What will repression do? (3.33) God can help if we are determined, but it is a very slow process. Another major deterrent to good relationships is a clash of egos. Everyone is trying to prove his or her superiority, whereas there is only one superior, i.e. God. We are all small, ignorant and quite helpless really.

This is what ego means. Sooner we give up the false sense of superiority and become humble better we will be served. Humility is a great quality to achieve relationships. One will begin appreciating instead, which endears us to one and all. One will have no dearth of friends, which all egoists lack. Just like everyone has faults, everyone has some good qualities also. Look for them and you will find plenty.

Make a habit of thanking whenever some favour is done to us; this habit entitles us to more favours. Lord Krishna has asked us to see all others as souls just like us. (5.18) There must be basic regard for all human beings. We are judgemental, and, unfortunately, suffer due to our very limited knowledge. How much do we know about anything in its totality – the Big Picture? Only God knows. Therefore, our expectations are very high from others and, inevitably, very little from ourselves. If we are not so judgemental our relations with others will be conducive to dealing. We will appreciate that the circumstances of others may not be so favourable to them. We will be better served in dealing with others if we embrace spirituality. We will not step in the three doors to hell, which are lust, anger and greed. And if we can control our hateful tendencies, we will endear ourselves to others greatly.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views expressed are personal)

The crisis of residential colonies in Punjab



SUKHDEV SINGH

Despite repeated efforts to curb unauthorised development, the reality remains stark: unauthorised colonies have proliferated, and buyers still face numerous hurdles



In its meeting held on August 14, 2024, the Punjab cabinet decided to remove the requirement of PUDA NOC for the sale of plots in the unapproved residential colonies. But the stated objective "to save the buyers from their struggle for basic civic amenities in these colonies" is the same as used by the successive governments amending the PAPR Act 1995 from time to time while its hollowness is so obvious in the reality on the ground. Every time the law has been amended to make some of its provisions more stringent against the colonizers, it has served them more. For example, the PAPR Act 1995 was amended in 2014 to deal with the promoters or estate agents registered under the act but failing to comply with its provisions.

The amendment changed the punishment of imprisonment from up to three years to a minimum of three years extendable to seven years with a fine from ten thousand to a minimum of Rupees two lac extending to Rupees five lac. But it made the law ineffectual on the offending colonizers in the past. The cycle of stricter punishment and waiver of the offences in the past has been on since 1995 in the name of saving buyers from cheating and deceit. The notifications, issued in the years 2010, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2021, and 2022, amending or adding to the law(s) of PAPRA instantiate the continuity in relief to the colonizers in the name of providing relief to the people. The successive governments have been approving the schemes of instituting the need for a 'no objection certificate' NOC by paying some fee as development charges that the individual plot holders are circumstantially compelled to pay but the real estate agents remain immune to it waiting for the next the cut-off date for the waiver. Given the increased demand for housing and the unregulated activities of "some private colonisers" working with the sole "motive of profits" disregarding "the interests and rights of buyers of plots and flats", the stated objective for repealing the Punjab Regulation of



THE PAPR ACT 1995 WAS AMENDED IN 2014 TO DEAL WITH THE PROMOTERS OR ESTATE AGENTS REGISTERED UNDER THE ACT BUT FAILING TO COMPLY WITH ITS PROVISIONS

colonies Act, 1975 and the legislating Punjab Apartment and Property Regulation Act (PAPRA) 1995 was "to check, control and regulate effectively the activities of such private colonisers and protect the interest of the consumers".

The situation originated from the unpreparedness of the government to meet the rising need for housing and post-1990 privatisation policy without any regulating mechanisms. In hindsight, the Punjab Apartment and Property Regulation Act 1995 was legislated and the Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority (PUDA) was established to register private colonizers and issue licenses to develop the housing colonies on the agricultural or other land after seeking change in land use (CLU) and approved plans as per rules in PAPR Act 1995.

With a huge financial burden on salaries and infrastructure PUDA and its subsequent regional authorities were tasked to enforce 'obligations on promoters and estate agents' to create all civic amenities within a specified time-frame requiring them to hand over the colony to the respective urban local body after NOCs from all the concerned departments. The stated objective of the act (PAPR) and the authority (PUDA) since then has been to check the growth of unauthorised colonies and enforce the development in the authorised colonies as per rules.

But unfortunately, it has miserably failed in its two-pronged objective: since 1995 the number of unauthorised colonies has risen to more than 15000 while the number of authorised colonies in comparison is much less.

Yet in the authorised colonies, the enforcement of time-bound assured development is too weak to act for anyone as a motivation to build houses there. The colonisers have sold all the plots in the name of legal colonies plotting a chunk of land on its sidelines without necessary approvals and without developing the approved section to the standards of seeking NOCs from the concerned departments to hand over the colonies to the local body; the irony is that the development authorities prefer not to take any suo moto notice of it. Neither the developer nor any government agency including PUDA undertakes the development responsibility although the rules prescribe stringent action against the coloniser and for PUDA to undertake development by confiscating the mortgaged properties and bank guarantees etc. But PUDA continues to grant extensions year after year while the plot buyer is not able to build the house on the 'legal' plot in a 'legal' colony because the PSPCL does not provide a power supply connection in the absence of NOC.

The officials appointed in PUDA and urban local body (ULB) to enforce and ensure time-bound development in the legal colonies by the licensed private developer finish off by saying that the public facilities in an authorised colony are the responsibility of the colonizer who doesn't give a damn to this responsibility because he understands that the enforcement agencies enforce the law on those who approach the law not on those who violate the law.

The plot buyers feel legally duped. The unauthorised colonies without change in land use or any

approved plan continued to mushroom where the colonisers created very little infrastructure and sold the plots leaving the plot holders to act as the vote bank approaching the political class for relief. Hence the need for NOCs and their waiver becomes a game of politics rather than a policy. Now that the cycle is complete by the Punjab cabinet decision to waive off the need for NOCs in the unauthorised colonies while the cabinet itself had legislated for the NOCs.

It doesn't matter to the common man which cabinet it was or is; what matters to them is a legal and easy-to-build house policy for them.

Therefore while the government notifies the waiver of NOCs in the unauthorised colonies, it should direct PUDA to confiscate mortgaged properties and bank guarantees to develop all more-than-ten-years colonies and ensure time-bound development of electricity LD systems, sewerage, water supply and roads before selling any plot in the authorised colonies to encourage the planned and legal development and strictly control the unauthorised development in future rather than approve policies to legalise the illegal.

The onus for ensured development should be on the regulator rather than on the buyer of a plot. Let the 2024 notification waiving off the condition of NOCs by the buyers be the last one! Let the common man experience the fundamental right to live a respectable life!

(The writer is a retired professor from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and a Member, of the Governing Council, INTACH; views are personal)

Seizing the opportunity in global defence supply gaps

With its growing defence manufacturing capabilities and strategic partnerships, India has the unique opportunity to address the emerging gaps in global defence supplies

The global defence landscape is rapidly evolving, marked by escalating geopolitical conflicts and the increasingly strategic use of denial tactics to restrict access to critical military hardware and technology. Many nations, including India's key strategic partners, are facing unprecedented challenges as essential defence stockpiles deplete, and sophisticated war machines become obsolete or vulnerable to new forms of subversion.

In response, major defence suppliers, particularly those in first-world countries, are prioritizing the preservation of their stockpiles over external sales. Amid these challenges, a critical opportunity emerges for India. By adopting a strategically designed approach to filling these gaps and enhancing



PADMALOCHAN DASH

its strategic influence and partnerships, India can play a significant role in addressing the emerging deficits in the global defence supply chain. **Vulnerabilities in the Global Defence Supply Chain:** The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with ongoing conflicts in regions like Ukraine, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific, has exposed the fragility of global defence supply chains. As India seeks to position

itself as a reliable and diversified supplier of defence equipment, it is imperative to act promptly. Scaling these capabilities and implementing robust, resilient policies rooted in long-term strategic objectives is critical for India to emerge as a prominent player in the global defence marketplace.

Strengthening Strategic Alliances: India has bolstered its defence partnerships with major global powers, including the United States, Russia, France, and Israel. However, these alliances must evolve beyond transactional arrangements into enduring, reciprocal relationships. For India, every transaction or partnership should be leveraged to bolster the country's ability to produce surpluses

and emerge as a key provider for other nations' defence needs. These strategic alliances should not only enhance India's position as a global player but also provide it with a sustainable competitive edge in the global defence market.

Advancing Indigenous Production Capacity: India has made considerable strides in Indigenous defence production, exemplified by achievements such as the Arjun main battle tank, BrahMos missile, and Tejas fighter jet. However, these successes must evolve to meet the increasing demands of the global defence market. To strengthen its position as a world-class defence producer, India must expand its production capabilities into areas such as military-class UAVs, advanced missile defence systems, and cutting-edge cyber defence technologies. Additionally, integrating advanced maritime reconnaissance aircraft, anti-submarine warfare systems, and comprehensive surveillance infrastructure into its production portfolio is essential.



India's Indigenous defence production capacity must be enhanced to meet international benchmarks, positioning the country as a dominant player in filling global defence requirements.

Enhancing Strategic-Critical Manufacturing Projects: India's ambitions to become a leading, self-sufficient defence producer are underscored by initiatives like 'Make in India' and Atmanirbhar Bharat. However, the true measure of success will be how well these products align with international demands and address the expanding gaps in the global defence supply chain.

India must swiftly adapt to global requirements, ensuring that its products are compatible with international platforms and standards. To achieve this, the country's policies must prioritize attracting investments in advanced manufacturing infrastructure, supporting defence production

systems, and upgrading critical production expertise. Additionally, enforcing rigorous quality control and fostering an innovation-driven, high-quality production foundation is essential to meeting global defence demands. **## Diversification and Global Competitiveness:** Diversification and transformation within India's defence sector are vital for achieving global competitiveness. A diversified manufacturing base that strategically incorporates public sector units with private enterprises must be developed to create a more adaptable and responsive supply chain.

As India aims to become a major defence supplier, success will depend on developing a sustainable innovation ecosystem that produces tangible

outcomes.

