



OPINION 6 THE EVOLUTION OF LEARNING

WORLD 8 OVER 60 LEADERS ENDORSE KAMALA HARRIS FOR US PRESIDENT

MONEY 10 INDIA'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR GROWTH EASES SLIGHTLY IN JULY

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MY FAVOURITE BOWLER IS BUMRAH: DHONI 12 SPORTS



North to South, Monsoon Mania ravages India

CAPITAL DELHI

Delhi turned into a floating city after record-breaking downpour late on Wednesday, the highest single-day rainfall for July in 14 years...



SDRF personnel evacuate stranded people after cloudburst at Junglechatti near Lincholi, in Rudraprayag district, on Thursday



Search and rescue operation underway following a cloudburst, in Rampur area of Shimla district, on Thursday

HIMACHAL / UTTARAKHAND

Building collapsing in Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, roads being washed away, pilgrims being airlifted — these were the scenes in Uttarakhand and neighbouring Himalayan State of HP on Thursday morning...

WAYANAD

Even as the South-West Monsoon's fury continued unabated in Wayanad district, the death toll in the massive landslides in Mundakkai settlement crossed 283 mark by 6 pm on Thursday...



Rescue operation underway after landslides triggered by rain, in Wayanad district, Kerala on Thursday



SC vents its ire on Kejriwal aide Bibhav Kumar's conduct

The Supreme Court on Thursday came down heavily on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar who allegedly assaulted AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal...



Apex court upholds quota within quota

In a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that sub-classification within the Scheduled Castes (SC) which form a socially heterogeneous class is permissible...

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw assures action on recent accidents

Under criticism due to series of train accidents and derailments in recent times, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday assured that the Government will make every effort to implement automatic train-protection system...



Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Thursday

Trials in Mandir-Masjid dispute to continue, says Allahabad HC

The Allahabad High Court on Thursday ruled that the trial in 18 cases relating to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura can continue, dismissing a petition filed by the mosque committee...

Puja Khedkar denied anticipatory bail

The decks are cleared for arrest of controversial dismissed trainee IAS officer Puja Khedkar after a Delhi court on Thursday denied anticipatory bail to her. She has been accused of 'misrepresenting and falsifying facts' in her Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) application...



BSF woman wards off Bangla infiltrators all alone

A woman personnel of the Border Security Force has successfully beaten back infiltration bid by an armed band of Bangladeshis fighting them single-handedly at the Ranaghat border out-post of the 68th battalion in Nadia district...



personnel fought back even as a fellow jawan threw a 'stun grenade' from a distance to frighten the intruders away. As the infiltrators continued to advance undeterred the woman constable fired a single shot from her rifle scaring the infiltrators who then ran back

Swapnil Kusale adds to India's medal collection at Olympics

On an empty stomach and with his heart racing, Indian shooter Swapnil Kusale kept his composure to stage a remarkable comeback and help the country claim its first ever Olympic bronze in the 50m rifle 3 positions event here on Thursday...



10m air pistol bronze alongside Sarabjot Singh. 'I did not eat anything, was feeling the butterflies (in my stomach). Just had black tea and came here. The night before every match, I just pray to god,' Kusale said after his unprecedented achievement.

MCD, DDA at loggerheads over drowning of woman, son

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi Development Authority (DDA) are in loggerheads over the death of a woman and her three-year-old son by drowning in east Delhi's Ghazipur during the torrential downpour on Wednesday. While the DDA claimed that the drain belongs to MCD, AAP targeted Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena who is also the head of the DDA over the death.

This comes a day after Tanuja and her three-year-old son Priyansh slipped and fell into the waterlogged under-construction drain around 8 pm on Wednesday, amid heavy rain in the area. They had gone to a weekly market near Khoda Colony.

The DDA blamed the MCD for the death, stating that the major portion of the drain where the tragedy struck has been handed over to the MCD while their part is covered with Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) slabs. "The total length of the drain along the Khoda Colony side is 1350 meters. Out of which, 1000 meters of the drain, along with the adjoining road, was handed over to the MCD a considerable time ago. The remaining 350 meters of the drain, extending from the Truck parking plot (Bus Terminal) to the PWD road, is under the jurisdiction of the DDA," a



statement by DDA said. The added that recently, the desilting of the 350-metre section of the drain under the DDA's jurisdiction was completed, and this section was subsequently covered with RCC slabs. "Additionally, a screen was installed at the junction point of the MCD and the DDA drains to prevent the flow of garbage into this drain," the statement stated.

It added that the tragic incident took place in the MCD drain. "Their bodies were found at the junction point of the MCD and DDA drains, where a screen is installed, which is approximately 500 meters from the drowning site," it stated, adding that the 350-meter section of the drain under the jurisdiction of DDA is fully covered.

Putting the onus on the DDA, MCD stated that the incident of drowning happened in an under construction DDA drain near Ambedkar Gate of Khoda

Colony (UP - Delhi border). "The road and drain where the incident took place is under construction by DDA (DDA jurisdiction). The drain is about 10 to 12 feet deep and the same is running along the 120-150 feet road of DDA starting from Khoda Chowk towards Mayur Vihar Phase-III," the statement read.

Earlier, the AAP targeted Saxena over the drowning of a woman and her toddler in an under-construction DDA drain in Ghazipur and demanded action against the erring officials, terming it as "unfortunate". "The DDA was carrying out the work of redevelopment of the drain. The Lt Governor is the chairman of the DDA. The officials directly report to him. We demand action against the Lt Governor," Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, accusing the BJP of "maintaining silence over the incident that he termed as 'murder'".

MCD orders survey of buildings

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has ordered a survey of buildings with basements, open hanging wires and old barrels catering to the combined drainage system across the city in wake of the Rajinder Nagar coaching centre deaths.

The civic body has issued urgent preventive measures for compliance which includes ensuring separate entry and exit points in the basement of any building, public declaration of their building plan, removal of encroachment from drains and footpaths, among other steps. All zonal deputy commissioners have been directed to implement these measures to prevent misuse of the basement and other related matters in a circular issued on July 29, released on Thursday.

"A tragic incident occurred in the basement of a coaching institute for IAS aspirants located at Old Rajender Nagar on Saturday, the 27th of July 2024 which resulted into loss of life of three students due to flashflood caused because of choked sewer line / storm water drainage system. Needless to say that it is the primary responsibility of MCD to provide a safe and livable city to the Public..." "In

this regard, a delegation of students met the Commissioner on Sunday, the 28th of July 2024 and expressed their concerns on this issue. It was explained to them by the Commissioner that MCD will take all necessary steps urgently so as to prevent such a mishap in future," the circular read. The MCD ordered the building having basement should be surveyed and immediate action including sealing be taken against those who are found misusing the same.

There should be separate entry and exit gates for the basement and all building plans be made available in public domain, so that the violators can be detected, it added. All encroachments above drains and footpaths must be removed and the storm water drains be fully desilted and choked at any point needs to be cleared with the help of super-sucker machines, as per the order.

"In case a fresh drain is required at any place, an immediate proposal for the same should be put up," it said. Furthermore, the officials have been directed to keep handy portable pumps along with operators for dewatering of vulnerable points where waterlogging usually occurs. Such points have already been identified by the MCD, it said.

AAP holds meet to discuss future strategy, Assembly elections

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP held a meeting on Thursday evening to discuss the future strategy and the Delhi Assembly elections at its party headquarters where the senior party leaders were also present.

According to a statement, the party will discuss its strategy regarding the upcoming Delhi elections which will be held in 2025 while also deliberating upon how the party will deal with the various incidents happening in the national Capital politically including the death of the three IAS aspirants in the basement of Rau's coaching centre recently due to rain induced floods.

Senior party leaders including Rajya Sabha MPs Sanjay Singh and Sandeep Pathak, Delhi cabinet ministers Atishi, Saurabh Bharadwaj and Gopal Rai, AAP National Secretary Pankaj Gupta and Kondli MLA Durgesh Pathal were present in the meeting.

"The meeting will be held at the party headquarters. There will be a discussion on the strategy ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls, which are due early next year," the AAP said. The AAP, which is in power for the last three consecutive terms, is vying to gain power for the fourth time. To achieve this, the



party is chalking out a strategy to start organisational meetings with ground workers at both Mandal and Booth level. The party is planning to hold meetings with MLAs, Councillors and booth level workers in every constituency across the state. Later, the party will hold such meetings at the booth level where the party's strategy will be discussed with all the workers. After these two levels of meetings, AAP is planning to carry out "Apke Vidhayak Apke Dwar" campaign where all MLAs will present their report cards to the public. As the party is not in alliance with Congress for the impending elections, the AAP will fight the assembly polls solo. AAP's Delhi State convener Gopal Rai had said, "For the State Assembly elections, there is no need for the INDI alliance. We will fight the polls with the help of the people of Delhi, and we will win."

Olympics 2024: Kolhapur erupts in joy as Kusale wins Bronze

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Kolhapur, a city in western Maharashtra that is known as "Dakshin Kashi", famous for its Mahakshmi temple, its chappals and wrestling akhadas - erupted in joy on Thursday, as its son of the soil Swapnil Kusale won a Bronze medal in Olympics in the 50-metre rifle three-position final in Paris. The shouts of "Bharat Mata ki jai... Bharat Mata ki jai..." rent the air in the nooks and corners of the historic city located on the banks of Panchganga River as 28-year-old Swapnil brought glory to Maharashtra 72 -long years after Khashaba Jadhav clinched an individual Bronze in wrestling in the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. Glued as they were to the television sets, the family members and the people of his Kambalwadi village in Radhanagari taluka of Kolhapur district cheered the Olympic gold medallist, wept in joy and went into a celebration mode, after their own lad became the toast of the nation.

A recipient of the coveted Shiv Chhatrapati Award, Swapnil comes from a humble background.

Pakistani infiltrator gunned down by BSF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

An unarmed Pakistani intruder was gunned down by BSF troops along the International Border in the Samba district of Jammu region while he was attempting to infiltrate inside the Indian territory late Wednesday night. Preliminary reports suggested the intruder was being pushed inside the Indian territory to check whether the gaps existed to push in small groups of terrorists. Senior BSF officers of the Jammu frontier rushed to the forward BSF post to take stock of the infiltration bid from across the International border.

Briefing reporters in Samba, Inspector General of BSF, Jammu Frontier D K Boora said, "At around 10.15 pm, forward duty points (of Border Security Force) observed movement of one human being crossing the International Border from Pakistan. His movement was kept under observation and was challenged when he entered into this side." The intruder tried to flee and was fired upon by the alert personnel and neutralized. The



search operations were conducted in the area" the IG BSF said. The officer asserted that anyone stepping foot on Indian soil with "nefarious design" would meet the same fate. The officials said the body of the intruder was recovered from the border fence but nothing objectionable was recovered from his person. The identity of the deceased could not be ascertained immediately, they said, adding the body is being handed over to police for post-mortem and other legal formalities. In Rajouri, a joint team of the Indian Army, JK Police, and BSF launched an operation based on intelligence inputs. The operation led to the recovery of a large consignment of weapons, ammunition, and explosives from a remote location in Kalakote, Rajouri.

Army engineers achieve major feat in laying 85 ft Bailey Bridge in Wayanad

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The engineers of the Indian Army did the country proud by laying an 85 feet long Bailey Bridge in just 36 hours, a record feat by any standard, in Wayanad district of Kerala on Thursday. This was achieved by 6 PM on Thursday despite heavy rainfall and uncertain weather conditions. An Army jeep made the first trip along the bridge as onlookers raised "Jai Jawan" slogans. The completion of the bridge would speed up the rescue operations in the disaster affected region as there are no roads worth the name in the district thanks to the Public Works Department of the State. Members of the National Disaster Response Team and soldiers of the Indian Army, who have proved their mettle and expertise in handling some of the worst mishaps are finding it tough to work in the post-disaster landscapes in Wayanad district in Kerala. Incassant rains, fallen trees and dilapidated roads have made it a challenging task to lay the

Bailey Bridge and maneuver heavy machinery meant for removing the obstacles from the thoroughfares, according to chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Briefing the media after an interaction with commanders of the Indian army units who have been working 24x7 for the last three days, Vijayan said it would take many more days to clear the debris generated by the landslides. "The completion of the Bailey Bridge by this evening would speed up the rescue and relief operations. Since there are no means to take the heavy machinery to cut and remove the trees and boulders, the rescue staff were finding the going tough," the chief minister said.

K Rajan, revenue minister and rated as the best minister in the present government, said that dead bodies were recovered from Chaliyar river at Pothukal (in Malappuram district). "This shows the huge impact of this incident," said the minister. The Pothukal area of Chaliyar River is around eight kilometres from Mundakkai.

SC remarks expose moral decline of AAP: Vijender

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vijender Gupta, former president of Delhi BJP and MLA from Rohini, referred to the Supreme Court's serious remarks on the incident of assault with Rajya Sabha MP and former Delhi Commission for Women chairperson Swati Maliwal at the Delhi Chief Minister's residence. He said that today, the court has also exposed the lies, deceit, and atrocities against women by the Aam Aadmi Party. Gupta said that in the case of misbehaviour with Swati Maliwal, the court has put the morality of the Aam Aadmi Party in the dock. The court stated that even big criminals are granted bail, but the deliberate misbehavior with a woman at the Chief Minister's residence is a gross moral decline.