Path Forward:

India as a Leading Defence Supplier India's ambition to emerge as a leading defence supplier demands decisive action and strategic focus. To realize this vision, India must enhance its export capabilities, target key markets, and align with international standards. Success in this arena depends on establishing a firm policy commitment to consistently deliver high-quality, adaptable, and precise defence products tailored to the needs of diverse conflicts, theatres, and warfare requirements.

The author is an ICSSR-Post Doctoral Fellow, School of National Security Studies, Central University of Gujarat. The views expressed are personal

Malayalam film industry a saga of sexual abuses, suicides

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The accusations by Malayalam actresses against senior artists in the movie industry that they were sexually harassed and abused which have become daily headlines of newspapers and topics of evening debates in TV channel shows are nothing new. A glance over the history of Malayalam and Tamil film industry will show that many female artists have died mysteriously over the last five decades which the cops just write them off as unnatural deaths or suicides. All these deaths have their roots in the shadow boxing between artists, directors, producers and film financiers over "casting couch" and refusal of actresses

to share bed with their predators. The first such death to hog the limelight was that of Vijayasree, the Thiruvananthapuram born actress who was a heart throb of movie goers in late 1960s and early 1970s. The prima donna of South Indian film industry, she was known more as the Marilyn Monroe of Malayalam and Tamil films. Her beauty added to her physique and the then super stars were vying with one another to be case withers as heroes. But she was found dead at the peak of her career in 1974 at the age of 21. Those were the days when it was impossible to imagine a Malayalam movie which has no Vijayasree.

Though it was claimed that she committed suicide, nobody could give any reason for her decision. Though names of producers Kunchako, Azim Bhai and actor Prem Nazir were linked with her death, investigators stood their ground that it was a suicide. The death of Shoba, who became the youngest star in the history of Indian cinema at 18 to win the national award for best actress (1979) for her realistic depiction of a wayside worker which demolished the age-old concept of female artists as decorative pieces in films is another tragedy of movies. The Urvashi Award turned out to be Shoba's swan song. Within days of the honour being bestowed on her, the



artist was found dead in the bedroom of her rented house. Balanathan Benjamin Mahendra (known by the screen name Balu Mahendra), a Sri Lankan movie maker who was 25 years senior to her was cited as the cause for Sobha's 'suicide'. Mahendra had married Sobha



and by the time she won the national award, had dumped her and went after another artist. Later he married a child artist whom he met during the making of his movie Yatra. "Shoba's life should have been an eye opener for other youngsters and aspiring stars and their parents. Even today we can see



many mothers accompanying their daughters to sets and directors' bungalows in the hope of making their children the future Hema Malinis and Nayan Tharas," said P K Sreenivasan, chronicler of South Indian films who has authored many books about the unseen and unheard wannabe stars

who burnt out before they venture out to the studio floors. Srinivasan said that Sobha's death was enmeshed in mystery and he would not describe it as suicide. Silk Smitha (1960-1996) who took Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada films like a storm was another martyr of the world of glamour. Hailing from a poor family in rural Andhra Pradesh, Smitha was the 'most and she was known for wanted' artist at the time of her demise as directors, male super stars and technicians waited for her dates. "Smitha was not the kind of conventional artist who would resort to the extreme measure even in the toughest situation. I strongly believe there was

foul play in these deaths," said Sreenivasan. He pointed out that there were super mega stars in South India who would go to any extent to get rid of their eyesores. "There is an actor who ditched her South Indian wife to marry a Punjabi star and then tried to murder her by pushing her down from the balcony of their house. The third wife ran away for fear of death even as he was wooing the fourth and fifth preys," said Mankombu Gopalakrishnan, lyricist and story writer. There are many other stars who have fallen by the wayside. The names Mukesh, Ranjith, Siddique, Raju, Babu Raj, Idavela Babu and Jayasoorya are just tip of the iceberg.

Kolkata horror: Mystery of man in red T-shirt on crime scene

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The parents of the lady doctor who was raped and murdered inside the seminar hall of the RG Kar Medical College Hospital in the early morning of August 9 have once again referred to a mysterious man in a red T-shirt and another person wearing a violet shirt on the crime scene when they visited the place. "He was acting quite suspiciously and searching something around the dead body." According to the mother of the victim doctor, "I can tell from my memory that there was a swarm of people inside the seminar hall contrary to what DCP Central Indira Mukherjee has said... besides I also noticed a person wearing red T shirt acting suspiciously... he was trying to search something... I

then told this to a junior doctor who told me that he was not a doctor but could be someone from the class IV staff... Then I told him of his mysterious murder and asked the doctor to catch him... he immediately went and took his photographs. Incidentally a broken blue tooth had been found from the place of occurrence that formed a major evidence to nab the prime accused Sanjoy Das. She wondered whether such information had been shared with the CBI. "We are not getting any inputs on the progress of the investigation... we don't even know whether the CBI has such details... now after more than three weeks of the crime many things are appearing to us that should have been investigated," the father of the victim said. The mother of the victim had also said on Thursday that she

had seen her daughter covered with a green sheet "whereas the insiders were talking about a red sheet and the photographs of the crime scene show that she was covered with a blue sheet... all these should be investigated." Speaking on the issue the senior police officer had earlier said that the police had cordoned off the 40-feet area from where the dead body of the victim was lying and that the crowd was standing in the 10-feet area outside that cordoned off place. However, photographs and videos shown by the junior doctors who were present at the scene show that a swarm of people including doctors, paramedics, outsiders and even those not connected to medical profession had gathered at the area inspecting the body of the victim perhaps doing everything that could destroy evidence, sources said.

Jammu and Kashmir legislative complex remains incomplete, 13 years on

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A multi-floor under-construction building of the Legislative Assembly complex in Jammu is a picture-perfect image that depicts the story of 'Good Governance' in Jammu and Kashmir. In the last 13 years, three Chief Ministers, two Governors, and two Lieutenant Governors, who have taken over the reins of power to govern the erstwhile princely state spent lavishly on releasing full-page advertisements hard selling the theme of Naya Jammu and Kashmir. Ironically, they too failed to expedite the completion of the project. The pace of work and scale of planning exposes the 'work culture' in the region. The unavailability of the funds for such a long period delayed the project's completion and added to the cost escalation. The original cost of the project initially pegged at around 110 crores has already exceeded 200

crores. After the Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A in August 2019, developmental projects worth several hundred crores were launched in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Ironically, this ambitious project once again missed the bus. Currently, the project executing agency is awaiting a nod to receive Rs 134 crores as per the revised estimates. So far the project executing agency has failed to receive adequate funds to ensure its timely completion. The foundation stone of the ambitious project was laid on July 1, 2011, by the then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. On ground zero, the construction work was started in August 2011. Initially, the project was estimated to be built at a cost of around 113 crores in a stipulated period. According to the project engineers, who remained in charge from time to time the work on the project was going on smoothly till 2015 but the same hit the roadblock during



the BJP-PDP alliance government in office. The alliance government raised certain specific queries related to the administrative and financial approval before giving their formal nod to the revised estimates. After the fall of the BJP-PDP alliance government, the pro-

ject remained a non-starter for one long year. In August 2019 after the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was reorganized following the Abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A the project executing agency once again failed to receive the funds to complete the pending works. The work was delayed further during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the last decade, ever since the work on the project was put on hold no attempts have been made to minimise the delay and check the 'unproductive' cost escalation. In October 2021, former Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Mehta issued necessary directions to submit the revised proposals and restart the work on the project at the earliest".

However, little headway was made. At present, the Public Works Department has taken over the project from the Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC). According to official sources, a revised estimate has been submitted to the Union Territory Administration for approval. The DPR will now be submitted before the Administrative council or the new cabinet for approval after it is thoroughly examined by the Finance Department, Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs Department. The multi-story complex will be equipped with a modern fire fighting/ alarm system, lifts, digital lighting control system, FACAED lighting, the most advanced electro-mechanical and sound system LAN, CCTV, PAVA, AV system and solar lights besides rainwater harvesting and treatment systems. In the Assembly Hall, space for 500 people for the Press gallery and visitors gallery has been created.

CM Saini to contest Haryana polls from Ladwa

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini will contest the Haryana Assembly elections from Ladwa in Kurukshetra district. The ruling BJP is expected to release its first list of candidates for the October 1 polls by Sunday. Badoli -- when asked from where the chief minister would contest the elections -- said, "CM Ladwa se chunav ladenge (the CM will contest from Ladwa)". Saini, who represents the Karnal seat in the Haryana Assembly, was the MP from Kurukshetra between 2019 and 2024. Speaking to reporters in Delhi, Badoli did not divulge if Saini would also contest from Karnal. The Ladwa Assembly seat is currently held by the Congress' Mewa Singh. Badoli, the MLA from Rai in Sonapat, also said that he would not contest the elections. After another round of meetings, the first list of candidates is expected to be out soon, he said. He also said there had been no discussions regarding an alliance and asserted that the BJP would form the government with a clear majority. The BJP has finalised the names of more than 50 candidates for the upcoming Haryana Assembly polls at its Central Election Committee (CEC)

meeting held here on Thursday. The BJP CEC meeting, chaired by party president JP Nadda, was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, party's Haryana election in charge and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, National General Secretary (Organisation) BL Santhosh and other senior party leaders. During the CEC meeting, discussions were held on the names of candidates for all seats, Badoli -- who took over as BJP chief in Haryana in July -- said and added another meeting would take place after two days. Some candidates will be declared in the first list, he said. In March, the BJP replaced Manohar Lal Khattar as Haryana chief minister with Saini, an OBC leader. Khattar, who won the parliamentary elections from Karnal, is now a Union minister. At the time he replaced Khattar, Saini was the BJP's Haryana chief and the party's Kurukshetra MP. He won the bypoll from the Karnal assembly seat vacated by Khattar. Saini had won the assembly polls from the Naraingarh seat in Ambala district when BJP stormed to power in 2014. The 90-member Haryana Assembly is set to go to polls on October 1. The counting of votes will take place on October 4.

Skill up-gradation and certification programme launched

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Power Sector Skill Council (PSSC) has launched the Lineman Certification Programme under the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) initiative in association with BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) aligned with the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) Safety Regulations. This strategic program aims to enhance the skill sets of BYPL's workforce, particularly those engaged in electrical operations, ensuring adherence to the highest safety standards. Created with a mandate to facilitate skill development across the Power Industry (covering Power Generation, Transmission, Distribution, Renewable Energy and Power Equipment Manufacturing), PSSC has been actively engaged in the task to deliver on the objectives with active support of industry stakeholders. This recently launched program of PSSC is significant for all distribution, transmission and generation companies of the power sector as it aligns with the government's commitment to safety and quality in electrical operations. This will also benefit the employees in getting National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) aligned certifications along with Skill India.