Gupta explained that according to Maliwal's FIR, she pleaded with Vibhav to stop hitting, citing menstrual pain she was suffering through, but he did not stop. This was the height of inhumanity. Gupta stated that no amount of condemnation of this incident is sufficient, and such criminals



must be taught a lesson so that the message goes out to society that there is no place for such incidents in a civilised society. Gupta further said that even after knowing all this, Vibhav's presence alongside Kejriwal in the Lok Sabha election campaign shows that the unfortunate incident with Maliwal was part of Kejriwal's conspiracy. Gupta questioned, how was Vibhav Kumar at the Chief Minister's residence despite not holding the position of private secretary? This is a question for Kejriwal, who preaches sanctity to other parties. Gupta said that in the list of Kejriwal government's crimes, consisting of loot, corruption, scams, negligence, incompetence, and anarchy in Delhi, atrocities against women should also be added.

TMC passes resolution in House against new criminal laws

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The ruling Trinamool Congress on Thursday passed a resolution against the three new criminal laws - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Saksdhy Adhinyam replacing Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and the Indian Evidence Act in that order - earlier implemented nationally by the Centre from July 1. The resolution to this effect was earlier moved under rule 169 in the Bengal Assembly seeking a review of the three new criminal statutes --- calling then 'dra-

conian law'. Bengal Law Minister Moloy Ghatak during discussion said that, "there are many questions that are being raised against these three criminal laws. We are opposing this because it was passed without consulting with the stockholders and Law Commission," adding how Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee herself had written three letters to the Centre demanding consultation with the State Governments being the stakeholders in this case. The State Government had formed a Committee to review these laws, and suggest suitable amendments he said.

Trials in Mandir-Masjid...

From Page 1 But the mosque management committee and the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board argued that the suits were barred under Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 that prohibits changing the status of any place of worship

from what it was on the day of the country's Independence. Hindu side counsel Vishnu Shankar Jain told reporters that with the dismissal of the plea challenging maintainability, the high court will continue to hear all the cases.

INBRIEF

DUAL GATE PHONES AT LEVEL CROSSING FOR SAFETY: NFR Maligaon: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) is installing of Dual Gate Phones at Level Crossing (LC) gates across its network in addition to the existing gate phones. This will help to reduce the failure duration of gate phone that often leads to operational problems. This initiative aims to significantly reduce punctuality losses and enhance safety measures. The introduction of Dual Gate Phones facilitates seamless communication between gateman and station masters, ensuring timely coordination. Out of 1447 Level crossing gates in NFR, till date 1030 gates have been provided with Dual gate phone. Non-interlocked Level crossing gates have also been provided with voice recording facilities. This initiative underscores NFR's commitment to improving railway efficiency and passenger safety.

TREE PLANTING CAMPAIGN BY PSPCL

Patiala: Aggregate Revenue Requirement and Tariff Regulation (ARR & TR) Wing of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) today launched a tree planting campaign at Shakti Vihar, Patiala. As part of PSPCL's ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability, this initiative saw planting of 150 trees, including shade-giving, flowering, fruit-bearing, and ornamental varieties. The campaign was led by Er Harmohan Kaur, Chief Engineer/ARR & TR, along with Er SP Singh, Er Harjeet Singh, Dr Sachin Kapoor, and other officials and employees of the wing. This event highlighted the dedication to greening initiatives being undertaken by PSPCL's CMD, Er Baldev S Sran. The diverse variety of trees planted will not only enhance the beauty of the Shakti Vihar campus but also contribute to improving air quality and biodiversity in the area.



AUGUST 14, LAST DATE FOR 2 COURSES AT GNDU

Amritsar: B.Tech. (Textile Processing Technology), a four-year programme and M.Sc (Fashion Designing) two year programmes are running at the Department of Apparel & Textile Technology of the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Few seats are vacant in these courses. Last date for admission without late fees is 14.8.2024. Dr Varinder Kaur, head of the department said that candidates should contact the department directly. She said that the eligibility for B.Tech. (Textile Processing Technology) was 10+2 with Physics, Chemistry & Mathematics/Biology subjects or 10+2 with Chemistry as compulsory subject. The eligibility for M.Sc. Fashion Designing course is graduation in Fashion/Garment/Textile/Apparel Designing/Technology/Home Science or additional course in graduation related to Fashion/Garment/Textile/Apparel Designing/Technology.

HIMACHAL / UTTARAKHAND

From Page 1 In Uttarakhand, at least 12 people including three of a family, were killed and six injured in heavy overnight rains in various parts that triggered many incidents of house collapse, flooding and rise in water levels of several rivers. An advisory has been issued for Kedarnath-bound pilgrims asking them to wait in a safe place until the weather improves and the roads blocked here and there are restored. Both Mandakini and Alakananda rivers in Rudrapur district are flowing close to the danger mark. Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Himachal

Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu and took stock of the situation arising due to the cloudburst in the state, and assured him of all help from the Centre. Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Dhami said the government stands with the affected people. All possible assistance will be provided to them. He directed Tehri District Magistrate to streamline road connectivity, electricity and drinking water supply in the affected areas to restore normalcy. In Kharkhari, a truck carrying rations and essentials for a group of kanwariyas was among the vehicles washed away.

CAPITAL DELHI

From Page 1 It said the problem was detected timely and corrective measures were taken immediately. "Thereafter, no further leakage of water has been noticed," the Lok Sabha Secretariat said. Six weather stations across Delhi recorded over 100 mm of rain in a single day. Rains in Delhi, which was put on a 'red alert', claimed lives of at least six people in the city including a 62-year-old man who died in a building collapse in north Delhi's Sabji Mandi area, a 22-year-old woman and her three-year-old son in east Delhi's Ghazipur area who drowned after they slipped into a waterlogged drain, a 12-year-old boy who got electrocuted after coming in contact with a live wire in

southwest Delhi's Bindapur area, an 18 year old boy who fell and died in South Delhi's Sangam Vihar and a 28 year old Prabhat who died due to electrocution at his home in South east Delhi's Meethapur. Five deaths were reported in the adjoining regions of the city including Gurugram and Noida. In Haryana's Gurugram, three died due to electrocution after coming in contact with high tension wire after heavy rain while two died in Greater Noida after a wall collapse in Dadri area. Multiple incidents of fallen trees, water inundated roads, and wall collapses were reported from across the city as several key stretches were choked with unending traffic and people left stranded.

SC vents its ire on...

From Page 1 "Every day we grant bail to contract killers, murderers, robbers but the question is what kind of incident..." the bench said, while asserting that the manner in which the incident had taken place bothered it. Singhvi said on the day of the incident she went to the police station, then came back without saying anything but then after three days she lodged an FIR. The bench told the senior lawyer, "We are shocked? Is this a way to deal with a young lady? He (Kumar) assaulted her even after she told about her physical conditions." Singhvi said the court is relying on the details of the FIR lodged by her but Kumar's complaint was not registered by her 'friendly' police and Delhi lieutenant governor. Justice Kant said, "We are not on your internal politics and the court is only going by the case records and the FIR."

Puja Khedkar denied...

From Page 1 "The investigation agency needs to widen the scope of the investigation. The agency is directed to find out the candidates recommended by the UPSC in recent past who have availed benefits beyond permissible age limit under OBC quota and those who availed Persons with Benchmark Disabilities benefits despite not being entitled to it," the Court ordered.

WAYANAD

From Page 1 Soldiers and volunteers of the National Disaster Response Team numbering more than 500 are working round-the-clock in their efforts to rescue persons trapped underneath the boulders and clay. Chief Minister Vijayan said in his media briefing that the Army officers had told him that there was no possibility of finding any survivor in Mundakkai as the entire population have been either drowned or washed away by the gushing waters

following the landslides. All 348 houses in Mundakkai were washed away by the flood waters. The Central Water Commission, the agency entrusted with the task of issuing warnings about floods, issued a flood alert in five districts of the State. Vijayan had on Wednesday blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for the failure of the central agencies in issuing timely warnings about the flood and landslides.

Apex court upholds...

From Page 1 "The State in exercise of its power under Articles 15 (non-discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth) and 16 (equality of opportunity in public employment) of the Constitution is free to identify the different degrees of social backwardness and provide special provisions (such as reservation) to achieve the specific degree of harm identified," held the CJI in his 140-page judgement. "Historical and empirical evidence demonstrates that the SCs are a socially heterogeneous class. Thus, the state in exercise of the power under Articles 15(4) and 16(4) can further classify the SCs if (a) there is a rational principle for differentiation; and (b) the rational principle has a nexus with the purpose of sub-classification," the CJI held. The ruling means that within the 15 percent reservation for SCs, castes that are deemed more disadvantaged would be given more weightage than others. The ruling will have crucial consequences for states which want to give wider protection to some castes that are grossly underrepresented despite reservation, in comparison to the so-called dominant scheduled castes.

Railway Minister...

From Page 1 ensuring safety of passengers. "Unfortunately, during the 58 years of Congress rule, the automatic train-protection system was not implemented on even one km on Indian Railways till 2014. I acknowledge that many experiments were carried out, but there was no focussed approach to take it to fruition," Vaishnav said. Vaishnav said Kavach 4.0 received certification by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation on July 17 this year and three manufacturers of the system have scaled up their production capabilities. "Two new manufacturers are also coming onboard, more than 8,000 engineers and technicians have been trained, six universities have introduced Kavach in their syllabus," Vaishnav said.

Mahtari Vandan scheme installment disbursed as Rakshabandhan gift

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

At the head of Rakshabandhan festival, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday disbursed the sixth installment of the Mahtari Vandan Yojana as a festival gift to women in the state.

He e-transferred the installment amount at a function held in Bastar headquarters Jagdalpur.

The Chief Minister also launched the Mahtari Vandan App for beneficiaries to track the information online.

A government official said a total of 70,12,800 applications were found valid in the first phase. For this, Rs 655.57 crore has been sanctioned as installments.



Under the scheme, eligible women are provided a monthly assistance of Rs 1,000. The amount is directly transferred to their bank accounts, he said. Married women who are domiciled in Chhattisgarh and aged above 21 years as of January 1, 2024, are eligible, along with widows, divorced and abandoned women.

20 IAS officers get fresh posting

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government has effected a major bureaucratic reshuffle transferring 20 IAS officers.

The district Collectors of Bijapur, Koriya and Mahasamund have been shifted, as per an order issued on Thursday.

Bijapur's Anurag Pandey (2009) has been made Special Secretary at the Secretariat in Nava Raipur.

A 2018 batch IAS officer, Sambit Mishra will be the Bijapur Collector. He was the Korba District Panchayat Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The Director, Swachhh Bharat Mission (Rural), and 2016 batch officer Chandan Sanjay Tripathi will be the Collector of Koriya. Koriya Collector Vinay



Kumar Langeh (2016) has made the Mahasamund Collector. Mahasamund Collector Prabhakar Malik (2015) has been appointed as the CEO, Chhattisgarh Infotech Promotion Society (CHIPS). A 2012 batch IAS officer, Pushpendra Kumar Meena is the new Commissioner, Commercial Tax (GST). Also, he will be Secretary, Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission, and Inspector General, Registration and Stamps. A 2009 batch IAS officer, Kiran Kaushal has been made Commissioner, Medical

The district Collectors of Bijapur, Koriya and Mahasamund have been shifted, as per an order issued on Thursday.

Education. Mahadeo Kaware (2008 batch) is the Raipur Divisional Commissioner.

Research scholars must contribute to society: Prof Chakrawal

STAFF REPORTER ■ BILASPUR

Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal, Vice-Chancellor of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (Central University), on Thursday urged research scholars to contribute to the development of the society and the nation.

He said this at the inauguration of a 10-day research methodology workshop organized jointly by the university's Department of Physical Education and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi.

The workshop, from August 1 to 10, focuses on research and mental health.

At the inauguration, Prof. Chakrawal encouraged young



researchers to set clear goals and work diligently towards achieving them.

He advised that recognizing one's potential and building on valuable original ideas is a key to success. Additionally, he suggested that through yoga, researchers can maintain focus and stabilize their minds, which will aid in their research efforts.

In the first technical session, Dr. Mahesh Singh Dhopola reviewed the research process, while Prof. R.K. Pradhan presented a lecture on research report writing methods and referencing styles in the second session.

The course will feature 30 lectures by subject experts from Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Kerala and Tripura.

Two Maoist memorials razed



STAFF REPORTER ■ BIJAPUR

Security forces on Thursday demolished two Maoist memorials in Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh.

Maoists observe 'Naxal Shaheed Smriti' week in memory of their slain comrades from July 28 to August 3. The founder leader of

the Maoist movement in India, Charu Mazumdar, died in a Kolkata prison on July 28, 1972.

The District Reserve Guard and Bastar Fighters were on an anti-Naxalite operation in Bandepara and Koranjed villages.

They razed the Maoist memorials at Bandepara village.

Chhattisgarh inks MoU with TRI for rural development

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh's Panchayat

Department on Thursday inked a MoU with Transform Rural India (TRI) Foundation for strengthening rural economy and to step up development process in villages.

The MoU was inked by Principal Secretary, Panchayat Niharika Barik

Singh, at a workshop held at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Nava Raipur.

The workshop dwelt on the issues of rural development, environment stability and societal progress and discussed challenges in front of them. The Secretary to the Chief Minister, Rahul Bhagat and IIM Director Ram Kumar Kakani were present at the workshop.

The Secretary to the Chief Minister, Rahul Bhagat and IIM Director Ram Kumar Kakani were present at the workshop.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग, बिलासपुर मंडल, बिलासपुर

क्र.	नि.अ.सू.क्र./दिनांक	कार्य का नाम	लगत (लाख में)
1	82	लोक निर्माण विभाग, उपसभागा कोरबा अंतर्गत आवासीय / गैर आवासीय भवनों का साधारण मरम्मत कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। कोरबा संभागा कोरबा	25.00
2	83	लोक निर्माण विभाग, कोरबा संभागा कोरबा के अंतर्गत जना नद में शांति आवासीय / गैर आवासीय भवनों के मरम्मत कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। कोरबा संभागा कोरबा	49.84
3	84	लोक निर्माण विभाग, उपसभागा क्र-1 कटचोग अंतर्गत आवासीय / गैर आवासीय भवनों का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। कोरबा संभागा कोरबा	25.00
4	85	लोक निर्माण विभाग, उपसभागा कोरबा भागों में विशेष मरम्मत, मजदूरीकरण एवं चौकीकरण तथा पुन-पुलियों का विशेष मरम्मत कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। कोरबा संभागा कोरबा	25.00
5	86	लोक निर्माण विभाग, उपसभागा कोरबा अंतर्गत आवासीय / गैर आवासीय भवनों का रंगई पोतई एवं डिस्टेपरिंग का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। कोरबा संभागा कोरबा	45.00
6	87	उपसभागा मरवाही के अंतर्गत मरवाही-कटार- बेल्डिरिया कांसबरवा मार्ग = 19.60 कि.मी., बरीर-उषाड मार्ग 10.60 कि.मी., मरवाही परासी चोरी मार्ग = 8.60 कि.मी., लईकुल मरवाही पहुंच मार्ग 0.20 कि.मी. एवं तैरुन-बनार मार्ग = 200 कि.मी. में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पोखरा संभागा पोखरा	45.00
7	88	उपसभागा मरवाही के अंतर्गत सेरा-धनपुर-सिवनी- लखनवाट चोरी मार्ग के कि.मी. 4, 7 से 36/6 मी. रुनागा पट्टा मार्ग 30.60 कि.मी., नईडड-अदेरिका मार्ग = 6.20 कि. 1.20 कि.मी. अईडड से पीपडोला मार्ग 4.00 कि.मी. एवं सेमरदई-माटारिका मार्ग= 4.50 कि.मी. कुल ल. 46.50 कि.मी. में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पोखरा संभागा पोखरा	45.00
8	89	उपसभागा पावनाड अंतर्गत पावनाड-शिवाडी-राजपुरा सारनाड रोड का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	49.87
9	90	उपसभागा जांगरी अंतर्गत अकरतार बलोदा सेराशन में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	39.27
10	91	पांच संभागा अंतर्गत विभिन्न महत्वपूर्ण गैर आवासीय भवनों का मरम्मत एवं रखरखाव का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	35.00
11	92	उपसभागा सवती अंतर्गत विभिन्न सवती मार्ग एवं वाणीय मार्गों में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	65.00
12	93	उपसभागा सवती अंतर्गत सवती मार्गों में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	35.00
13	94	उपसभागा पांच अंतर्गत अन्य जिला मार्ग एवं वाणीय मार्गों में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	40.76
14	95	उपसभागा जांगरी अंतर्गत जांगरी सेराशन 1, 2, 3 में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	60.57
15	96	उपसभागा पांच अंतर्गत विभिन्न सवती मार्ग एवं वाणीय मार्गों में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	59.23
16	97	उपसभागा पावनाड अंतर्गत पावनाड शिवाडी-राजपुरा सारनाड मार्ग (एस एच 13) एवं विभिन्न मार्गों में डब्ल्यू.एम.ए. एवं बी.टी. पेव शिपेर का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। पांच संभागा पांच	49.81
17	98	लोक निर्माण विभाग उपसभागा कोटा बिलासपुर के अंतर्गत आवासीय एवं गैर आवासीय भवनों में रंगई पोतई एवं डिस्टेपरिंग का कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। संभागा क्र-2 बिलासपुर	50.00
18	99	लोक निर्माण विभाग सईकोट उपसभागा क्र-1 बिलासपुर के अंतर्गत पुराना सईकोट सेराशन एवं छतरी सेराशन के आवासीय एवं गैर आवासीय भवनों का रंगई पोतई एवं डिस्टेपरिंग कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। संभागा क्र-2 बिलासपुर	25.00
19	100	जिला सारनाड के केन्द्रीय विद्यालय परिसर में स्टेज एवं सी.सी. रोड निर्माण कार्य। प्रथम आनंत्रण। सारनाड संभागा सारनाड	31.90

निविदा में भाग लेने की प्रक्रिया एवं निविदा के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी विभाग के उपचेयर वेबसाइट में देखें जा सकते हैं।
G-242501534/2
 अप्रीक्षण अभियंता
 लो.नि.वि. बिलासपुर मंडल, बिलासपुर

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER MAHANADI PROJECT, RAIPUR (CHHATTISGARH)

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
Procurement Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>
(First Call)
System Tender No. 156774/ NIT No.: 06/SAC/24-25
Dated: 31.07.2024

Online Tenders are invited for the following work up to 21.08.2024 at 17.30 Hours.

Name of work - Renovation & Up-Gradation of Residential and Government Building of Abhanpur Irrigation Colony in Block-Abhanpur, District Raipur.

Probable Amount of Contract: Rs. 256.99 Lakhs
(As per S.O.R dated 01.08.2010 and amended upto dated 22.08.2022).

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) from Date 07.08.2024, at 17.31 Hours (IST) onwards.

NOTE: All eligible/intrested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the Integrated e-procurement portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under Centralized Contractor/Supplier Registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Executive Engineer
 Water Management Division No. 1, Raipur
 For, Chief Engineer, Mahanadi Project
 Raipur (C.G.)

G-242501524/6

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER IN CHIEF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, NAVA RAIPUR, ATAL NAGAR (CENTRAL TENDER CELL) E-Procurement Tender Notice

Main Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

Tenders are invited for the Following works:-

S. No.	System Tender No./Date	Name of Work	PAC Amount (Rupees in lacs)
1	156535 First Call 23.07.2024	STRENGTHING WORK OF TARA-PREM-NAGAR- RAMANUJNAGAR-KRISHNAPUR ROAD LENGT 27-00 Km. (Ch. 0-5000, 5970-6800, 8330-10000, 15600-16500, 16600-22000, 22200-22640, 27780-27920, 29100-29600, 35800-39700, 42000-43060, 43800-45540, 45580-48000, 48000-51000) DISTT- SURAJPUR (C.G.) (Work code W25918).	5922.01
2	156547 First Call 24.07.2024	Construction of Widening of Jagdalpur Chitrakote Road from k.m. 1 to k.m. 5 (Length 5.00 k.m.).	2791.67
3	156595 First Call 24.07.2024	Widening of N.H. 30 Jyoti Nursery to Railway Crossing (length 2.50 k.m.) & Karkapal Junction to Bodghat Thana (length 2.00 k.m.) (Around the Airport) Bastar.	866.42
4	156649 First Call 26.07.2024	CONSTRUCTION OF (BALANCE WORK) KUE-NAR VIA. ERAMNAR TO TOYNAR ROAD FROM KM 1 to 11/6, LENGTH 10.50KM (CGRIDCL WORK) BLOCK-BIJAPUR DISTT.BIJAPUR (C.G.)	640.13

Last Date of Tender Downloading S.No. 04 date 16.08.2024. Other Tenders Date are Schedule as date 14.08.2024. For more details on the tender and bidding process please visit the above mentioned portal.

Chief Engineer
 (Central Tender Cell)
 Office Of Engineer In Chief
 P.W.D. Nava Raipur Atal Nagar
G-242501536/6



Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday distributed Farmer's Book explaining the forest land rights to tribals at an event at Jagdalpur district headquarters Bastar.

Elephant kills man in Jashpur

STAFF REPORTER ■ JASHPUR

A 55-year-old man was trampled to death by a wild elephant in Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh, a forest official said on Thursday.

The incident took place in Dumardand village on Wednesday night, Jashpur Divisional Forest Officer Jitendra Kumar Upadhyay said.

As per preliminary information, a tusker got separated from its herd and

entered the village and started damaging mud houses. Sensing trouble, Jagarnath shifted other family members to a safe place.

However, the 55-year-old villager himself could not escape in time. The elephant caught hold of him with its

trunk and trampled him to death. The kin of the deceased have been provided an instant relief amount of Rs 25,000.

According to the forest department, more than 300 people have been killed in elephant attacks in the state in the last five years.

बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा Bank of Baroda Regional Office, Jeevan Prakash.L.I.C. Building, Pandri, Raipur (C.G.)
 PH: 0771- 4222611, 4222612, E-mail: recovery.raipur@bankofbaroda.com

(Publication in the Newspapers in case of return/failure of service of 60 day's Notice U/s.13 (2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002).

The Authorized Officer, Bank of Baroda had issued 60 day's Notices to under mentioned borrowers / Guarantors U/s.13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 by Registered A/D/speed post. But these Notices were returned by the Postal authorities due to the reason of refusal to take delivery/wrong address/person left the place/city. These borrowers/guarantors have given their under mentioned movable/immovable assets by way of hypothecation / mortgage as security to secure the various credit limits granted by the Bank to the borrower(s). Due to non-payment of Bank's dues and non-fulfillment of terms and conditions of the loan, default has been committed by the borrower (s) / guarantor (s) in payment of bank loan and interest and the loan account has become NPA as per RBI guidelines. In view of the above, a 60 days Public Notice is given to the following borrower(s)/guarantor(s) to pay the bank dues as stated below alongwith interest till payment failing which the bank will be constrained to enforce its security interest without intervention of Court or Tribunal by taking recourse to one or more of the measures under Chapter - III of the Act. The borrower/guarantors are also directed by this Notice that in terms of Section 13(13) of the Act they shall not transfer by way of sale/lease or otherwise (other than in ordinary course of business) any of the secured assets charged to the bank without prior consent of the bank. The details of borrower/guarantors and secured assets is as follows, against whom the bank will start initiating action after 60 days in the event of non-payment of banks' dues by them.

Sl No.	Name of the Bank Branch & Phone No.	Name of the Borrower & address	Name of the Guarantor & address	Outstanding Amount as per Demand Notice	Details of Secured assets (NPA Date:04.04.2024)(Notice Date:30.04.2024)
01	Choubey Colony Branch, Raipur 9752098095	M/s Khubchandani Engineering And Tools Mrs. Kashish Khubchandani (Proprietor) Capital City Phase-2, House No.-163, Saddu, Raipur, C.G.- 493116	Mr.Sanjay Khubchandani (Guarantor) Capital City, Phase - 2, House No. - 163, Saddu, Raipur, C.G.- 493116	Rs. 22,00,000.00 + Unapplied interest + other charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothecation of Stock and Book Debts Net off Creditors (Rs 28.95 lacs + Rs 2.94 lacs - Rs 1.65 lacs as per Estimation as at 31.03.2024). Equitable Mortgage of residential land & building bearing Plot No.-163, Kh.No.-79/17 (New),79/11(old) PH No. - 109/39, Area- 1500 sqft situated at Mouza Saddu, Ward No. - 26 (Kushabhau Thakre Ward), Capital City, Phase-II, Tehsil- Raipur, Distt.- Raipur, standing in the name of Mr. Sanjay Khubchandani.

Date:02.08.2024, Place:Raipur, Chhattisgarh Authorized Officer, Bank of Baroda

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EC takes first step to hold polls in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a fresh indication that Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir are imminent, the Election Commission (EC) has asked the Union Territory administration to transfer out officers posted in their home districts, an exercise it holds ahead of conducting elections. The commission has been following a consistent policy that officers directly connected with the conduct of elections in a poll-bound State or Union Territory are not posted in their home districts or places where they have served for a considerably long period.

It has issued similar directions to the Chief secretaries of Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand. It said the terms of the existing legislative Assemblies of Haryana, Jharkhand and Maharashtra were up to November 3, 2024; January 5, 2025; and November 26, 2024, respectively, and elections in these States were due in 2024.

"Further, the election to the legislative Assembly of the



Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is also due in the near future," it noted on Wednesday.

It is usual for the poll panel to issue instructions related to transfers of officers ahead of Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. Recently, it had ordered the updation of electoral rolls in Jammu and Kashmir and the three States.