Dialogue a bygone...

From Page 1 "The real issue is that of overlapping identities versus forging new ones. So, everywhere there is history at play, but there is politics that often contests history and this in a way is a perennial challenge for India's relationships with all its neighbours", Jaishankar said. On India's ties with Afghanistan, Jaishankar said there is actually a "strong people-to-people relations", at the societal level, adding there is a certain goodwill for India. The minister previously stated that the Centre cannot "overlook" terrorism in an effort to improve relations with Pakistan. He noted that terrorism has become almost an "industry level" issue in Pakistan, and India's current mood is not to tolerate such threats. He also addressed the situation in Bangladesh, which has faced political instability following Sheikh Hasina's ouster, as well as law and order challenges, including attacks on the minority Hindu community. "It is natural we will deal with the government of the day," Jaishankar said, while recognising that regime changes can be disruptive. He underlined the need for mutual interest and cooperation, saying, "Neighbours are always a conundrum... Tell me which country is there that doesn't have challenges with neighbours?"

Helpless Mamata...

From Page 1 According to sources, the Governor provided detailed information on the current situation in Bengal. State BJP president and Union Minister Sukanto Majumdar had earlier met the Governor with a demand of stringent action against the State Government for massive lathi charge on the students who had marched to the State Secretariat at Nabanna seeking the Chief Minister's resignation. In a related development the National Human Rights Commission has written a letter to Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal to explain the lathi-charge on the student rallyists on Wednesday.

Assam cancels Jumma break for Muslim...

From Page 1 "My gratitude to Hon'ble Speaker Shri @BiswajitDaimar5 dangoriya and our legislators for this historical decision," Sarma added. For the last time, this two-hour break was provided on Friday, the final day of the Autumn session of the assembly, the official said. An official statement circulated in the House, a copy of which was made available to reporters, said the Rules Committee of the assembly had unanimously agreed to drop this practice. "Accordingly, today, the House adopted a motion to amend this rule so as to provide for sitting of the House for conduct of its proceedings on Fridays like any other day," the statement added.

Jagdish Tytler to...

From Page 1 The Delhi Police registered a case the same day. Tytler would have to be physically present in the court for the framing of charges under the IPC Sections 143 (unlawful assembly), 147 (rioting) 153A (promoting enmity between different

groups), 188 (disobedience of the order duly promulgated by a public servant), 295 (injuring or defiling a place of worship), 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house), 451 (house trespass), 380 (theft in dwelling house), 149 (common object), 302 (murder) and 109 (abetment). A witness had earlier submitted in the charge-sheet that Tytler came out of a white Ambassador car in front of the

Gurdwara Pul Bangash on November 1, 1984 and instigated a mob with the words, "kill the Sikhs, they have killed our mother," following which three people were killed. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered the case afresh in November 2005 on the recommendations of the Nanavati Commission, which was formed in 2000 and submitted its report five years later.

Construction threatens...

From Page 1 The violations of the ESZ zonal plan and notification are expected to exacerbate development pressures in the area, thereby jeopardizing the park's ecosystem. Evidence indicates significant stress on the national park, as demonstrated by the reduction in the size of Sultanpur Jheel and the increased reliance on the Gurgaon canal to maintain water levels, the report stated. "The violations of ESZ zonal plan and the ESZ notification are likely to intensify develop-

ment in the region, thus putting the park ecosystem at risk," warned the report about the Sultanpur wetland. Furthermore, the report highlighted the park's previous exposure to species invasion and the considerable loss of wetland areas surrounding the park, which is of serious concern. It underscores the importance of the ESZ notification and the zonal plan as essential regulatory tools to align regional development with the ecological needs of the protected site. The report emphasises that the ESZ notification and the zonal plan are essential tools for aligning regional development with the park's ecological

needs. It called for strict enforcement of existing regulations, enhanced monitoring of compliance, and improved coordination among agencies to safeguard the park's biodiversity and ecological services. The Committee concluded that the park represents a critical biodiversity hotspot. Preserving the park's biodiversity and ecosystem services is vital for both regional ecological and economic stability, as well as for the global biodiversity given its designation as a Wetland of International Importance. The Committee has recommended stringent enforcement of existing regulations, vigilant monitoring of ESZ compliance, the development of inter-

agency coordination mechanisms, the preservation of no-construction zones, and addressing shortcomings in the Sultanpur ESZ Zonal Plan notification. It has also called for the removal of unauthorized farmhouses that have proliferated in the region and prevention of alterations to hydrological pathways. Mitigation measures proposed include compensating for increased built-up areas with additional green cover, enhancing human resources for the management of the Ramsar site and the ESZ, preparing an integrated management plan, and fostering community awareness.

PM Modi apologises to his deity, Shivaji...

From Page 1 Slamming the previous governments at the Centre for failing to pay heed to Bharat's rich past, Modi said: "This is New India. It learns from history and recognizes its potential and pride. New India is creating new milestones in maritime infrastructure by leaving behind every trace of the shackles of slavery". Stating that lakhs of crores of rupees had been invested in modernising ports in the country, the Prime Minister said: "Entire world is looking towards Vadhvan Port today. Very few ports in the world can match Vadhvan Port's depth of 20 meters. This port would transform the economic landscape of the

entire region due to railway and highway connectivity. It will create opportunities for new businesses and warehousing owing to its connectivity to the dedicated Western Freight Corridor and proximity to the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway". Dwelling upon the launch of the Vessel Communication System, the Prime Minister said: "This system will become a blessing for the fishermen community. Our government plans to install 1 lakh transponders on vessels used by fishermen to establish uninterrupted connectivity with their families, boat owners, fisheries department and coast guards. That will help fishermen communicate

in times of emergency, cyclones or any untoward incidents through the help of satellites. "It is the government's priority to save lives during any emergency". Modi said that more than 110 fishing ports and landing centers are being built for the safe return of fishermen's vessels. Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan, chief minister Eknath Shinde, deputy chief ministers Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal and Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Rajiv Ranjan Singh were present on the occasion.

Champai Soren joins BJP...

From Page 1 This community which has been the main electoral base of the JMM. He was a close aide of JMM supreme Shibu Soren. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has alleged that Champai was kept under surveillance by his own government for six months and a befitting reply awaits the "corrupt" JMM-led alliance in two months. "Champai Soren was kept under surveillance by Jharkhand police for six months. I have never heard of such an instance. I warn you (Chief Minister Hemant Soren), we will give a befitting

reply after two months," Sarma said at a function in Ranchi where Champai joined the BJP. After joining the BJP, Champai said, "After I was put under surveillance by the Jharkhand Government in Delhi and Kolkata, my resolve to join the BJP got strengthened." He also said the BJP can save the tribals' identity and check infiltration in Jharkhand's Santal Pargana. Alleging that the tribal identity was put "at stake" by the Congress, Champai said, "I am committed to delivering justice to the people." "I nurtured JMM with my sweat and blood but only got humiliation and insult in return. I am compelled to join the BJP. I am now proud to be a member of the world's largest political party. I was not ready to tolerate humiliation

and snooping," Champai said. Champai had previously met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi to announce his decision to join the BJP. "Tiger Zinda Hai", said Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday while welcoming Champai into the party fold. "When Champai was the Chief Minister of Jharkhand, he took tough decisions against middlemen. This irked JMM top leadership which started humiliating him. He had been trying to free Jharkhand from the malaise of corruption," Chouhan said. Champai quit the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) on Wednesday, claiming that the State Government's present style of functioning and its policies compelled him to leave the party he served for

many years. Champai has earned the moniker of 'Jharkhand's Tiger' for his contribution to the fight for a separate state of Jharkhand to be carved out of Bihar in the 1990s. Jharkhand was carved out of the southern part of Bihar in 2000. The elections to the 81-member Assembly are due later this year. Despite being chosen over Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana to lead the government, Champai's tenure as CM was short-lived. Five months into his term, Champai Soren was compelled to resign amid what he described as "bitter humiliation" from the party he once held dear. Following Hemant Soren's release from jail on June 28 and his subsequent swearing-in as Chief Minister on July 4, Champai resigned on July 3. A matriculate from a

government school, he started his political career after getting elected as an Independent MLA through a by-election from the Seraikela seat in undivided Bihar in 1991. Four years later, he contested the assembly polls from the seat on the JMM ticket and defeated the BJP's Panchu Tudu. In the maiden 2000 assembly elections, he was defeated from the same constituency by the BJP's Anant Ram Tudu. He regained the seat in 2005 by defeating the BJP candidate by a margin of only 880 votes and won subsequent elections in 2009, 2014 and 2019. He served as a cabinet minister in the BJP government headed by Arjun Munda between September, 2010 and January, 2013 when BJP formed government in the state with the support of JMM.

America ready to 'turn the page' on Trump: Kamala Harris

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The American people are ready to "turn the page" on Donald Trump, Kamala Harris has said, asserting that her Republican challenger is pushing an agenda which "divides" the country and "diminishes the character" of its people. In her first major television interview of her presidential campaign, the 59-year-old US Vice President, who will face Trump in the November 5 elections, said the American people are ready for a "new way forward". "I think sadly in the last decade, we have had in the former president someone who has really been pushing an agenda and an environment that is about diminishing the character and the strength of who we are as Americans — really dividing our nation," Harris, in a joint interview with her running mate Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, told CNN.

"And I think people are ready to turn the page on that," Harris, the Democratic Party's candidate, said. "The American people are ready for a new way forward. Our former president has pushed an agenda that diminishes the character and strength of who we are as Americans, and divides our nation. People are ready to turn the page," she said in a post on X, linking an interview snippet.

Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, also refused to engage in Trump's identity politics during the interview. She eluded questions about Trump's claims over her racial identity, calling those a part of the "same old tired playbook".



Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris poses for photos at a campaign rally. AP/PTI

Last month, Trump questioned Harris' racial identity at the National Association of Black Journalists conference in Chicago, suggesting she had previously identified as South Asian but "happened to turn Black" for political purposes. Her refusal to comment aligned with her campaign's strategy to avoid leaning into identity politics following Trump's remarks, CNN reported. Responding to a question about a previous debate on the decriminalisation of US borders, she said, "I believe there should be consequence. We have laws that have to be followed and enforced that address and deal with people who cross our border illegally. And there should be consequence."

Harris added that she is the "only person" in the presidential race who has "prosecuted transnational criminal organisations who traffic in guns, drugs, and human beings". "I'm the only person in this race who actually served a border state as attorney general to enforce our laws. And I would enforce our laws as president going forward. I recognise the problem," she said. Calling the border issue a "very significant" immigration issue to the American people and the security of the US, she said a border security bill was crafted under the administration of her boss — incumbent President Joe Biden. She said that Trump killed the bill that would have put 1,500 additional agents

at the border as it "would not have helped him politically". Speaking about Biden, she said that serving with him for almost four years was "one of the greatest honours of my career". "He has the intelligence, the commitment and the judgment — disposition that I think the American people rightly deserve in their president," she said. Last month, Biden dropped out of the presidential race, saying it was in "the best interest" of the Democratic Party and the country to withdraw from the race. He endorsed Harris to be the nominee of the party. Harris also said she would name a Republican to serve in her Cabinet if elected.

Zelenskyy sacks air force chief after F-16 crash

AP ■ KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy fired the commander of the country's air force on Friday, four days after an F-16 warplane that Ukraine received from its Western partners crashed during a Russian bombardment. The order to dismiss Lt. Gen. Mykola Oleshchuk was published on the presidential website. "We need to protect people. Protect personnel. Take care of all our soldiers," Zelenskyy said in an address minutes after the order was published. He said Ukraine needs to strengthen its army on the command level. US experts have joined the Ukrainian investigation into the crash, the air force said. Meanwhile, a Russian attack on the northeastern city of Kharkiv using powerful plane-launched glide bombs killed five people, including a 14-year-old girl on a playground, and wounded 47 others, regional Gov. Oleh Symehubov said. The bombs struck five locations across the city, which had a prewar population of around 1.4 million people, the governor said.

One of the bombs hit a 12-story apartment block, setting the building ablaze and trapping at least one person on an upper floor. Emergency crews searching for survivors feared the building could collapse. Zelenskyy pointed to the Kharkiv strikes as further evidence that Western partners should scrap restrictions on what the Ukrainian military can target with donated weapons. The Kharkiv strike "wouldn't have happened if our defense forces had the capability to destroy Russian military aviation at its bases. We need strong decisions from our partners to stop this terror," Zelenskyy said. F-16s are one of the weapons that could be used to hit Russian bases behind the front line. Oleshchuk said on Telegram that "a detailed analysis" was already being conducted into why the F-16 jet went down Monday, when Russia launched a major missile and drone barrage at Ukraine. "We must carefully understand what happened, what the circumstances are, and whose responsibility it is," Oleshchuk wrote in the post. The crash was the first reported loss of an F-16 in Ukraine,

where the warplanes arrived at the end of last month. At least six are believed to have been delivered by European countries. Military analysts say the planes will not be a game-changer in the war, given Russia's massive air force and sophisticated air defense systems. But Ukrainian officials welcomed the supersonic jets, which can carry modern weapons used by NATO countries, for offering an opportunity to hit back at Russia's air superiority. Elsewhere, the Russian army is making slow but gradual progress in its drive into eastern Ukraine, while Ukrainian forces are holding ground in the Kursk border region of western Russia after a recent incursion. Oleshchuk directed scathing criticism at a lawmaker who is deputy head of the Ukrainian parliament's defense committee for her claims that the F-16 was downed by a Patriot air-defense system. Ukraine has received an unspecified number of the US-made systems. Mariana Bezuhla cited unnamed sources for her claim and demanded punishment for those responsible for the error.

UN to deploy team in Bangladesh to probe rights abuses during uprising

AP ■ GENEVA

The UN human rights office said Friday that it will deploy a fact-finding team to Bangladesh to investigate alleged rights abuses and violations through use of excessive force by security forces to quell protests led by students against the former government this summer. The office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said he had received an invitation from the country's interim leader Muhammad Yunus, to send the team to Bangladesh. The visit is set to take place in coming weeks. Yunus, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, took over this month as head of the government after former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stepped down and fled the country to India amid a mass uprising. The United Nations has reported nearly 650 people died since

July 15 when the student protests turned violent, and the figures also covered the deaths of many in new violence after Hasina left the country on August 5. A UN advance team visited Bangladesh over the last week and met with student leaders of the protests, including some who had been detained, as well as interim government and police officials, journalists, rights defenders and others. The team received commitments from authorities and security for their "full cooperation" with the team's work, the rights office said. "The UN human rights office looks forward to supporting the interim government and people of Bangladesh at this pivotal moment to revitalize democracy, seek accountability and reconciliation, and advance human rights for all the people in Bangladesh," the rights office said in a statement.

Sharif speaks to Yunus

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday spoke to Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus during which the two leaders agreed to work closely for the progress and prosperity of the people of both countries. During the telephone conversation, they further agreed that "greater regional cooperation could play a vital role in uplifting the lives of the people of South Asia", according to an official statement here. Sharif's telephone call to Yunus marks the first high-level direct contact between the leaders of the two countries since the change of government in Dhaka. Prime Minister Sharif highlighted the importance of "revitalizing bilateral relations" through enhanced cooperation

across various domains. He emphasised the shared historical, religious, and cultural bonds and expressed a "keen desire to boost commercial relations, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts." Sharif congratulated Yunus on his assumption of the leadership of Bangladesh's interim government. He expressed his best wishes to the Chief Adviser and hoped that the goodwill between the two countries would be translated into substantial cooperation for the benefit of their peoples. Sharif expressed sympathies over the devastation caused by the recent floods in Bangladesh and expressed his willingness to provide support. Yunus thanked Sharif for the phone call and the congratulatory message received from him following his swearing-in as the Chief Adviser.

Maori King dies after 18-yr reign

AP ■ NUKU'ALOFA

New Zealand's Maori King, Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII, died Friday at age 69, days after the celebration of his 18th year on the throne. Tuheitia died in hospital after heart surgery said Rahui Papa, a spokesperson for the Kiingitanga, the Maori King Movement, in a post on Instagram. Tuheitia was the seventh Kiingitanga monarch. The position was created in 1858 to unite all New Zealand's Indigenous Maori tribes under the leadership of Pootatau Te Wherowhero. Kiingitanga's primary goals were to end the sale of land to non-Indigenous people, stop inter-tribal warfare, and provide a springboard for the preservation of Maori culture in the face of British colonization, the Waikato-Tainui tribe website said. The monarch has a largely ceremonial but consequential role in New Zealand, where Maori are a minority.

Israel hit convoy to hospital in Gaza, says Aid group

AP ■ DUBAI

An Israeli missile hit a convoy carrying medical supplies and fuel to an Emirati hospital in the Gaza Strip, killing several people from a local transportation company, the American Near East Refugee Aid group said Friday. Israel claimed without immediate evidence that it opened fire after gunmen seized the convoy. The strike killed several people employed by a transportation company that the aid group was using to bring supplies to the Emirates Red Crescent Hospital in Rafah, said Sandra Rasheed, Aneera's director for the Palestinian territories. The strike happened Thursday on the Salah al-Din Road in the Gaza Strip and hit the convoy's first vehicle. "The convoy, which was coordinated by Aneera and approved by Israeli authorities, included an Aneera employee who was fortunately unharmed," Rasheed said in a statement. "Despite this devastating incident, our understanding is that the remaining vehicles in the convoy were able to continue and successfully deliver the aid to the hospital. We are urgently seeking further details about what happened." Aneera planned to release more information later Friday. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday from The Associated Press. However, Israeli military spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee posted to the



A damaged house following an Israeli military operation in the West Bank refugee camp of Nur Shams, Tulkarem on Friday. AP/PTI

social platform X that "gunmen seized a car at the head of the convoy (a jeep) and began driving." After the seizure operation and after confirming the possibility of attacking the militants' vehicle alone, the raid was carried out, as the rest of the convoy vehicles were not harmed and reached their target according to the plan," Adraee wrote. "The operation to target the militants removed the risk of seizing the humanitarian convoy."

Yemeni rebels plant bombs on oil tanker Greek-flagged Sounion poses major threat of oil spill in Red Sea

AP ■ DUBAI

Yemen's Houthi rebels released footage on Thursday showing their fighters boarded and placed explosives on a Greek-flagged tanker, setting off blasts that put the Red Sea at risk of a major oil spill. The vessel was abandoned earlier, after the Houthis repeatedly attacked it. In the video, the Iran-backed Houthis chant their motto as the bombs detonated aboard the oil tanker Sounion: "God is the greatest; death to America; death to Israel; curse the Jews; victory to Islam." The blasts capped the most-serious attack in weeks by the Houthis in their campaign disrupting the \$1 trillion in goods that pass through the Red Sea each year over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, as well as halting some aid ship-



ments to conflict-ravaged Sudan and Yemen. The Sounion carried some 1 million barrels of oil when the Houthis initially attacked it on Aug 21 with small arms fire, projectiles and a drone boat. A French destroyer operating as part of the European Union's Operation Aspidos rescued the Sounion's crew of 25 Filipinos and Russians, as well as four private security personnel, after they abandoned the vessel and took them to nearby Djibouti. The footage released Thursday shows masked Houthi fighters carrying Kalashnikov-style rifles boarding the Sounion

after it was abandoned. The bridge appeared ransacked. Fighters then rigged explosives over hatches on its deck leading to the oil tankers below. At least six simultaneous blasts could be seen in the footage. The footage, as well as comments by the Houthi's mysterious leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi, confirmed an earlier analysis by The Associated Press that the Houthis boarded and planted explosives on the Sounion. The Houthi-controlled SABA news agency described al-Houthi as saying the Sounion attack shows America "is lying

in its claims regarding any deterrence of Yemeni operations supporting Palestine". "The effectiveness of our operations and their control of the situation is acknowledged by the enemies," al-Houthi said. Western countries and the United Nations have warned any oil spill from the Sounion could devastate the coral reefs and wildlife around the Red Sea. However, the EU's naval force in the region says it has yet to see any oil spill from the Sounion. Operation Aspidos "is preparing to facilitate any courses of action, in coordination with European authorities and neighbouring countries, to avert a catastrophic environmental crisis," the EU mission said. "Together, we can protect the environment and maintain stability in the region."