In June, it decided to accept applications seeking allotment of 'common symbols' from registered unrecognised parties in the Union Territory. Whenever Assembly elections are held in Jammu and Kashmir, they

will be the first since provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution were abrogated and the erstwhile State divided into two Union Territories in 2019. The electoral exercise in Jammu and Kashmir is usually spread over a month.

Following a delimitation exercise, the number of Assembly seats has gone up from 83 to 90, excluding those allocated to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Last December, the Supreme Court directed the poll panel to hold Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir by September 30.

Be alert during House proceedings to ask supply questions: Birla to MPs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Thursday asked members to be alert during House proceedings or else, he said, they will lose the opportunity to ask supplementary questions during the Question Hour. Birla said this after Shiromani Akali Dal MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal was unable to respond to the Speaker's call on time.

During the Question Hour, a question posed by Badal related to Punjab was listed in the agenda for discussion. When Birla took Harsimrat Badal's name for a few times, she failed to respond in time as she was apparently busy talking to a fellow member.

At this, the Speaker decided to move on to the next question. Soon after, the Shiromani Akali Dal MP responded and urged the Speaker to allow her to raise the issue. "I have called your name thrice. But you were busy in talking. You have to be alert when your question is listed. I want to tell all Honourable members that if you don't pay attention to the



proceedings, you will not get the chance to raise issues," Birla said. The Speaker also told members that if they want to ask any supplementary question of any listed question, they should submit their names to his office by 10.30 am of that particular day. "I will try to accommodate your request if it relates to your respective State. But that does not mean that you will certainly get the chance to ask any supplementary," he said. Birla, however, later allowed Badal to raise the relevant issue and ask the supplementary question. The first hour of the Lok Sabha proceedings, called the Question Hour, is reserved for MPs to ask any question of public importance. The member whose question is listed in the agenda is allowed to ask two supplementary questions.

India, Vietnam firm up action plan to expand strategic ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Vietnam on Thursday firmed up a new action plan to expand their strategic ties, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that both sides will work towards a free and rules-based Indo-Pacific and that New Delhi supports development and not "expansionism".

After his wide-ranging talks here with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Modi said, the agreed USD 300 million credit line for Vietnam, will strengthen the Southeast Asian nation's maritime security. Chinh arrived in Delhi on Tuesday night on a three-day visit that is aimed at further expanding the comprehensive strategic ties between the two countries.

"We have adopted a new plan of action to further strengthen our comprehensive strategic cooperation," Modi said in his media Statement in presence of Chinh.

Modi said both sides will continue cooperation for a free, open, rules-based and prosperous Indo-Pacific.



Vietnam is India's important partner in our Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision, he said.

"We support development, not expansionism (Hum vistarbad nahi, vikasvad ka samarthan karte hai)," Modi said. The comments came amid growing global concerns over China's expansionist behaviour in the Indo-Pacific. Modi said various dimensions of India-Vietnam relations have both expanded and deepened in the last one decade. In the last 10 years, we have transformed our

relations into a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, he said.

"We held extensive talks on all aspects of mutual cooperation and initiated steps towards the framework of future cooperation," he said, adding the two countries have adopted a new plan of action to further strengthen comprehensive strategic cooperation. Modi said both sides have decided that cooperation will be strengthened on counter-terrorism and cyber security.



Lt Gen Sadhana: First woman to become DGMS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lt General Sadhana Saxena on Thursday took charge as the Director General Medical Services (Army), becoming the first woman officer to be appointed to the post.

She graduated from the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune, with a distinguished academic record and was commissioned into the Army Medical Corps in December 1985, according to a Statement issued by the defence ministry.

She assumed the office of the Director General Medical Services (Army) on Thursday, it said. "Prior to this, she was the first woman to hold the post of DG Hospital Services (Armed Forces) on promotion to the rank of Air Marshal," it said.

Lt General Nair has become the first woman to be appointed as the Director General Medical Services (Army), the ministry said. She holds a post-graduate degree in family medicine, diplomas in maternal and child health and healthcare management, and has undergone a two-year training programme in medical informatics at AIIMS, New Delhi, the Statement said. She was trained in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear warfare with the Israeli Defence Forces and in military medical ethics with the Swiss Armed Forces in Spiez, it added.

Lt Gen Nair is also the first woman Principal Medical Officer of Western Air Command, and Training Command, Indian Air Force (IAF). She was nominated as an expert member of Dr Kasturirangan Committee for drafting part of the medical education component of the National Education Policy, the Statement said.

For her meritorious service, she has been awarded the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Air Command and Chief of the Air Staff Commendations as well as Vishisht Seva Medal by the President, it said.

New Bill promises to revolutionise disaster management

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024, introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday, aims to strengthen the efficient working of the national and State disaster management authorities besides bringing more clarity and convergence among stakeholders working in the field of disaster management.

The Bill also aims to provide statutory status to certain pre-Act organisations like the National Crisis Management Committee and the High Level Committee.

Besides, it aims to strengthen the efficient working of the National Disaster Management Authority and State disaster management authorities, according to the Statement of objects and reasons of the Bill.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, who introduced the Bill, asserted that there is no interference in the rights of the States and disaster management is the first responsibility of the States.

The Bill also provides to bring more clarity and convergence in the roles of authorities and committees working in the field of disaster management and to provide statutory status to certain pre-Act organisations like the



National Crisis Management Committee and the High Level Committee.

The Bill also aims to empower the National Disaster Management Authority and State disaster management authorities to prepare the disaster plan at national and State level instead of the National Executive Committee and the State Executive Committee.

It will provide for creation of disaster database at national and State level, to make provision for constitution of "Urban Disaster Management Authority" for State capital and large cities having Municipal Corporation and to make provision for constitution of "State Disaster Response Force" by the State Government.

The original act, the Disaster Management Act, 2005, was

enacted to provide for the effective management of disasters and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The main purpose of the act was to put in place necessary institutional mechanisms for drawing up and monitoring the implementation of disaster management plans, ensuring measures by various wings of Government for prevention of and mitigating the effects of disasters and for undertaking a holistic, coordinated and prompt response to any disaster or threatening disaster situation. For achieving the said purpose, certain authorities and committees were established at the national level, State level and district level.

In addition, the act enumerated the measures to

be taken up by the ministries and departments of the Government of India and mandated that every ministry or department would carry out the nodal responsibilities in respect of disaster management.

Due to the constant endeavour of the central Government for mainstreaming the disaster management in the development plans, aligning with the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission, learnings from past disasters, and experience gained during the implementation of the Act, the Disaster Management Act, 2005 has been reviewed in consultation with all stakeholders including the State Governments, the Statement of objects and reasons of the Bill said.

Some Opposition members, however, questioned the constitutionality of the measure. Opposing the Bill at the introduction stage, Manish Tewari (Cong) said none of the entries in List 1 or List 2 of the Constitution dealing with central and State subjects deal with the issue of disaster management.

He suggested that the Government should amend the concurrent list to have a proper entry to cover the issue of disaster management. Tewari said the law's

legislative power should be properly defined. He said any law based on "derived legislative power" may not stand the test of constitutionality. He also noted that the rule making power of the Centre provided in the Bill encroaches the powers of the States.

Saugata Ray (TMC) said the multiplicity of authorities will create confusion. The Bill was later introduced by a voice vote.

Minister of State or Home Rai asserted that there is no interference in the rights of the States and disaster management is the first responsibility of the States.

According to the Statement and objects and reasons of the Bill, the main purpose of the 2005 Act which the Bill seeks to amend was to put in place necessary institutional mechanisms for drawing up and monitoring the implementation of disaster management plans. For achieving its purpose, certain authorities and committees were set up at the national level, State level and district level. Seeking to mainstream disaster management in the development plans and learnings from past disasters, the Disaster Management Act, 2005 has been reviewed in consultation with all stakeholders, including State Governments.

Twelve more airports ready to implement DigiYatra facility



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Twelve more airports are ready to implement DigiYatra facility that will provide passengers seamless and contactless movement at various checkpoints through facial recognition system, Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday. Naidu said 12 more airports are ready to implement DigiYatra, while 11 airports are preparing to have the facility. Currently, the DigiYatra facility is available at 15 airports of the country. Responding to supplementaries during the Question Hour, the Minister emphasised that the passenger data shared through DigiYatra App is not stored in any centralised system, saying the

Government is committed to protecting data privacy.

While the DigiYatra app is slowly gaining traction, there have been concerns expressed in various quarters about privacy of passenger data.

"The app facilitates the passengers to enroll their verifiable credentials using Aadhaar card number and to keep their personal information on their smartphones to ensure data privacy," the Minister said. Based on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT), DigiYatra provides for contactless, seamless movement of passengers at various checkpoints at airports in India.

DigiYatra app has been downloaded by more than 43 lakh users, Naidu said, adding the scaling up of the facility will be done in a phased manner.

Rajnath urges personnel to enhance skills

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday here called upon the personnel of the Armed Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) Civilian Services to continue enhancing their skills in today's fast-changing times for efficient policy making and implementation and execution of reforms being undertaken in the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Addressing the 83rd AFHQ Civilian Services Day, he described the civil services as the steel frame of governance and commended the dedication and hard work of the AFHQ personnel in taking forward the ongoing works, including efforts to attain Aatmanirbharta, and contributing to the welfare of soldiers.

"You are an important link between the Armed Forces and the rest of the civilian Government. There is a need to further strengthen your capabilities for enhanced efficiency," he said.

Rajnath added that the three Services form a large part of the functioning in MoD and the AFHQ cadre ensures that the possibility of 'group-think', which results in poor decision-making, is negated in policy formulation.



"Unprecedented reforms have been undertaken in MoD in the last five years, and there has been tremendous progress in several areas. Our achievements have been recognised globally. This has happened due to team work. The Armed Forces and Civil Services should work together from Command Headquarters and Service Headquarters to the Ministry for better output. By including AFHQ Civil Services officers in key roles in MoD, the quality of decision making will improve," he added. The defence Minister urged the Department of Defence to explore the possibilities of better career progression for the personnel of AFHQ Civilian Services. Rajnath exhorted the

personnel to pay attention to the core values of honesty, discipline and uniformity.

He was of the view that everyone deserves respect, irrespective of their position or rank, emphasising that ego must be shed and the personnel must work as a team. He called for learning from one another, which makes even hard work easy to accomplish.

The AFHQ Day is celebrated on August one every year to recognise the role of the personnel who work shoulder-to-shoulder with the Service personnel, primarily in the three Integrated Service Headquarters; HQ, Integrated Defence Staff and 24 Inter-Services Organisations of MoD. The aim is to foster spirit-de-corps of the civilian employees of AFHQ Cadres, who play the role of a bridge between Service Headquarters and MoD, both during peace and war.

The foundation of AFHQ cadres was laid on August 01, 1942 by organising the then decentralised civilian posts/cadre operation as distinct entities under various Service Headquarters and Secretariat of Ministry of Defence and Finance (Defence) under the control of Chief Administrative Officer.



Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera assumes charge as Assam Rifles DG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Lt General Vikas Lakhera on Thursday assumed charge as the new director general of the Assam Rifles, which is known as the "Sentinels" of the north-eastern region. He succeeds Lt General P C Nair who retired after four decades of service. Lt Gen Lakhera has varied professional experience in serving in the northeastern region. He was commissioned into the 4 Sikh Light Infantry in 1990. He is a post graduate from Defence Service Staff College, Wellington. He is an alumnus of the Higher Defence Management Course from College of Defence Management, Secunderabad and completed the prestigious National Defence Course from the Royal College of Defence Studies, London.

Influenza spreads, 132 fatalities in five months, reports NCDC

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In the first five months of this year, India has seen a significant surge in influenza cases and deaths, with a total of 6,351 cases and 132 fatalities reported. Punjab topped the mortalities list with 41 deaths followed by Gujarat with 27 and Haryana with 26. Case numbers are highest in Delhi (1,563), Gujarat (1,049), and Rajasthan (1,008), according to data from the National Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC) under the Union Health Ministry. Last year, in Tamil Nadu alone, 3,544 influenza cases marked the highest number in 14 years.

Health experts said that while temperate regions see seasonal flu primarily in winter, tropical areas like India experience two phases of influenza—summer and a longer winter phase. Since, the current year has already seen 80% of last year's total cases in just five months, it suggests that a potentially severe flu season is ahead. The incubation period, or the time from infection to illness, is about two days but ranges from one to four days.

However, experts have attributed rise in numbers to higher investigations post-Covid-19 pandemic. Also,



this indicates that regions with immunocompromised populations, those with comorbidities, and the elderly are at higher risk of afflicting with influenza. Dr Deepak Kumar Das, Chief Medical Officer at the Delhi Government-run Hindu Rao Hospital, emphasised that individuals with low immunity or underlying health condition as well as those suffering from co-morbidities are at a higher risk of contracting influenza. "Prevention steps are similar to those for Covid-19. People should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and wash their hands regularly. They should also avoid going to crowded places and must wear masks as a prevention measure," said Dr Das.