Trump asks federal court to intervene in hush money case

AP ■ NEW YORK

Donald Trump asked a federal court late Thursday to intervene in his New York hush money criminal case, seeking a pathway to overturn his felony conviction and indefinitely delay his sentencing scheduled for next month. Lawyers for the former president and current Republican nominee asked the federal court in Manhattan to seize the case from the state court where it was brought and tried, arguing that the historic prosecution violated Trump's constitutional rights and ran afoul of the US Supreme Court's recent ruling on presidential immunity. Trump's lawyers said moving the case to federal court follow-

ing his May 30 conviction will give him an "unbiased forum, free from local hostilities" to address those issues. If the case is moved to federal court, Trump lawyers wrote, they will then seek to have the verdict overturned and the case dismissed. If it remains in state court, with sentencing proceeding as scheduled, it could amount to election interference, they said. "The ongoing proceedings will continue to cause direct and irreparable harm to President Trump — the leading candidate in the 2024 Presidential election — and voters located far beyond Manhattan," Trump lawyers Todd Blanche and Emil Bove wrote in a 64-page US District Court filing. Trump was convicted in state

court in Manhattan of 34 counts of falsifying business records related to a payment to bury affair allegations that threatened to cloud his 2016 presidential run. Even if the case isn't moved to federal courts, the potential delay caused by litigation surrounding Trump's effort could give him a critical reprieve as he navigates the aftermath of his criminal conviction and the homestretch of his presidential campaign. Separately, the state court judge who presided over the trial, Juan M Merchan, is weighing Trump's requests to postpone sentencing until after Election Day, Nov 5, and to overturn the verdict and dismiss the case in the wake of the Supreme Court's immunity decision.

The high court's July 1 ruling reins in prosecutions of ex-presidents for official acts and restricts prosecutors in pointing to official acts as evidence that a president's unofficial actions were illegal. Trump's lawyers argue that in light of the ruling, jurors in the hush money case should not have heard such evidence as former White House staffers describing how the then-president reacted to news coverage of the deal to pay hush money to porn actor Stormy Daniels. Trump's lawyers had previously invoked presidential immunity in a failed bid last year to get the hush money case moved from state court to federal court. A federal judge rejected that request, clearing the way for Trump's historic trial in state court.

Probe into sinking of Italy's yacht widened

AP ■ ROME

Italian prosecutors have put under investigation two more crew members of the Bayesian, the superyacht that sank off Sicily last week, killing seven people, their lawyer said on Friday. The move widens the probe into the tragic shipwreck, for which the ship's captain, New Zealander James Cutfield, is already under investigation for possible manslaughter and culpable shipwreck charges. Since Wednesday, Tim Parker Eaton — the engineer who was in charge of securing the yacht's engine room —

and sailor Matthew Griffith — who was on watch duty on the night of the disaster — are under investigation for the same possible charges, their lawyer said. "The profile of their possible responsibilities is still unclear, as the investigation has just started," lawyer Mario Scopesi told The Associated Press. Scopesi added that both Parker Eaton and Griffith left Italy on Wednesday, along with Cutfield and the rest of the crew. The three crew members were among 15 survivors of the Aug. 19 sinking that killed British tech magnate Mike Lynch, his daughter Hannah and five others.

Bengaluru innovators' AI start-up revolutionising marking in UK schools

PTI ■ LONDON

An artificial intelligence (AI) based start-up founded by two innovators from Bengaluru claims to be revolutionising marking for teachers across secondary schools in the UK. sAnaptic, co-founded by fellow data scientists Dr Rajeshwari Iyer and Kavitha Ravindran as a side project, has since gone on to raise just under GBP 1 million from investors. Their app, which uses natural language processing and machine learning to mark pupils' answers and provide personalised feedback, is now in the process of beginning another funding round. "Teachers can spend around one day a week marking and

giving feedback to students' work. Our app can accurately mark students' answers and provide instant feedback so that teachers can spend more time in the classroom," Iyer, who studied for a PhD in Computational Neuroscience at Imperial College in London, said in a statement this week. "We've already seen the impact that AI has had in other sectors and there is now a great opportunity for it to revolutionise education," she said. The co-founders, both in their early 40s, estimate that the app could save teachers hundreds of hours a year spent marking, freeing up more time for teaching. They have seen their innovative app being rolled out in more than 50 secondary schools

across the UK and is now attracting interest from schools and exam boards worldwide. sAnaptic recently took part in Venture Trek, an initiative run by Imperial Enterprise Lab to give start-ups much-needed international exposure to grow their businesses. Ben Mumby-Croft, Director of Entrepreneurship at Imperial College London, said: "It's always inspiring to see our alumni turning their vision into an exciting business that can impact society. "Imperial Enterprise Lab has a successful track record of helping start-ups test new ideas and launch products, services and ventures that address real-world problems." As CEO of sAnaptic, Imperial

alumnus Iyer is an experienced research scientist with an MPhil in Computational Biology from the University of Cambridge. She has over 12 years of experience in computational modelling and data science, complemented with a background in software development. Meanwhile, Ravindran as the Chief Content Officer has a PGCE in secondary science from the University of Cambridge, with over 12 years of experience as a secondary science schoolteacher and GCSE examiner. She is responsible for directing the development of sAnaptic's content in line with the various curricula and leading the pedagogical aspects of the platform. sAnaptic is a play on the word

synapse, which is the junction between nerve cells that helps in the transfer of information from one neuron to the next. The strength of the synaptic network in the human brain dictates the consolidation of information from our short-term to long-term memory. The co-founders explain that the platform is designed with ease of use in mind which means that getting started is simple and fast, with a "user-friendly interface that makes navigating the system a pleasure." "Setting up your marking process takes just a few clicks, and you're ready to go. Our AI handles the bulk of the work, quickly and accurately marking hundreds of student answers

within seconds," they note. sAnaptic is about to begin a new funding round and introduce its International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) — an English language-based secondary qualification for students aged 14-16 — offered to international schools, and expanded into the vocational and certification sector. Imperial College London said its Enterprise Lab supports more than 2,000 students each year with mentoring, access to experts and funding programmes. Start-ups supported by Imperial Enterprise Lab are among the most successful in Europe with a three-year survival rate of 72 per cent, the leading UK university said.

Sensex, Nifty hit all-time high during early trade

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty hit their new all-time high levels during early trade on Friday, amid the ongoing bullish rally in domestic stocks, tracking firm trends in Asian markets and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 502.42 points to hit a fresh all-time high of 82,637.03 in early trade. The NSE Nifty surged 105.7 points to hit a new record peak of 25,257.65.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC Bank, Titan, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, Power Grid, Asian Paints and HCL Technologies were the biggest gainers. Tata Motors and Sun Pharma were the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong were trading with gains. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Thursday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 3,259.56 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.



Domestic Institutional Investors also bought equities worth Rs 2,690.85 crore.

"Continuation of accumulation of quality largecaps by the DIIs (Domestic Institutional Investors) and HNIs and the FIIs reducing their selling significantly and buying on certain days have contributed to the resilience of the market," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.23 per cent to USD 80.12 a barrel. Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd, said, key catalysts for markets rally include substantial FII buying, positive global cues, and upbeat US GDP data.

The BSE benchmark jumped 349.05 points or 0.43 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,134.61 on Thursday, extending its winning momentum to the eighth day in a row. Rallying for the 11th straight session, the Nifty surged 99.60 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at a new closing high of 25,151.95.

Mahindra Group, Sentrycs sign MoU to explore development of anti-drone solutions

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mahindra Group and Israel's Sentrycs Ltd on Friday said they have signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore opportunities for developing and providing 'differentiated anti-drone solutions' in India.

The solutions will cover civilian and military applications, the two companies said in a joint statement. The MoU relates to the 'anti-drone systems' technology space and will focus on the Transfer of Technology (TOT) and manufacturing of radio frequency-based counter-drone solutions under the government of India's 'Make in India' initiative, it added. The 'differentiated anti-drone solution' is an autonomous and integrated system with a command and control (C2) module, and enables detection, tracking, identification and mitigation of incoming drones. "We believe that this MoU with Sentrycs would enable the group to explore opportunities in the anti-drone space and set the stage for cutting-edge technological offerings with global partners for a full suite of anti-drone solutions across applications in the future," said Vinod Sahay, Mahindra President, Aerospace & Defence Sector and Member of Group Executive Board.



Sentrycs CEO Yoav Zaltzman said the strategic partnership with Mahindra would provide a cutting-edge multi-layer CUAS (Counter Unmanned Aircraft System) solution, made in India, that can be used to protect military bases, military forces and borders against the threat of drones. "India is a very important market for us and I am confident that together with industry leaders like Mahindra we will create the best CUAS solution for India," he added. The differentiated anti-drone solution can monitor drone flight paths, and identify their specific models, unique serial numbers, and their IDs. This capability allows for precise differentiation between friendly and hostile drones, the statement said.

In cases where a drone is classified as a threat, the system can autonomously take control and ensure it lands safely in a predefined zone resulting in no collateral damage. The system can be deployed for protection of critical infrastructure in urban areas or as an integral part of a broader multi-layered 'anti-drone solutions' for military applications, it added.

Rupee rises seven paise against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rupee appreciated 7 paise to 83.82 against the US dollar in morning trade on Friday, supported by significant foreign fund inflows and a positive trend in domestic equities.

Forex traders said a rise in global risk sentiments supported the rupee, while recovery in the US dollar and month-end dollar demand from importers and oil marketing companies (OMCs) weighed on investor sentiments.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.83, then gained ground to touch 83.82, registering a rise of 7 paise from its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee appreciated 8 paise to close at 83.89 against the American currency.

According to forex traders, MSCI rebalancing flows could take the rupee higher. "Some appreciation in the rupee appears likely, with anticipated MSCI inflows of around USD 3 billion. The rupee is likely to trade within a range of 83.75 to 83.90, while in the medium-term, a range of 83.60 to 84.05 is anticipated, with a bias towards the upside," CR Forex Advisors MD-Amit Pabari said.



Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was up 0.03 per cent to 101.37 points. Brent crude, the international benchmark, gained 0.29 per cent to USD 80.17 per barrel in futures trade.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 227.63 points, or 0.28 per cent, to 82,362.24 points, while the Nifty was up 65.70 points, or 0.26 per cent, to 25,217.65 points. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Thursday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 3,259.56 crore, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, Moody's Ratings on Thursday raised India's GDP growth forecast for 2024 and 2025 calendar year to 7.2 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively, on strong broad-based growth.

CAG signs MoU with General Court of Audit, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has signed a pact with the General Court of Audit, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to strengthen cooperation and exchange of expertise between the two nations in the field of public sector auditing.

The area of cooperation encompasses conducting joint training programmes on topics related to financial, performance and compliance audits and exchange of audit manuals and audit methodologies, the CAG said. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on Thursday in Riyadh.

"Our commitment to a strong bilateral relationship is a witness to the shared values and objectives of our institutions and will serve to reinforce bonds between our SAIs and our nations," CAG Girish Chandra Murmu said. The CAG stated that the support and cooperation between the two SAIs will energise their capacity development initiatives and encourage exchange of knowledge and information between the two Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs).



Hussam Abdulmohsen Alangari, President, General Court of Audit, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, highlighted the importance of the agreement in enhancing the cooperation in areas of competence of two SAIs to enhance and improve their respective external audit practices.



SpiceJet shares slump as DGCA places carrier under enhanced surveillance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of SpiceJet on Friday morning tumbled over 6 per cent after aviation watchdog DGCA decided to place the crisis-hit firm under enhanced surveillance.

The stock tanked 6.38 per cent to Rs 62 on the BSE after a weak beginning. DGCA on Thursday decided to place SpiceJet under enhanced surveillance that will entail increased spot checks and night surveillance to ensure safety of the airline's operations.

Based on reports of cancellation of flights and financial stress being experienced by SpiceJet, DGCA said it conducted a special audit of the airline's engineering facilities on August 7 and 8 and certain deficiencies were found during the audit.

"In light of the past record and the special audit carried out in August 2024, SpiceJet has once again been placed under enhanced surveillance with immediate effect. This would entail an increase in the number of spot checks/night surveillance with a view to ensure safety of operations," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in a release on Thursday.

In 2023 also, the regulator had placed SpiceJet under enhanced surveillance. The no-frills carrier has been grappling with multiple headwinds, including financial and legal woes, and is also in the process of raising funds.

INBRIEF

NBCC SELLS COMMERCIAL SPACE WORTH ₹14,800 CRORE APPROX

NEW DELHI: NBCC (India) Limited, announces the remarkable achievement of selling 100% of the office space inventory at World Trade Center (WTC) Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi and 100% retail and commercial space at Downtown Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi.



RECPDCL HANDS OVER BHADLA-III

NEW DELHI: REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), handed over a project specific SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle), viz. Bhadla-III Power Transmission Limited to M/s Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) on 28th August 2024 at Gurugram.

7TH INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS EXPO

NEW DELHI: Union Minister of AYUSH Pratap Rao Jadhav Inaugurates the Three-Day 7th International Health and Wellness Expo at Pragati Maidan in Delhi



DR. PONGURU NARAYANA ON HIS APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER

ANDHRA PRADESH: Dr. G. Viswanathan - Hon'ble Chancellor along with Shri Sankar Viswanathan - Vice president VIT University have called Dr. Ponguru Narayana on his appointment as Minister of Municipal Administration and Urban Development - Government of Andhra Pradesh

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY ORGANISED EXPERT TALK

AMRITSAR: Department of Education of Guru Nanak Dev University organized an expert talk to explore the universe and to develop the scientific temper and attitude among the teacher educators of the department under the guidance of Prof (Dr) Jaspal Singh Sandhu, Vice Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University.



1ST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ADVANCED MATERIALS

AMRAVATI: The inauguration of first edition of International Symposium on Current Trends in Advanced Materials (CTAM-24) was held at VIT-AP Campus. The 6-day symposium is being organized in association with American Chemical Society.



Vistara to operate its last flight under brand name on Nov 11

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI

Vistara will operate the last flight under its brand on November 11 and the full-service carrier's operations will be unified with Air India from November 12.

The government has given its nod for the foreign direct investment by Singapore Airlines as part of the Air India-Vistara merger.

Vistara is a joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore Airlines.

Air India is owned by Tata Group. "Starting 03 September 2024, customers will, progressively, no longer be able to make bookings with Vistara for travel on or after 12 November 2024," Vistara said in a release on Friday. Thereafter, Vistara aircraft will be operated by Air India and bookings for the routes operated by these planes will be redirected to Air India's website.

"Vistara will continue to take bookings and operate flights as usual till 11 November 2024," the release said. The merger of Vistara with

Air India was announced in November 2022 and post-completion of the deal, Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India.

Vistara CEO Vinod Kannan said the merger is about offering passengers more choice with a larger fleet and a wider network while elevating the overall travel experience.

"Cross-functional teams from Air India and Vistara have been working together for many months to make the transition of aircraft, flying crew, ground-based colleagues and, most importantly, our valued customers, into the new Air India as seamless as possible," Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson said. In a separate release, Air India welcomed the Union Cabinet's approval for the foreign direct investment by Singapore Airlines in the airline. "This is an important milestone that facilitates the merger process between Vistara and Air India, and the broader transformation of the Air India Group," it said.

SEBI amends rules to regulate unregistered financial influencers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets watchdog Sebi has amended norms in a bid to regulate unregistered financial influencers or finfluencers amid growing concerns about potential risk associated with such unregistered persons.

In three separate notifications, the regulator has restricted associations between its regulated entities and unregistered individuals. This came after the board of Sebi approved a proposal in this regard last month.

As per the notifications, the persons regulated by Sebi and the agents of such persons will not have any association like any transaction involving money, referral of a client, interaction of information technology systems with any other person who, directly or indirectly, provides advice, recommendation or makes explicit claim of return.

"No person regulated by the Board (Sebi) or the agent of such a person shall have any direct or indirect association, with another person who provides advice or any recommendation, directly or indirectly, in respect of or related to a security or securities, unless the person is registered with or otherwise permitted by the Board to provide such advice or recommendation; or makes any claim, of returns or performance expressly or impliedly, in respect of or related to a security or securities, unless the person has been permitted by the Board to make such a claim,"



the regulator said. By requiring finfluencers to register with Sebi and adhere to specific guidelines, the regulator is setting a standard for accountability and expertise in the sector, market experts said. The move would ensure that mutual fund houses, research analysts, registered investment advisors and stock brokers do not partner with finfluencers. On the other hand, a small window has been provided for investor education from such partnership. This is subject to a condition that these finfluencers do not provide any recommendation or claim any return or

performance. This came amid growing concern over the potential risks associated with unregulated finfluencers who might offer biased or misleading advice. They usually work on a commission-based model. Finfluencers have significantly impacted their followers' financial decisions in the last few years and thus Sebi's regulatory framework can make them accountable and responsible for the advice they provide. To give this effect, Sebi has amended norms governing depository participants, intermediaries and Securities Contracts.

Centre fixes kharif rice acquisition target at 485 lakh tonnes for 2024-25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has fixed kharif rice procurement target at 485 lakh tonnes for the 2024-25 marketing year starting October and asked states to focus on increasing purchases of coarse cereals. In the current 2023-24 marketing year (October-September), the government procured 463 lakh tonnes of kharif rice.

Paddy is grown in both kharif and rabi seasons. State-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the government's nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains. Union Food Secretary on Friday chaired a meeting with State Food Secretaries and FCI to "discuss arrangements for procurement of crops in ensuing Kharif Marketing Season (KMS) 2024-25", an official statement said. Various factors impacting procurement such as weather forecast, production estimates, and readiness of states for procurement operations were reviewed during the meeting. "After deliberations, the estimates for paddy procurement (Kharif crop) during ensuing KMS 2024-25 have been fixed at 485 lakh tonnes in terms of rice compared to procurement of 463 lakh tonnes (Kharif crop) during KMS 2023-24," the statement said. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary/Secretary (Food) of states/Union Territories as well as officers from FCI, IMD and Department of Agriculture.



MAGICAL SPELL OF AN UTTARAKHANDI RASOIYA

We metropolitan dwellers are forever starved of authentic regional cuisines across India's traditionally rich and diverse home kitchens. **SHOBORI GANGULI** had the fortune of feasting on one such regal platter wafting from the heart of Uttarakhand in Delhi



Tamra, at Shangri La Eros, New Delhi, had a monsoon delight on offer this month with a pop-up of some truly earthy, hearty and soulful Uttarakhandi cuisine handcrafted by the extremely gifted Dehradun based Chef Yojana Khanduri Chaudhary. Those familiar with the flora and fauna of this northern Himalayan region would clearly know of the robust aromas of a pahadi kitchen and some of its most mouth-watering dishes to be savoured on a rain-drenched August afternoon.

Here, I will pause to underline that Chef Pin is God's gift to those who worship and crave for, authentic Indian regional cuisines, far away from the butter chicken and paneer tikka fare that parades under the "Indian cuisine" banner in restaurants across metropolises. A unique and innovative platform across Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, and Mumbai, Chef Pin is an app which offers diners local, authentic and home-cooked meals from hundreds of talented home chefs. Apart from opening up these secret kitchens to urban diners at their homes, the pop-ups organised by Chef Pin at leading hotels allow these chefs to showcase their unique culinary flair to a much larger audience.

So this month it was Chef Yojana, a textile designer by training, her passion for food having taken her on a parallel route of creativity: Cooking. Her dedication to cooking, imprinted with her signature flourish on time-held traditional recipes of the Himalayan landscape, gave us a truly delectable meal. This infectiously bubbly Chef has made a commendable effort to act as a bridge to bring the raw, earthy robust spices, herbs, vegetables and seeds sourced from the



heart of Uttarakhand to the uninitiated urban metro dweller.

I was indeed fortunate to savour the innovative fusion of aromatic spices, fresh ingredients and traditional cooking techniques masterfully curated by Chef Yojana. Her passion for authenticity and originality, deeply inspired by her Himalayan roots, to cater to the urban palate is nothing short of a marvel.