"Anti-viral medications can be used to treat influenza. Newer antiviral drugs are also available. Seasonal influenza vaccines are updated annually to match circulating strains. The 2024-25 influenza vaccine includes components targeting common strains of Influenza A (H1N1, H3N2)." "Efforts are ongoing to improve vaccine effectiveness and develop universal influenza vaccines that offer broader protection," said Dr Rishikesh Desai, Consultant Physician at the Department of Medicine, Sir Gangaram Hospital.

"Also, the vaccine shot should be taken before the onset of influenza spread. Taking the vaccine during the influenza season will not help," said the doctors. Dr. Kartikeya Kohli, Senior Consultant of Internal Medicine at MASSH Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi, emphasised that influenza is a serious respiratory illness if ignored.

"The symptoms of influenza include high fever, chills, muscle aches, fatigue, sore throat, cough, and a runny or stuffy nose. Vaccination remains the best preventive measure against influenza, helping to reduce the severity and incidence of the flu," Dr Kohli explained.

Karnataka CM holds discussions with Cabinet colleagues after Guv's notice on MUDA scam

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday held discussions with his Cabinet colleagues in the wake of the Governor Thawarchand Gehlot reportedly issuing him a "show-cause notice", seen as a precursor to sanctioning his prosecution in the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam'.

The Governor has reportedly asked the Chief Minister to explain why prosecution sanction must not be accorded in connection with the alleged irregularities in the distribution of sites to land losers by MUDA, including to his wife Parvathi.

During a breakfast meeting, Siddaramaiah is said to have discussed with the Ministers regarding a political and legal strategy and the Congress high command's directions on the issue. A Cabinet meeting is slated to be held



later today. Siddaramaiah along with Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday met Congress President M Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, party General Secretaries K C Venugopal and Randeep Singh Surjewala in New Delhi and held discussions. The Governor's move comes

after a delegation of BJP legislators met the Governor on July 25 and submitted to him a memorandum demanding transfer of the MUDA case to CBI for a probe and resignation of the Chief Minister, and advocate-activist T J Abraham seeking sanction to prosecute Siddaramaiah. In the MUDA 'scam', it is

alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA. The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where MUDA developed a residential layout. Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for forming residential layouts. BJP leaders have claimed that the MUDA "scam" is of the magnitude of Rs 4000 crore to Rs 5,000 crore. The Congress government on July 14 constituted a single member inquiry commission under former High Court Judge Justice P N Desai to probe the MUDA 'scam'.

BRS seeks apology from Telangana CM over comments on women MLAs

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Members of the BRS held a protest in the Telangana Assembly on Thursday demanding an apology from Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy over his alleged insulting remarks against women members of the opposition party. Hitting back at the opposition party, Revanth Reddy said he always respected women and sisters. As soon as the House commenced business, the BRS MLAs wearing black badges rose and started raising slogans. The members entered the well of the House and indulged in sloganeering during a discussion on a bill for setting up skill universities in the state. Despite repeated requests by Speaker G Prasad Kumar and the treasury benches to return to their seats, the BRS legislators continued their agitation. AIMIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi asked the Speaker to either give the BRS



members a chance to speak or suspend them so that the House would be in order. "You have to face them or have the courage to suspend them. If you don't have the courage, you give them the mike," he said. After BRS MLA Harish Rao made a favourable statement on the skill university and the Supreme Court's verdict on empowering states to make sub-classifications of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the party walked out and staged a dharna in front of the CM's chambers in the Assembly.

Later, they were evicted by the marshals, who carried BRS Working President K T Rama Rao and others out of the Assembly. The opposition party also called for statewide protests on Thursday against the CM's comments. Later, the CM found fault with the BRS for not participating in the debate on the skill university. He also castigated the opposition party, alleging that it is circulating objectionable pictures and posts on social media on Minister Dansari Anasuya Seethakka

"If I show you that (objectionable) video (of Seethakka), you will hit them with footwear," Revanth Reddy told the Speaker. Asserting that he always respected women, Reddy alleged that the BRS reached an understanding with Delhi after its MLC Kavitha was arrested. Later, talking to PTI Videos, K T Rama Rao, termed Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's comments as "highly disgraceful, highly disrespectful and highly reprehensible", and accused Reddy of not acting like a Chief Minister but a "Cheap" Minister in Telangana. He made some (comments) which are unbecoming of a Chief Minister, Rama Rao asserted. "Those kinds of comments against women members who are senior legislators and former ministers. They did not say anything, there was no provocation. I was speaking on Appropriation. He suddenly jumps and intervenes and starts calling them names," Rama Rao said.

Clashes erupt in Manipur after security forces fire tear gas shells to disperse crowd



PTI ■ IMPHAL

Clashes erupted between internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in a relief camp and security forces in Manipur's Imphal East district on Thursday after tear gas was used to disperse a protest rally, police said. Approximately 100 IDPs from Akampat relief camp in the district attempted to stage a protest but were stopped by security forces, leading to an altercation, they added. The relief camp residents, holding placards and banners, were demanding their rehabilitation and a resolution to the ethnic violence in the state so they could return to

their homes at Moreh in Tengnoupal district, and other areas. Ethnic violence in the state which started in May 2023 has so far claimed 226 lives and left over 59,000 people displaced, officials said. Locals also joined the fray, hurling stones at the security forces. The protesters managed to continue their rally for about 1 km but were stopped at Singjamei in Imphal West district after additional security reinforcements, including CRPF personnel, arrived. Reports of assaults and injuries have surfaced but the numbers remain unconfirmed.

Phalguni, Shambhavi rivers in spate, houses inundated in coastal Karnataka

PTI ■ MANGALURU/UDUPI (KARNATAKA)

Two major rivers in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts are in spate following torrential rains in the past two days, officials said on Thursday. The Phalguni river in Dakshina Kannada and Shambhavi in Udupi district were overflowing in the wake of heavy rains, they said. As a result of the heavy to very heavy rainfall, a 56-year-old woman died after her house partially collapsed in Nellikuru village in Udupi district, the officials said. According to Prashanth Jain, secretary of Nellikuru Village panchayat, the woman was alone in her house when a wall collapsed. Her three children were engaged in covering the leaking roof of the house with a tarpaulin sheet, but a sudden gush of water broke down the wall. She was, however, rescued from the rubble and taken to a hospital but was declared brought dead by the hospital authorities in the wee hours of Thursday.



The water level in the Phalguni river recorded a sudden rise early on August 1 and saw at least eight houses in Kadapa and Kariya villages flooded. The river water entered about eight houses of Ammunje village near Polali. All the families are being rescued with the help of the taluk administration and fire brigade personnel as per the directions of Tehsildar Archana Bhatt. Archana Bhatt said there were heaps of garbage floating on the water that had hindered rescue operations.

In addition, the Mangaluru Electric Supply Company has also deployed additional people to clear the area of fallen electric poles and cables. In Udupi district, it has been raining continuously for the past 72 hours. In Karkala taluk on Wednesday (June 31) there was heavy rain and many rivers including the Shambhavi were overflowing. During the 24 hours ending 8.30 am on Thursday, Renjala of Karkala taluk in the foothills of the Western Ghats received a total of 319.5 mm rain, while it was 289.5 mm in

Sanur in Karkala, 278.5 mm in Madamakki in Kundapur, 269 mm in Shirtadi. The Shambhavi River, flowing from Sanur in Karkala to Nitte, Bola, and Mundkur villages, has faced unprecedented floods in recent years. Many houses, shops and home-industries have been flooded. The houses of Mundkur gram panchayat members Ashok Shetty, Suresh Shetty and Bhaskara Shetty were destroyed. More than a thousand coconut trees have been uprooted, according to Panchayat officials.

New cave fish discovered in Meghalaya

PTI ■ SHILLONG

A group of scientists has identified a new species of loach in Meghalaya's South Garo Hills district, near Bangladesh border, officials said on Thursday. Loach is a freshwater bottom-dwelling fish and found across rivers in South East Asia. The species, Schistura sonarengensis, was discovered in Sonarenga, Nakama, and Chiabol caves in the district, they added. Funded by the ICAR - National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources in Lucknow, the discovery was led by Dr Khlor Mukhim, principal of Lady Keane College, a team from Guwahati University, among others. The research paper was officially published on Wednesday by Wiley-Blackwell, an international Journal of Fish Biology of the Fisheries Society of the British Isles. "A new species of nemacheilid loach, Schistura sonarengensis sp. Nov., is described from three cave-dwelling populations (Barak-

Surma-Meghna drainage) in the South Garo Hills district of Meghalaya, India," Wiley-Blackwell said in its publication. The species is distinguished by its prominent eyes and 13-26 vertically elongated to circular black blotches on a grayish-black mid-lateral stripe, over a dull white or pale-beige body, it added. Despite lacking the typical adaptations for subterranean life, such as complete loss of eyes or pigmentation, this species shows reduced pigmentation compared to surface-dwelling relatives. Genetic molecular analysis has confirmed its distinction from other known species in the region, officials said. Mukhim noted that while these cave-dwelling fish are somewhat pale, they are not blind like other cave species found in Jaintia and Khasi Hills. The new species retains prominent eyes and is distinct from other Schistura species in the Barak-Surma-Meghna and adjacent river drainages of northeast except for Schistura syngkai, Mukhim added.

Two Chinese men arrested for illegally entering India

PTI ■ MAHARAJGANJ (UP)

Two Chinese nationals were arrested at the Indo-Nepal border area here for allegedly trying to cross over into India illegally, police on Thursday said. A Tibetan refugee, who was helping them in the task, has also been arrested, they said. The trio was held at the Sonouli transit point between the two countries by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). "Yang Meng Meng (37) and Gu Baoqiang (35), both from People's Republic of China, were roaming in Sonouli Indo-Nepal Border area last night when they were stopped by the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) for a routine checking," said Maharajganj Additional Superintendent of Police Atish Kumar Singh. "They were arrested by the immigration department in the Sonouli area after they found the Chinese passport but no Indian visa papers and



responsibility of their transportation from Kathmandu to Gorakhpur, but they could not escape the security agencies and all three were arrested by SSB jawans while entering India from Nepal," Singh added. He said when valid documents were asked from the two arrested Chinese citizens, no visa was recovered from them, while the Tibetan refugee was found to have an Indian Aadhaar card and PAN card which had an Indian address. "The motive behind their move could not be established yet. Interrogation is being done," the officer added. The police have registered a case against both the Chinese citizens under various sections of the law, including Section 14 of the Foreigners Act, while action is being taken against the Tibetan person by registering a case under relevant law at the local Sonouli police station.

Central institute prepares food products with longer shelf life for landslide victims

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A scientific research institute under the central government has been working without break for the last two days to prepare food items with longer shelf life for the survivors of landslides in Wayanad. A team of scientists from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) - National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) here has converted their incubation cell for technology transfer into a food processing and production unit with more than 70 people, including researchers and scholars volunteering to help, working in one shift to prepare 1000 packets of each food item. They are using an exclusive technology developed by the institute to

provide extra shelf life to food items like Upma, which the director said has a high protein value. "One is upma; we increased the protein content of it by 10 per cent. And we use retort processing and retort pouches that will keep the food fresh for at least one month. Then we have poha mixed with ground nuts in dried form, which also has a shelf life of one month. We also have millet puffs for kids," C Anandharamakrishnan, director of CSIR-NIIST, told PTI. He said the prime aim was to pack and send food items that are readily consumable and have a longer shelf life. Anandharamakrishnan said their unit is equipped to produce more if further requirements come, and they aim to complete the first



batch by Thursday evening. "We are planning to hand over the consignment to the Thiruvananthapuram district collector by this evening," the director said. NIIST never had a full-fledged production capability

at their technology incubation cell, but they used the existing infrastructure and converted it into a round-the-clock production line. "The retort process is a high-temperature, high-pressure process. With this process, any food item could

be kept fresh for two to three months. A minimum of one month is our guarantee," V V Venugopal, head of the Department of Agroprocessing and Technology, told PTI. He said the Poha mix does not have any moisture content, so it could be kept for longer days and readily consumed. These food packets will be sent to the landslide-affected area through the district administration, where they will be distributed among the survivors. The devastating landslides in Wayanad district have killed 173 people and left about 200 injured, and authorities are struggling to trace the missing and continue the rescue efforts in challenging terrain without heavy machinery to uncover debris and buried victims.

Telangana Assembly passes Bill to set up skill university in State

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Assembly on Thursday passed a Bill for setting up a Young India Skill University-Telangana in the state. Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu moved the Young India Skill University Bill and the House took up a discussion on it. Speaking on the Bill, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said, taking inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, who started an English

journal "Young India," during the struggle for Independence the Telangana government named the varsity as "Young India Skill University." Reddy said the varsity will be run on a PPP model. "We had several rounds of discussions with universities, industry and students on the proposed varsity. This university will focus on preparing the students to meet the international standards," Sridhar Babu said.