This young Chef put out quite a royal feast, her signature creations infusing each preparation with the warmth of a pahadi rasoiya. She was kind enough to detail all the ingredients she had sourced from her home town to give the Delhi diner some authentic flavours, like Jakhiya, Bhang beej, Bhang jeera, Phara, Jhangora (millet), Mandua (Ragi millet), Lal Bhaat, (red rice), Chemi (pahadi rajma) and gehet (horsegram). Chef Yojana is



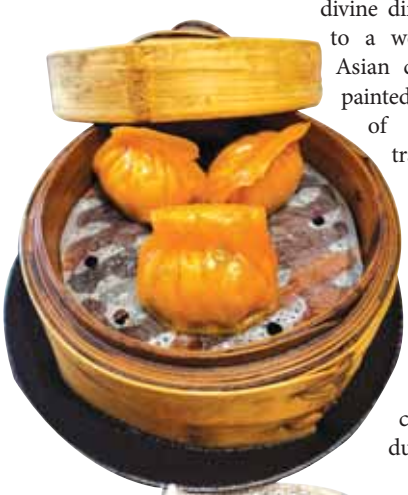
passionate about roasting and hand grinding her masalas on a sil batta (stone mortar and pestle). Rare to see such enthusiasm for tradition in today's generation of professionals.

With everything in place, I set out on a heart-warming culinary journey through Patudi, a mini Dal Cheela, the absolutely irresistible and aromatic Bhaang Sookha Chicken. With Lal Bhaat as a companion, Chef Yojana walked me through with chicken cooked in arbi leaves (colocassia). Her Shikar Mutton was the show stopper of the whole spread with its smoky flavours lifting the rich gravy to an unbeatable level. There was palak hari bhujji (Spinach) and Urad ki Kichdi. All accompanied by side dishes like Bhang ki Chutney, Kheere ka Raithu, Naal Badi ka Saag and Mooli Thechwa.

Chef Yojana concluded the fare with her signature take on traditional Uttarakhandi sweets like Jhangore Ki Kheer and Mandwa Ka Halwa, descending straight from the serene landscapes of the Himalayas into the heart of Delhi. Hope these roving chefs continue to visit us with their art and craft of cooking!

Sushi Samurais, Dim Sum Warriors

China Bistro in Delhi recently observed its first anniversary with the launch of Chopstick Chronicles. **SHOBORI GANGULI** participated in this celebration of Asia's ancient culinary heritage set against the backdrop of a contemporary Bistro



Tucked away in a quieter corner of the bustling Select City Walk mall in Delhi, China Bistro with its calming ivory hued décor and Pan Asian culinary spread is the perfect place for a relaxed and quiet lunch or dinner with friends and family. Since its inception in 2012 in Mumbai, it now has outlets across India and the UAE. In the NCR, Delhi is the Bistro's first chapter, August 21 marking its first anniversary.

To commemorate the event, China Bistro launched Chopstick Chronicles, a festival of sushi and dumplings, crafted and curated by Chef Lee Khan as he unveiled Asia's centuries-old imperial culinary treasure trove for its patrons. Each bite proved to be a passport to divine dining, transporting one to a world of traditional Asian cuisine artistically painted on a rich canvas of culture and tradition.

As pointed out by Rajib Mazumder, Corporate Chef at Foodlink F&B Holdings India Pvt Ltd, "Chopstick Chronicles goes beyond the plate, exploring the cultural significance of chopsticks and the dynamic duos of Asia's sushi and dim



sum." Indeed, the sushi rolls were a work of art and the dim sum folds displayed brilliant craftsmanship. Drawing inspiration from global gastronomic innovations, the spread brought Japan, Tibet and China to the table.

The result: Simply awesome.

One started out with the Lasha Luxury Dumpling, a Tibetan masterpiece which had juicy, aromatic chicken dumplings wrapped in lotus flour dough. Legend has it that these dumplings had to be bathed in a rich, piping hot chicken broth served right at the table. The experience was as magical as the dish itself. This was followed by the Dynamite Prawn Maki, a creation of Chef Chiro



from Vancouver, crispy prawn tempura, crunchy nori, and sweet sushi rice. The freshness and texture of the prawns really stood out.

Next on offer was the Wasabi Firecracker Prawns - crispy tempura coated prawns tossed in a spicy wasabi sauce, inspired by Chef Jack's offering at his seafood restaurant from his coastal hometown. Sitting in the heart of Delhi, savouring this delicacy was pure pleasure.

I was then thrown open to the Dim Sum Dare. This dish had four juicy chicken dim sums wrapped in carrot lotus flour and served with chicken broth. The dare was that these had to be consumed with four deadly chili dips, Sesame Sauce, Roasted Pepper Sauce, Sichuan Pepper Sauce, Bhut Jolokia Sauce. I guess my Bengali genes helped me simply cruise through this spice challenge.

I also tried Chef Takashi's exquisite and signature Enoki Truffle Crunch, crispy tempura Enoki mushrooms wrapped in creamy truffle mayo in a delectable sushi roll. They say, one evening in a tranquil forest, Chef Takashi discovered a hidden truffle patch. He then used his discovery to create a creamy truffle mayo teaming it with crispy Enoki mushrooms to create a revolutionary sushi roll. This modern innovation of a traditional Japanese cuisine went on to become a legend.

Of course, I washed all this down with a chilled glass of Kogarashi, a combination of ginger and lime and some cool crispy cucumber flavour. A splash of non-alcoholic ginger beer gave the beverage a fizzy, spicy finish. China Bistro is highly recommended if you crave for authentic Pan Asian cuisine.

FACTFILE

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ABHINAV BINDRA SAYS TRAINING INDIAN ATHLETES ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES A 'WORK IN PROGRESS'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra on Friday acknowledged training Indian athletes across sports on the aspect of mental health remains a "work in progress", while adding that benefits of the same must reach grassroots level. Bindra said mental health directly influences overall well-being of an athlete and sports administrators also share equal responsibility in it. "It's an area where there is work in progress — we all acknowledge that. We are a sporting ecosystem which is developing. It is slowly maturing," he said during a virtual interaction organised by Mpower to launch AMP: A Sports Psychology Division to Elevate Athlete Performance. "This is an aspect that not just from a shooting athlete's point of view, but across the board, which needs to be prioritised. It is something which has a direct influence on the performance of the athlete. "It has a direct influence on the well-being of an athlete. Sports organisations and everybody involved in governance has to also ensure that our athletes perform well, but their well-being is of equal importance," he added.



Bindra highlighted the presence of a mental health expert with the Indian contingent in Paris Olympics as a step in the right direction. "We've seen progress made even during the Olympics in Paris. It was the first time there was a mental health expert who was with the team. There (also) was somebody for sleep,"

he said. "There are things that are happening. But we need to keep working with intensity to make sure that this perpetuates down to the grassroots level," he added. Bindra rejected the notion that athletes today are "softer" than those in the past. "I completely disagree. If that is

the notion to be believed, then the softer ones are winning more than the tougher ones because that's what our results and our history tell us," he said. Bindra revealed how a meditation course, while planning to quit shooting, helped him find "love for the process" after winning the Olympic gold in 2008.

"When I did win that gold medal at the Olympics, my energy was completely drained in the sense that I was physically, emotionally (and) mentally drained. It also required a period of time to just let go and then to recharge my batteries and that wasn't easy," he said. "I decided to go on a vipassana

meditation course and it was interesting because I was wanting to actually leave the sport and move on to the next calling. That was my primary drive, to find my new calling. "I had to meditate for eight nine hours a day in complete silence for 10 days and all I did in that course was to think back to my sport and think back to how I loved the process of what I was doing," he said. Bindra said he was guilty of not realising his full potential since he judged himself on outcomes of tournaments. "For far too long, perhaps, I too was guilty in putting myself worth to wear my name, equating myself worth to where my name would appear on the ranking list of a sports competition and that was very silly," he said. "I became an Olympic champion, (a) world champion, I won many many championships but I failed in achieving my fullest and truest potential and now that I have a chance to look back I would attribute that failure to this lack of balance that I had in my life as an athlete. "I did not humanise my effort enough and I think that was while it helped me achieve goals it didn't help me get to my very best ability," he added.



Jurgen Klopp joins the crowd at the Paralympics

CHEERING ON LONG TIME FRIEND PLAYING BADMINTON

AP ■ PARIS

Former Liverpool coach Jürgen Klopp is used to being at the center of attention. On Thursday he was more than happy to be on the sidelines, cheering for his longtime friend Wojtek Czynz as he competed in badminton at the Paris Paralympics. "I stood next to Elena, his incredible wife, and we both had tears in our eyes," Klopp said after watching Czynz lose to Britain's Daniel Bethell in the men's singles. "I couldn't be prouder of him. I know sports are all about results, but just seeing him on the court was so touching, and I couldn't get my head around that." Their friendship began about 20 years ago when Czynz, a promising soccer player, suffered a devastating injury in a collision with a goalkeeper that led to the amputation of his lower left leg. During his rehabilitation Czynz met Klopp, who was managing FSV Mainz 05, a second-division German club at the time. They made an immediate connection that grew deeper over the years. Klopp, who stepped down as Liverpool coach this year after more than eight seasons, often uses Czynz's story as a source of inspiration for others. "Wojtek is constantly doing things I'm not brave enough to do," Klopp said at the La Chapelle Arena in the north of Paris. "Yesterday, he was telling me how easy it is to swim with sharks," he added, referring to Czynz's experience as a licensed diving instructor. Following his injury, Czynz

started competing in para athletics, winning gold medals for Germany in the 100 meters, 200 meters and long jump at the 2004 Paralympics. After he quit the sport in 2013 he and his wife Elena Brambilla-Czynz bought a catamaran and sailed around the world, helping amputees living on remote islands to get prosthetics. They arrived in New Zealand in 2019 where Czynz decided to take up badminton. After just a few years, he got so skilled at the sport that he earned a spot at the Paris Paralympics, competing for New Zealand. However, Bethell, the No. 2 seed, proved to be difficult for the 44-year-old Czynz in the SL3 category for players who practice standing and have a disability in one or both legs. Bethell won in straight sets 21-5, 21-2. Still, Czynz said Klopp's support meant a lot. "Jurgen is family to me," Czynz said. "It was great having him in my corner, despite the tough loss today. We need people like Jurgen putting the spotlight on us." It was a special moment also for Bethell who received a thumbs-up and a "Great job, Dan" from Klopp. "That was surreal, seeing him (Klopp) in the stands," Bethell said. Despite the loss, Czynz's journey in Paris is not over. He will face Ukraine's Oleksandr Chyrkov in a decisive second group stage match. Will he invite Klopp to watch again? "Given my performance today, I'll have to think about it," Czynz joked.