The varsity would focus on skilling students in some of the sectors such as BFSI, pharma and life sciences, Artificial Intelligence, retail and e-commerce, in association with industry, he said. He further said a permanent campus for the skill university will be built in over 50 acres at Mucharla near here. During the debate, BRS members protested before the Speaker alleging that Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy made some remarks on women members of the opposition party on Wednesday. Later, BRS legislator Harish Rao said his party is supporting the Bill. BJP floor leader A Maheshwar Reddy said his party is supporting the state government's move for the university. The AIMIM party suggested that the Bill be referred to a select committee for a wider



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Squabbling overshadows tragedy

The Wayanad landslide tragedy serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of ignoring environmental warnings

In India, we've developed a bad habit of politicising everything, from festivities to tragedies, using every opportunity for one-upmanship against opponents. Indeed, the tragic landslide in Wayanad, Kerala, that claimed life of more than 170 people is being used as a slingshot to score brownie points. It has triggered a heated political exchange between State and Central Government leaders. The tragedy, which resulted in significant loss of life and property, has brought to the forefront the critical issue of disaster preparedness and environmental stewardship. Following the landslide, Home Minister Amit Shah stated that the State had received an early warning but failed to take necessary preventive measures. He criticised the State Government for the negligence, suggesting that more lives could have been saved with timely action. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan quickly refuted Shah's claims, asserting that the State Government had acted on all available warnings and had undertaken necessary measures to mitigate the impact. Vijayan emphasised that the unprecedented intensity of the landslide was beyond what the early warnings had predicted and that the state's disaster response teams had worked tirelessly to manage the situation. This spat achieved nothing; neither relief for the people injured nor a plan of action to stop such incidents in the future. But yes, both the Central and State Governments gave themselves a clean chit, and that was the end of it.

This incident highlights challenges in disaster management and the need for coordinated efforts between State and Central Governments. The

Wayanad tragedy has also opened a broader discussion on environmental conservation and the risks of taking nature for granted. The Kerala Government must take the blame for unrestricted development in the Western Ghats, one of the most fragile ecosystems in the country. Despite frequent disasters, the Kerala Government continues unsustainable activities in the name of development. The thick tree cover is gone due to changed land use. This has turned many perennial streams and rivers into seasonal ones and increased the risk of flooding in the monsoon season. The Wayanad landslide is a stark reminder of the consequences of ignoring environmental signals. Human activities such as deforestation and unplanned construction have exacerbated the vulnerability of regions like Wayanad to natural disasters. The Wayanad landslide underscores the importance of accountability and proactive measures in disaster management. More importantly, it highlights the critical need to respect and care for our environment. Forests, for instance, play a crucial role in stabilising soil and regulating water cycles. Deforestation disrupts ecosystems, making landslides more likely. The Wayanad tragedy is a call to action for governments, communities, and individuals to prioritise environmental conservation for our collective survival.

PICTALK



Asian Openbill storks perch on a tree, in Kolkata

The evolution of learning

Learning is a complex phenomenon with multiple layers. It needs judgement, sensitivity, foresight and a strong will to absorb new ideas



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The real world can be tricky to negotiate. This is because a lot of early childhood learning needs substantive modification when it comes to real life. Illustratively, a child is taught many principles which are simply impracticable as he grows up. Typically, a child will be told never to do something without informing their parents, whereas in real life this is neither feasible nor practicable.

The truth is, that childhood learning is about basics; one learns to modify or calibrate it as one goes along. It has to do with a child's mind and establishing certain principles that life experiences may define or modify. Consider the case of teaching a child about parallel lines. The child is taught that parallel lines are lines that never meet. That's good enough for his purposes. As one matures and gains a few years, the child transitioning into adulthood learns that parallel lines do meet, but they meet at 'infinity'. Similar examples can be cited elsewhere. However, more to the point is a simple proposition, namely that learning has to do with the capacity and capability of the learner.

The same principle can undergo several modifications or even alterations. As one emerges into adulthood, one learns many other intricacies about life, and several of them can only be re-learned only through experience. Here is the need to sharpen a person's capacity for continuous learning and absorption. Typically, the adult, as he goes through life, meets different types of people, and there is a clear need to coexist with several others. One's judgment becomes a crucible for deciding what the truth is and where one has to steer clear or walk through it. This is what adult learning is about, and it is a lifelong necessity that is felt at each stage. Sometimes strange situations can occur, especially if one learns through aphorisms/proverbs/ folk sayings, and even the wisdom of



elders. An illustration of this could make the point clear. In Sanskrit, there is a saying "Satyam brooyat, priyam brooyat, na brooyat satyama priyam". "Broadly translated, it means, speak the truth, but speak it pleasantly. If a truth is bitter, it need not be spoken". Whether this is desirable or not is a moot point. What is more, is that other sayings can be found to be very different than the one quoted above. For example, there is another Sanskrit statement "Satyameva jayate" "A free translation into English would be that "truth alone triumphs". The two statements are clearly in two different contexts and mean two different things. There is an element of contradiction between the two. It is here that adult learning acquires a special veneer of its own. What that special something is a matter of experience and exposure. Some people who repeatedly emphasised in their childhood that they must always tell the truth get so much in the habit of only telling the truth that they become offensive in conversations. This is not because of their



AS ONE EMERGES INTO ADULTHOOD, ONE LEARNS MANY OTHER INTRICACIES ABOUT LIFE, AND SEVERAL OF THEM CAN ONLY BE RE-LEARNED THROUGH EXPERIENCE

ill intention, but their style itself became 'offensive'. Such offensive behaviour can have a heavy price. After all, tact is something that is not an optional extra, it is essential to life. Being tactful does not end up lying or being untruthful. It only trains a person to be sensitive to another person's feelings and sentiments. It also raises the importance of recognizing that all inputs contribute to better and improved behaviour. Creating a situation in which everyone gains and a better environment is established is essential. If bluntness causes hurt rather than improvement, it could lead to deterioration of quality of life, which cannot be the objective of any action. The obvious conclusion is that learning is a complex phenomenon with multiple layers. It needs judgement sensitivity, and foresight. In the absence of any of the above relationships, they can become compromised. After all, if the relationship itself is lost, one might ask: what is the input about? This issue is fundamental to the act of living. This is so because man is a gregarious animal, and the act of living

requires a collective experience. Learning therefore is a lifelong exercise requiring continuous involvement and the capability to evolve. External inputs to learning are of course critical, but internalization of the same is the core. Unfortunately, whereas much attention has been paid to teaching, an equal amount of attention is due to the ways of the learning process. There are indeed definite limits to the capacity to learn and methods of learning. This is something that needs to be more widely recognized than before, especially since it does not seem to be integrated into the larger theories of learning. Indeed, one needs to pay attention to also when and how a revision of the learning process becomes seminal. To sum up, it is important to recognize the continuous nature of learning and one's central role in keeping that learning alive. A teacher can only help the process but cannot substitute a learner's learning. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Remembering APJ Abdul Kalam



Throughout his life Abdul Kalam professed the scientific, academic as well as spiritual development of the students. He made

numerous speeches and wrote many books addressing the youth; which are listened and read even today by students even across the world. Choosing his birth day as the 'World's Student's Day' was an appropriate decision honoring his works as a scientist and the millions of youths that he inspired and still inspires through his works, achievements, speeches, lectures and books. Students deserve better education standards and we hope it is time to inculcate the best education to students so that they may not wish to go to other countries for education purposes. He believed that students are the future of a nation and they can bring considerable change if well nurtured and educated. He professed education as the only weapon to fight back the demons of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition etc.

Anandambal Subbu | Mumbai

Bombay. Furthermore, he was a pioneer in advocating for workers' rights, introducing an eight-hour working day, free medical facilities, and more. As stated at the outset, it is impossible to fully capture the essence of JRD Tata, whose life itself was his message.

Tata passed away in Geneva, Switzerland, from a kidney infection on 29 November 1993, at the age of 89. A few days before his death, he remarked, "Comme c'est doux de mourir" ("How gentle it is to die"). Upon his death, the Indian Parliament was adjourned in his memory, an honor rarely given to those who are not members of parliament.

He was buried at the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. Pages from JRD Tata's life ought to be made compulsory reading in our parliament and legislative assemblies. It might lead to some introspection and, perhaps, inspire some of our elected representatives to mend their ways. Politics in India being what it is, I know this is just daydreaming on my part. Avinash Godbole | Dewas

LACKADAISICAL APPROACH OF MCD

Madam — This refers to the editorial, Enough is enough (July 29) vide which the bitter truth was elaborated that the inaction of municipal authorities and the lack of accountability have resulted in yet another tragedy. The tragic death of three students at the illegal Rao IAS Coaching Centre in Old Rajendra Nagar area of Delhi is a shameful tale of gross and unpardonable negligence at the administrative level. This illegal business is flourishing with the connivance of MCD officials. The basement meant for commercial storage was illegally converted into a coaching centre. There was no emergency exit and no technical scientific arrangements for drainage. The issuance of NOC for building usage and security lapses reflected lackadaisical approach of the MCD officials. Harshest punitive measures must be taken against the people responsible.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Age and capability: Rethinking retirement and leadership

Why is it that in the corporate world, age is a barrier to employment, while in public service, older individuals often hold the highest offices?

In May 2020, close on the heels of the covid outbreak, my husband lost his job. It was an unexpected knock to take barely a month after he was awarded the best employee. The company that he was serving for the past many years attributed the pink slip to the pandemic, and following it, it was near impossible for him to find another job. In most cases, it seemed as if he was deemed over-age. In the traditional sense, it must be true that 58 years is the time to hang one's boots, but taking superannuation was far from his mind. His mental and physical abilities had not dimmed a wee bit and he had many more years of active work life left in him. But it was hard to convince a work culture that was transitioning to a younger demographic about his worthiness. He was soon forced to stop looking for a job and start something of his own. Three years on, it is a decision we don't regret taking. But there is one thing that I have not been able to decipher. If a company considers a person to be too old to seek employment at that age, what makes older doyens eligible to



seek fresh terms as heads of state? This question is more relevant now after John Biden was forced to step aside following doubts over his diminishing cognitive abilities on various platforms. Biden's dropping out in no way suggests that his opponent (who is younger by only three years) is more eligible to be the boss at the White House if age is a major criterion for holding responsible positions. Yet, in public service, it is par for the course for older men and women to push it till economic and social policies allow or they are naturally indisposed. Why is 80 a wholesome number to be at the helm of a state and 60 an age to retire for employees?

There is no doubt that the age gap between the highest and lowest denominators at a workplace has widened significantly. There are concerns about an agile, IT-driven young generation unable to work alongside an older brigade that follows old clunky ways. On this side things, it is still a huge challenge for those used to archaic practices of functioning to adopt digital modes overnight. But experience is something we still cannot discount. On the other hand, we also need a lot of young blood to keep our workplaces vibrant. People age differently. Their biological age may not be commensurate with their chronological age. In a

recent interview on CNN, Anthony Fauci, former chief medical advisor to the President of the United States looked and sounded many times more agile and vigorous at 81 than Biden does. My mother at 77 is much less healthy than a few other relations in their 90s. So to determine people's capabilities based on the number of summers they have seen is a faulty method. Our cognitive age and ability to handle the pressures of a job is something only we can gauge. It is for us to decide if we are fit to handle the responsibilities — be it to serve the nation, run a company or a household. John Biden must have eventually realised that cracks are showing up in his public image and faculties and that stepping aside is the most gracious thing to do, both for his self-esteem and for the sake of his country. Although it had to come after much persuasion, he made the call. Congratulations to him for being rational and accepting 'it is what it is'.

(The author is a Dubai-based author and columnist; views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

ALL QUIET IN BANGLADESH

Madam — After the recent mind-boggling violence in Bangladesh, things seem to be stabilising for now. Hopefully, peace will not be compromised again, as Dhaka is an important neighbor for New Delhi. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's support for those who fought for the liberation of Bangladesh, led by her late father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is well known and reasonable. In the past, Hasina's firm and decisive action against the offenders of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War earned her praise, but her indecision and leniency towards extremists were criticized by moderates and liberals.

Her recent decision to reserve fifty-six percent of jobs for the descendants of the liberation movement was undoubtedly aimed at certain sections of the country's vote bank. Although the Bangladesh Supreme Court struck down the order and reduced the reservation to five percent, Hasina must be feeling the setback. Some short-sighted remarks by Hasina during the students' protests further fueled emotions. It's time for the longest-serving Prime Minister of Bangladesh to get her act together and display the statesmanship expected of her.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

THE LEGACY OF JRD TATA

Madam—The 29th of July 2024 marked 120 years since the birth of JRD Tata, fondly called Jeh by those close to him. Words cannot do justice to his modesty, philanthropy, achievements, awe-inspiring firsts, patriotism, and staunch belief in the three guiding tenets of Zoroastrianism: good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, without professing either belief or disbelief in God. Jeh was India's first commercial pilot license holder and the first to fly a commercial plane from Karachi to Madras. He was also the first Indian businessman who refused to bribe politicians and the first to establish Asia's first cancer care hospital, the Tata Memorial Centre in



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA NAVIGATES DIPLOMATIC TIGHTROPE

Despite the US unease, India charts its own course; QUAD Tokyo conference is a case in point



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

In a balancing act of sorts, the Government of India is trying to address US and European concerns regarding PM Modi's meeting with President Putin last month, when many of the leaders were in a huddle in Washington for the NATO summit. President Putin went an extra step to welcome PM Modi in Moscow, signalling a strong message to the US, regarding the long-standing partnership with India. Senior officials in the US expressed deep concern with the optics involved in PM Modi's Moscow visit while reiterating that nothing significant was achieved. Russia bilateral is a tightrope, that India has managed to carefully tread on, despite its growing engagement with the US in the past decades. Therefore, this week's QUAD foreign minister's conference in Tokyo where External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met his US counterpart Anthony Blinken was significant. The joint statement in unequivocal terms condemned Russia's action in Ukraine, perhaps for the first time joining in such a multilateral official communication. The joint statement read "We express our deepest concern over the war raging in Ukraine including its terrible and tragic humanitarian consequences. We reiterate the need for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in line with international law, consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity."

PM Modi had also in his bilateral meetings with President Putin and public messages subsequently, mentioned the need for finding lasting solutions to the Ukraine crisis away from the battleground while condemning the attack by Russia killing nearly 41 persons including at a children's hospital. PM Modi said "Whether it is war, conflict or a terrorist attack, any person who believes in humanity, is pained when there is loss of lives. But even in that, when innocent children are killed, the heart bleeds and that pain is very terrifying." Ukraine President Zelensky has condemned PM Modi's visit to Russia. Government officials now indicate that the PM is likely to travel to Ukraine in August to balance the geopolitical dynamics and reset India and Europe's relationship. Meanwhile, the QUAD for-



eight ministers meeting continued to focus on the Gaza crisis, and its spillover in the Red Sea zone, impacting lives and raising freight costs. The foreign ministers jointly communicated "We urge all parties to comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, as applicable. We welcome UNSC Resolution S/RES/2735 (2024) and strongly urge all parties concerned to work immediately and steadily toward the release of all hostages and an immediate ceasefire. We call on all parties to take every feasible step to protect the lives of civilians including aid workers, and facilitate the rapid transportation of humanitarian relief. We also encourage other countries, including those in the Indo-Pacific, to increase their efforts to address the dire humanitarian need on the ground. We underscore that the future recovery and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip should be supported by the international community. We remain committed to a sovereign, viable and independent Palestinian state taking into account Israel's legitimate security concerns as part of a two-state solution that enables both Israelis and Palestinians to live in a just, lasting, and secure peace." India would be the host for the QUAD leaders summit scheduled this year, however, the crucial US presidential elections in November would be a key determinant of the time. President Biden who has mostly shaped the Quad narrative in the past, would like to leave a lasting impression on this group of four.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Union budget prioritises employment and skilling

To empower youth, the Government has announced three transformative schemes aimed at promoting skilling across various sectors



DINESH SOOD



One of the top nine priorities of the Union Budget is employment and skilling. In line with this, three schemes have been announced to promote skilling. The first scheme involves increasing the maximum loan amount for high-end skilling courses under the revamped Model Skill Loan Scheme from Rs 1.5 lakhs to Rs 7.5 lakhs, with an interest rate of 1.5% per annum. This scheme is expected to empower the youth by providing easy access to advanced-level skill courses, potentially removing significant financial barriers for many deserving students and candidates to gain futuristic and in-demand industry skills, thus creating a future-ready and empowered workforce. Recognising the significant role played by non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and micro-finance institutions in the skill loan market, the Ministry of Skill Development and Employment (MSDE) has made pivotal modifications to the scheme. This includes the inclusion of NBFCs, Micro Finance Institutions, and Small Finance Banks to extend loans backed by a guarantee against default up to 75% of the loan disbursed through the instrument of collateral-free loans of up to Rs 7.5 lakh to facilitate 25,000 aspirants every year. Without a vibrant skill loan market, many youths leave aspiring candidates without the necessary financial support to pursue their skill training. To ensure uninterrupted credit flow in the skilling sector and to provide low-income youths with access to affordable finance for specialised skill courses, the MSDE initially launched the Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Skill Development in July 2015, resulting in below expectations. The low fund utilisation under the scheme over the past decade was due to the low ticket size of loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh, even as course costs and fees rose due to inflation, leaving many high-cost



THIS FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND SCHEME, AIMING TO COVER ONE CRORE YOUTH IN 5 YEARS, HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A GAME CHANGER IN TACKLING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

courses out of the scheme. Secondly, private banks still need to be more willing to finance government-sponsored schemes. As of March 31, 2024, loans amounting to Rs 115.75 crore had been extended to just 10,077 borrowers over the past decade. However, the government's unwavering commitment to addressing this issue is evident in the new model skill loan scheme, which aims to meet the challenges of a highly skilled workforce emerging from paced technological changes. Relevant skills are in demand, and the cost of acquiring specialised skills is higher. Only 5% of the so-called skilled workforce is formally trained, creating a significant skill gap that needs to be urgently addressed. While 26.5 crore children enrol in school each year, by the time they reach higher education, their numbers have dwindled to 4.3 crores. To align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 mandate, an additional five crore children who pass school need to be included in higher education and to make skill training accessible to every individual, especially the large number of students from rural India. The Model Skill Loan Scheme is not just a solution but a necessary and urgent step in bridging this gap. The skill economy is increasingly market-led, integrating new-age learning into the skill development ecosystem. The youth from urban and semi-urban areas recognise the opportunities for skilling and livelihood improvement. An initiative like the Model Skill Loan Scheme opens doors to many skill courses in sectors such as healthcare,

beauty-wellness, IT, AI-data science, cloud applications, digital marketing, hospitality, animation, gaming, graphic designing, and drone technology. These courses, driven by changing industry dynamics, offer substantial placement opportunities and the potential for global mobility, providing a promising future for the youth and opening doors to international career prospects. The second scheme aimed at skilling 20 lakh youth over five years. The scheme, with a total outlay of Rs 60,000 crore, aims at fulfilling this objective by upgrading 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the hub and spoke arrangements with outcome orientation. It's an ambitious scheme that aims to make youth more employable by imparting industry-specific skills. The course content and design will be upgraded to reflect the skill needs of the industry. For instance, emerging IT sector needs could include cyber security or data analytics skills. The third scheme introduced in the Budget for Skilling Youth is a comprehensive scheme that provides the youth with internship opportunities in 500 top companies. This first-of-its-kind scheme, aiming to cover one crore youth in 5 years, has the potential to be a game changer in tackling youth unemployment. This internship scheme's innovative approach and potential impact make it a beacon of hope for young people's future employment, promising a significant reduction in youth unemployment rates. Moreover, landing an internship is difficult, leading to a vicious

cycle of frustration and disappointment. Students with professional degrees like MBA, engineering, etc., may still find landing jobs or internships easier after graduation. However, the scenario could be more precise for unemployable humanities graduates with no ready-made market-appropriate skill set. Thus, such a scheme providing young graduates across disciplines with internship opportunities at leading companies can be a game-changer if implemented properly and effectively. Perhaps, in the future, the government could consider widening the scope of this scheme by making it mandatory for companies above a specific size (the government could come up with a set of specifications to decide this) to take in a fixed number of interns every year and fund the training program through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds. These funds are a company's initiative to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on environmental and social well-being. Most importantly, the internship opportunities provided under this new scheme could significantly boost the employability quotient of youth. With concrete experience, they will be more likely to land a job. However, implementation, effectiveness, and accountability are crucial to fostering employable skill sets. (The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Network Member of India International Skill Centres; Views expressed are personal)

Transforming bone fracture treatment with the magnesium implants invention

This innovative solution promises to alleviate the long-term suffering of bone-fractured patients caused by traditional metal implants

An age-old adage "necessity is the mother of invention" still holds now. This aforementioned adage is duly proven by the fact that Nitin Pratap Varma Senior Scientist and highly esteemed research scholar from Dhanbad-based IIT-ISM and currently working as Senior Scientist for Shahjahanpur (UP) based company G Surgiwear Limited, felt the necessity of resorbable implant that could be fully absorbed in the bodies of accident victims as part of treating their fractured bones. Understanding this need of the hour, Varma held meetings with members-scientists of his research team. Many brainstorming ses-



GYAN BHADRA

sions with experiments ensued. Eventually, the team led by Varma zeroed in on the final product and invented the "magnesium implant" for the first time in the world. Shedding light on the factual aspects of his invention, Varma says: "For many years, I have been observing the predicaments and troubles being suffered by bone-fractured patients due to inserted implants comprising plates and screws made

up of stainless steel and titanium metals. Since those plates and screws remained embedded in the body, patients had to undergo painful sufferings for a long period. To remove those metallic plates from the body, the patients have to undergo surgery which is physically tormenting as patients have to bear the brunt of risk aspects of surgery. And to add insult to injury, patients bear the huge expenses of surgery. Keeping in mind the troubles faced by patients, Varma convened a series of meetings with his fellow scientists and team members to discuss the use of plates made up of resorbable metals in place of stainless steel-made plates



After having a long discussion, we reached to the scientific conclusion that implant of resorbable metals gets fully absorbed in the body within 3-5 years of insertion. It is no hyperbole on my part if I say it vanishes into the

body. Thus through continued research and experiments, we invented and zeroed in on magnesium implant due to its path-breaking resorbable quality in the human body. Patients do not feel any physical inconvenience

afterwards, Varma explains matter-of-factly. Analysing his bone treatment-related achievement in an in-depth manner, Varma explains that there are three kinds of metals that are resorbable and biologically safe: magnesium, zinc and iron. Undoubtedly, these metals have their pluses and minuses. Varma and his colleagues have been experimenting with resorbable metals to gain knowledge of their utilities and qualities. For this very purpose, the team of scientists also visited the Jamshepur-based National Institute of Metallurgy institution to seek intricate technical knowledge of metals. Expressing optimism over the utility and quality of

magnesium implants, Varma avers that the invented product has reached the final stage; since the product has already been implanted in animals for testing its efficacy. Also, to be well-versed with different clinical parameters related to experimental procedures, the animals have been kept under observation for six months. Results from animal testing are very encouraging. After successfully experimenting with this product in animals, Varma has plans to test this product in human bodies. For this, he has decided to seek permission from the Drug Controller General of India. Having successfully tested this product in human bodies, it will be put in the

public domain, Varma explains. Eventually, it is no exaggeration to say that the invention of the magnesium implant is slated to bring revolutionary changes in the treatment of bone fractures and other bone diseases. This is more so because as per a research report, scores of scientists are engaged in experimental procedures of implants in laboratories the world over. And in this context, thousands of research papers have been inked and published. But to this date, those scientists have yet to make in-roads to reach the level of realistic utility of implants. (The writer is a freelancer; views expressed are personal)

Iran's supreme leader prays over coffin of Hamas leader Haniyeh

AP ■ BEIRUT

Iran's supreme leader and representatives of Palestinian militias he backs prayed Thursday over the coffins of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard who were killed in a shocking assassination blamed on Israel that risked escalating into an all-out regional war.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei prayed over Haniyeh's coffin at Tehran University while Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian stood next to him. State television later showed the coffins placed in a truck and moved on the street toward Azadi Square in Tehran and people throwing flowers at the funeral.

After the funeral services in Tehran, Haniyeh's remains are to be transferred to Qatar for burial Friday. Haniyeh came to Tehran to attend the inauguration of Pezeshkian. Associated Press photos showed the Hamas



Iranians attend the funeral ceremony of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and his bodyguard, some of them holding up posters with his photo and reading in Arabic: "Congratulations Haniyeh!" at Enqelab-e-Eslami (Islamic Revolution) Sq. in Tehran, Iran, Thursday. AP/PTI

leader seated alongside leaders from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant group and Hezbollah, and Iranian media showed him and Pezeshkian hugging. Haniyeh had met ear-

lier with Khamenei. Hours later, he was killed in an airstrike that hit a residence Haniyeh uses in Tehran. Iranian authorities said the attack is under investigation but haven't

provided details. Israel had pledged to kill Haniyeh and other Hamas leaders over the group's Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel that sparked the war in Gaza. The strike came just hours after Israel targeted a top commander in Iran's ally Hezbollah in the Lebanese capital Beirut.

Iran supports Hamas, as well as Hezbollah and other Palestinian militant groups fighting Israel in Gaza. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said "all parties" in the Middle East must avoid escalatory actions that could plunge the region into further conflict.

Speaking in the Mongolian capital of Ulaanbaatar on Thursday, Blinken appealed for countries to "make the right choices in the days ahead" and said a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza was the only way to begin to break the current cycle of violence and suffering.

Israel confirms death of Hamas military chief in July strike

Jerusalem (AP): The Israeli military said Thursday that it has confirmed that the head of Hamas' military wing, Mohammed Deif, was killed in an airstrike in Gaza in July.

Israel targeted Deif in a July 13 strike that hit a compound on the outskirts of the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, but the military said for weeks it was working to determine if he died in the blast. Hamas has denied he was killed. More than 90 other people, including displaced civilians in nearby tents, were killed in the strike, Gaza health officials said at the time.

In a statement Thursday, the Israeli military said that "following an intelligence assessment, it can be confirmed that Mohammed Deif was eliminated in the strike." There was no immediate comment from Hamas.