Ronaldo included in Portugal's first squad after scoreless Euro 2024

AP ■ LISBON (PORTUGAL)

Portugal coach Roberto Martínez has included Cristiano Ronaldo in his squad list for the first two Nations League matches following the veteran forward's disappointing European Championship. Martínez announced the squad on Friday for its home games against Croatia on Sept. 5 and Scotland on Sept. 8. The 39-year-old Ronaldo holds the record of 130 goals for international men's soccer. But he went scoreless in all five of Portugal's games at Euro 2024 before it was eliminated in a penalty shootout by France in the quarterfinals. Martínez said after Euro 2024 his team is starting "a new cycle for the 2026 World Cup." Ronaldo would be 41 by the time that tournament in North America kicks off. Martínez restored Ronaldo to his place in the starting lineup after predecessor Fernando Santos had stunned his team, and nation, by benching him midway through the 2022 World Cup, where he scored in an opening win over Ghana but then went scoreless over the next four games including a quarterfinal upset loss to Morocco.



Defenders: Rúben Dias (Manchester City), António Silva (Benfica), Renato Veiga (Chelsea), Gonçalo Inácio (Sporting), Tiago Santos (Lille), Diogo Dalot (Manchester United), Nuno Mendes (Paris Saint-Germain), Nélson Semedo (Wolverhampton). **Midfielders:** João Palhinha (Bayern Munich), João Neves (Paris Saint-Germain), Vitinha (Paris Saint-Germain), Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United), Bernardo Silva (Manchester City), Rúben Neves (Al-Hilal), João Félix (Chelsea), Francisco Trincão (Sporting), Pedro Gonçalves (Sporting). **Forwards:** Rafael Leão (AC Milan), Geovany Quenda (Sporting), Pedro Neto (Chelsea), Cristiano Ronaldo (Al Nassr), Diogo Jota (Liverpool).

Nitesh seals semifinal spot; Manasi, Manoj out

PTI ■ PARIS

India's Nitesh Kumar dished out a superlative performance, thrashing China's Yang Jianyuan in straight games in his second men's singles SL3 group A match to qualify for the semifinals in para badminton competition at Paris Paralympics on Friday. A 29-year-old IIT Mandi graduate, Nitesh, who had suffered a permanent damage to his leg due to an accident in 2009, outclassed Yang 21-5 21-11 in a dominating show. With his second consecutive win, Nitesh is assured of a top-2 finish in the four-man group. The top two ranked players from each of the two groups qualify for the semifinals. Nitesh, who hails from Karnal district in Haryana, will next face Thailand's Bunsun Mongkhon in his last group A match. Manasi Joshi and Manoj Sarkar, however, suffered their second successive defeats to end their hopes of making it to the semifinals from their respective groups. Manasi, a 2019 World Champion, faltered at the finishing line to go down narrowly 21-10 15-21 21-23 to Ukraine's Oksana Kozyna in her second women's singles SL3 Group A match. She had lost her opening match to Indonesia's Qonitah Ikhtiar Syakuroh on Thursday. Tokyo bronze medallist Manoj also suffered yet



another loss, this time going down 19-21 8-21 to Bunsun in his second Group A match. He had lost to compatriot Nitesh on Thursday and will meet Yang on Friday. SL3 class is for those players with more severe lower limb disabilities, requiring play on a half-width court. On Thursday night, Nitesh and Thulasimathi Murugesan had lost to Indonesian combination of Ramdani Hikmat and Oktia Ileani Ratri 15-21 8-21 in their second mixed doubles SL3-SU5 group stage match. Suhas Yathiraj and Palak Kohli also suffered a 15-21 9-21 loss to France's Lucas Mazur and Faustine Noel in their second group A mixed doubles match. SU5 class includes athletes with upper limb impairments.

Carlos Alcaraz's 15-match Grand Slam win streak ends in loss to Botic van de Zandschulp

AP ■ NEW YORK

After double-faulting to fall behind two sets to none - a deficit he's never overcome - in the second round of the U.S. Open, Carlos Alcaraz slung his equipment bag over a shoulder and trudged toward the locker room. Glancing in the direction of his coach, 2003 French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero, Alcaraz pointed his right index finger at his temple, then wagged that finger, as if to say, "I'm not thinking straight." He might have been excused for being confused by what was transpiring under the closed retractable roof at Arthur Ashe Stadium on a chilly evening, and one set later, Alcaraz's 15-match Grand Slam unbeaten streak was over with a sloppy 6-1, 7-5, 6-4 loss to 74th-ranked Botic van de Zandschulp. "It was a fight against myself, in my mind, during the match. In tennis, you are playing against someone that wants the same as you - to win the match - and you have to be as... Calm as you can, just to think better in the match and try to do good things," Alcaraz said. "Today I was playing against the opponent, and I was playing against myself, in my mind. A lot of emotions that I couldn't control." The result eliminated the pre-



tournament men's favorite and certainly was hard to predict beforehand, given the No. 3-seeded Alcaraz's standing in the game, his excellence of late and his opponent's far-lesser resume. It followed another exit in Ashe for a past U.S. Open champion, Naomi Osaka, who was sent home Thursday by Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-6 (5). That one, though, was not nearly as out-of-nowhere as what happened to Alcaraz. He won the French Open in June and Wimbledon in July to raise his career total to four major championships, including taking the title at Flushing Meadows in 2022.

Then, in early August, Alcaraz won a silver medal at the Paris Olympics, losing to Novak Djokovic in the final. Maybe, Alcaraz acknowledged, a tennis schedule he called "so tight" drained him too much. "Probably, I came here with not as much energy as I thought that I was going to (have)," he said. "But, I mean, I don't want to put that as excuse." What's clear is he never found his footing against van de Zandschulp, a 28-year-old from the Netherlands. Alcaraz was way off, repeatedly missing the sorts of shots he usually makes routinely. The 21-year-old from Spain came in with a 16-2 record at

the U.S. Open, where he never lost before the quarterfinals in three previous appearances. This also was Alcaraz's earliest defeat at any major tournament since bowing out in the second round of Wimbledon in 2021 as a teenager; he's never been beaten in the first round at a Slam event. In contrast, van de Zandschulp only once has been to a Grand Slam quarterfinal, getting that far at the U.S. Open in 2021. Otherwise, though, he is not someone most folks would have expected to pull off this sort of monumental upset. Consider: van de Zandschulp was just 11-18 for the season at

the start of this week and hadn't won consecutive matches at a four-level event in 2024 until now. "Actually, I am a little bit at a loss for words," he said. "It's been an incredible evening for me." Sure was. The key stat probably was that van de Zandschulp won the point on 28 of his 35 trips to the net. The opening set was unbelievably lopsided. With van de Zandschulp's powerful forehands and serves at up to 132 mph finding their marks, Alcaraz never seemed to get comfortable. He did not produce a single winner in that set and was nearly doubled up in total points, 24-13. The second set was a bit better for him, but not enough so, and a double-fault gift-wrapped a service break that put van de Zandschulp up 6-5. When Alcaraz pushed a forehand wide to end the next game, van de Zandschulp finished off a hold at love that gave him the initial two sets after 1 1/2 hours of action. Didn't take long for Alcaraz to fall behind by a break in the third, too, at 3-2, but he made a stand immediately - well, with some help, because van de Zandschulp's double-fault ceded a break that made it 3-all. Alcaraz then held at love and smiled as he strutted to the changeover.

New track, new colors, new confidence for Ferrari heading into home race at Italian GP

AP ■ MONZA (ITALY)

New track, new colours and renewed confidence for Ferrari as the Formula One team heads into its home race at Monza. Ferrari did better than expected at last weekend's Dutch Grand Prix, with Charles Leclerc earning a second straight podium finish and teammate Carlos Sainz Jr. Surging from 10th on the grid to place fifth. That was a surprise in what was expected to be a weekend of damage limitation before planned car upgrades at the Italian Grand Prix. Although it was a well-timed morale boost for a team which started 2024 fighting for wins but had dropped out of contention, Leclerc was quick to temper expectations. "I don't let the last two races change our expectations," he said. "We are in a difficult moment for the team. We are struggling a little bit with pace at the moment. "I think we understood quite a few things since Zandvoort... it was a good race. In Spa, it was good as well. "Here, it should be a bit more in the direction of Spa, so hopefully we'll be a bit more in the fight for the podium. However, for the win, I don't think we quite have that yet." Indeed, Ferrari has only won one of the past 13 editions of the Italian Grand Prix, with Leclerc delighting the passionate red-clad fans in 2019. Since then, the famed Italian Scuderia's only two podium finishes have been Leclerc's second place in 2022 before he was beaten to third place by Sainz last year. "I wouldn't say the feeling is that we must do better," Leclerc said. "However, there's definitely

a huge motivation because it's not only a normal weekend that starts from the Thursday to the Sunday, but it starts already from Monday in Maranello where we have so many tifosi (fans), and that obviously motivates everybody. "It seems and it looks like we've had a pretty strong car with a very low-downforce package even in the last few years where performance was not as good. That's positive because it's our home race and as much as it's giving exactly the same amount of points as other races, emotionally speaking and for the whole team it's definitely a special one." NEW LOOKS: Monza is one of the oldest and most historic circuits on the F1 calendar, but there have been considerable changes to the Temple of Speed this year. Modernisation works cost more than 20 million euros (USD 22 million), and the track has completely resurfaced for the first time since 1922 and will have a much darker appearance. Moreover, some of the iconic kerbs have been modified - much to the dismay of several drivers. "They've changed the kerbs," Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo said on Thursday after inspecting the new look by bicycle. "I went around the track this morning. I can't say I'm that impressed because some elements have lost some of the character of the circuit. "Maybe, it's just as a driver, because we drive it and experience it, but kerbs and things like this make a circuit unique... Part of Monza is that it was old school, and now that's gone. The resurfacing looks great, the asphalt looks really nice, but the kerbs, I'm a bit disappointed in."



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