US reaches plea deal with alleged 9/11 mastermind

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US has announced that it has entered into a pretrial deal with the alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, a Kuwaiti-Pakistani engineer, and two other co-accused in the 2001 terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

The agreement — reached after 27 months of negotiations — takes the death sentence off the table for Mohammed, Walid Bin Attash, and Mustafa al Hawsawi, prosecutors said in a letter sent to the families of 9/11 victims and survivors shortly before the Department of Defense announced the news in a press release Wednesday. Mohammed and his co-defendants, who have spent almost two decades in the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, will enter guilty pleas at a plea hearing that could come as early as next week, according to the letter obtained by

CNN. The settlement agreements with the Pentagon bring partial closure to a case that has dragged on for years and become mired in legal delays over whether the evidence extracted through torture during their interrogations was admissible in court.

On September 11, 2001, two hijacked passenger planes hit the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. A third plane struck the Pentagon in Washington. A fourth plane, heading to Washington, crashed in Pennsylvania after passengers fought back with the hijackers. Many family members of the nearly 3,000 people who died in the September 11, 2001, attacks want the 9/11 defendants put to death.

Since a trial became increasingly unlikely, plea bargains were widely viewed as the only way to resolve the case, the US media reported. The Convening Authority for Military

Commissions, Susan Escallier, has entered into pretrial agreements with Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, Walid Muhammad Salih Mubarak Bin Attash, and Mustafa Ahmed Adam al Hawsawi, three of the co-accused in the 9/11 case, the US Department of Defence said in a press release.

"The specific terms and conditions of the pretrial agreements are not available to the public at this time," it said.

The three accused, along with Ali Abdul Aziz Ali and Ramzi Bin al Shibh, were initially charged jointly and arraigned on June 5, 2008, and then were again charged jointly and arraigned a second time on May 5, 2012, in connection with their alleged roles in the September 11, 2001, attacks against the United States, the release said. The letter says that the families now have 45 days to submit questions to be answered by the alleged co-conspirators by the end of the year.

Blinken aims to ease US election concerns on 6-nation Asia tour

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

With large parts of the world in turmoil and deep uncertainty over the future direction of America's global role, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken sought this week to project an aura of calm normalcy as he traveled through Asia on his first overseas mission since President Joe Biden jolted the 2024 presidential race with his withdrawal.

Whether he succeeded or not remains an open question. On a trip to Laos, Vietnam, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and Mongolia that was punctuated by several potential escalatory developments in the Middle East, an uptick in Russian attacks in Ukraine and overshadowed by persistent fears about China's increasingly aggressive actions, he could not escape questions and comments about domestic U.S. politics.

Having embarked on the six-nation tour just days after Biden's decision, Blinken no

doubt would have preferred to avoid the issue entirely but came prepared with several stock answers to questions about U.S. leadership from concerned partners and allies. Chief among them: "I don't do politics" and variations on "American engagement abroad endures across administrations." In the Philippines, Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin remained politely silent when President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. welcomed them with a nod toward the campaign that now pits former President Donald Trump against presumptive Democratic nominee Vice President Kamala Harris.

"We are very happy to see (you) once again," Marcos said on Tuesday in Manila. "I am a bit surprised considering how interesting your political situation has become back in the States, but I'm glad that you've found the time to come and visit with us."

In Singapore, Blinken was asked by a senior diplomat about the

"noise coming out of the presidential campaign" and replied with a joke. "Really? I hadn't heard any of it," he said to laughter from the audience of students and academics from Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy before taking a stab at a serious answer. "We have these periodic things called elections and I think it's normal that before every election — given the importance of this moment in history that our country has around the world — that of course people ask questions," Blinken said.

"They wonder what's going to happen in any given election, what direction does the country take, and maybe there are lesser or higher degrees of that on any given election, but it always happens before every election, and I understand that," he said.

But, he argued that no matter who occupies the White House "there are a number of constants that don't fundamentally change irrespective of who wins a particular election."

UK stabbings suspect named in court

PTI ■ LONDON

The teenage male suspect charged with murder over the fatal stabbing of three young girls in north-west England was Thursday named by authorities after restrictions were lifted in court, as Prime Minister Keir Starmer held talks with police chiefs over violent protests the incident triggered outside Downing Street here.

Axel Muganwa Rudakubana, a Wales-born 17-year-old from the nearby village of Banks in Lancashire who was arrested soon after the attack on Monday in Southport, appeared at Liverpool City Magistrates Court charged with three counts of murder, 10 counts of attempted murder and possession of a knife.

Judge Andrew Menary lifted the legal restriction on naming the accused after hearing submissions that he is just days away from his 18th birthday on August 7 and remanded him in youth custody until the next hearing on October 25.

In its update on Wednesday evening's violent clashes in the



aftermath of the stabbings, the Metropolitan Police said that 111 people had been arrested for offences including violent disorder, assaults on police officers, possession of knives and offensive weapons and breach of protest conditions. A number of officers were injured as one was punched in the chest, one elbowed in the head, one kicked in the back, one kicked in the wrist and another kicked multiple times.

is shameful that some have sought to exploit this tragedy as justification for their own violence and criminality. There is absolutely no place for this on our streets. We will ensure that anyone involved in any violent disorder and criminal behaviour will be stopped, arrested and will face justice," he said.

Flares were thrown towards the gates of Downing Street and some among the crowd threw cans and glass bottles. Protesters later tried to kick down a fence as they were confronted by police equipped with riot gear. Chants of "Rule Britannia," "save our kids" and "stop the boats" could be heard as the crowd was penned in by the police trying to contain the disorder on Wednesday night. The London events followed violent protests in Southport and also in Hartlepool, north-east England, and Aldershot, south-east England, believed to involve far-right groups whipped up by social media misinformation claiming the male suspect behind the stabbing was a Muslim asylum seeker who arrived illegally in

the country on a boat. Arrests were also made in the violent disorder in Hartlepool and Aldershot.

Earlier, Merseyside Police Chief Constable Serena Kennedy said the charges against the teenage suspect mark a "significant milestone" in the "live investigation" as the force continues to work with partners from Lancashire Police and Counter Terrorism Policing North West (CTPNW).

Three children — six-year-old Bebe King, seven-year-old Elsie Dot Stancombe and nine-year-old Alice Dasilva Aguiar — died as a result of the attack at The Hart Space community centre.

A "Taylor Swift Yoga and Dance Workshop" aimed at primary school children was taking place at the time of the attack in the seaside town north of the city of Liverpool.

Eight other children suffered stab wounds in the attack, five of whom remain in critical condition in hospital. Two adults, including one of the organisers of the event, also suffered critical injuries. PTI AK

Over 60 leaders endorse Kamala Harris for US President

New York (PTI): More than 60 South Asian American state and local elected officials from across the US have endorsed Kamala Harris for the presidency, saying that as the daughter of an Indian immigrant mother, she will create a "fairer and more inclusive" immigration system. They also said that the US Vice President's victory in the November 5 presidential election would send a powerful signal to all Asian Americans, communities of colour, and women.

The officials joined the Indian American Impact in endorsing Harris, who is the 2024 Democratic candidate for President of the United States. "As South Asian elected officials, we proudly support Kamala Harris in her historic bid to become the first South Asian American woman President of the United States," the officials said in a statement issued by The Indian American Impact Fund, which is dedicated to promoting and elevating voices of Indian and South Asian Americans in the political and civic life of the United States.

"As the daughter of an Indian immigrant mother, Harris will also 'create a fairer and more inclusive immigration system,'" the statement said, referring to Harris's Chennai-born mother Shyamala Gopalan, a scientist who had moved to the US in the 1950s to pursue higher education.

"As an exceptional coalition builder, Harris possesses an extraordinary ability to unite our nation at a time when the stakes have never been higher," it said. The statement added that Harris's victory in the November 5 election would send a powerful signal to all Asian Americans, communities of colour, and women. "By helping so many reimagine what is possible, a President Kamala Harris would affirm that the American Dream isn't just an aspiration, but an achievable reality."

Ramaswamy accuses Harris of leaning into 'identity politics'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Former Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy has accused Vice President Kamala Harris of leaning into 'identity politics' and claimed that she only considered herself Indian-American when "convenient."

Ramaswamy, who supports the Republican Party's nominee Donald Trump now, said that Harris, the Democratic presidential election nominee, leaned on her Indian American heritage while running for office in California, where there is a significant Asian American population, but has since shifted her focus away from that identity on the national stage.

The 38-year-old Indian-American biotech entrepreneur drew a comparison between Harris' heritage and his own to share his views on the subject. "On a very personal level, my parents were immigrants to this country, legal immigrants from southern India — the very same part of India that (Harris) mother also immigrated from," he told



Real Madrid goalkeeper Andriy Lunin dives as Milan forward Samuel Chukwueze passes the ball during the second half of a friendly soccer match Wednesday, in Chicago

Fox News. "I think it's a hard fact... it's a fact whether you like it or not, that many Indian-Americans in the US are indeed somewhat offended by the way Kamala has suddenly cast aside the Indian-American side of identity,"

Ramaswamy said. She leaned into it when she ran for Office in California — big Asian-American and Indian-American population, he said. "So she wore that when it was convenient. She's wearing a different identity now when it is polit-

ically convenient on a national stage," he alleged. He said he does not think Americans should be relying on these ethnic identities at all. "We're actually American. And the problem is, when you're Kamala Harris and you actually lean into your identity politics, then you open the door to that type of criticism," he said. "But if you ask me, that shouldn't be how this election is decided one way or another. It should be decided on our own identity as Americans and what our vision is for the future of our country. And the number one thing missing in Kamala Harris' candidacy is that she lacks that vision for the country," he added. Harris, 59, is Indian American and African American. Her mother emigrated from India, and her father emigrated from Jamaica. Former President Trump also mocked Vice President Harris' heritage during a combative live interview Wednesday at the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) convention, saying "she happened to turn Black" in recent years.

Death toll jumps to 30 in China landslide

Beijing (AP): At least 30 people have died and 35 others are missing in a city in south-eastern China after days of heavy rains tied to a tropical storm, state media said Thursday.

The death toll rose sharply from a previously reported four deaths in villages in Zixing, a city in Hunan province. In addition, a mudslide from the same rains killed 15 people on Sunday in another part of the province. Earlier this week, state broadcaster CCTV showed helicopters being used to get relief supplies into severely flooded areas in Zixing.

By midday Thursday, roads, electricity and communications had been largely restored in the city's eight most affected townships, state media said.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang, visiting flood-hit villages in Zixing, urged all-out efforts to find the missing as search and rescue work continued.

Poland marks 80 years since Warsaw uprising, honours heroes



Warsaw (Poland) (AP): The Polish and German presidents bowed their heads to the cadence of a military drum as they paid tribute Thursday to Poles slaughtered by Nazi Germany during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 on the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the ill-fated revolt.

As Poland marked the hallowed day, news broke that the oldest surviving insurgent of the uprising, 106-year-old Barbara Sowa, died in the morning. With very few survivors left to take part in the ceremonies, it was a poignant reminder of the passing away of the generation shaped by the sacrifice of World War II. Later, the city will stop and sirens will not wait to pay tribute to the insurgents. Taylor Swift, who is giving the first of three concerts Thursday evening in Warsaw, warned her fans on social media not to panic when they hear the sirens. Many are traveling from far away for the performance. Polish President Andrzej Duda and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier stood together, heads bowed, to remember those days of August in 1944. They paid tribute to the Wola Massacre, the mass-murder of civilians of Warsaw's Wola district carried out by the Germans from August 5 to August 12, 1944. "They were led out of their homes, tenement houses, their homes were set on fire, and they themselves were shot in the streets, and

their bodies were burned. Several tons of ashes were collected from the streets and squares of Wola, in order to place them in a common grave," Duda said.

The German president's bowed head and other symbolic gestures signaled remorse for the crimes of his nation. That Steinmeier "lays a wreath, bows his head, kneels before the commemorative cross," calls for respect, said Duda, speaking for the nation under brutal occupation from 1939-1945, which suffered the extermination of millions of its citizens, Christian and Jewish, and the near-total destruction of its capital city. Many Poles feel the gestures of remorse are not enough, and the previous nationalist government in power from 2015-23 — allied with Duda — demanded USD 1.3 trillion from Germany in war reparations.

Germany says it will not pay and the matter was settled with compensation paid to East Bloc nations in the years after the war and with territory given up to Poland.

The government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk, which took power last December, has toned down the demands but says it would still like Berlin to consider possibilities for compensation. Warsaw's revolt began August 1, 1944, by the clandestine Home Army, which acted on orders from Poland's government-in-exile in London.

Trump questions Harris' racial identity: Is she black or indian?

Washington (PTI): Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has launched a racially insensitive attack against Kamala Harris by questioning whether she is "Indian or Black," drawing a sharp reaction from his Democratic rival who termed his remarks "the same old show" of "divisiveness" and "disrespect."

Trump, 78, falsely claimed Vice President Harris had only emphasised her Asian-American heritage until recently when, he claimed, "she became a black person."

"I've known her a long time, indirectly, not directly very much, and she was always of Indian heritage, and she was only promoting Indian heritage. I didn't know she was Black until a number of years ago when she happened to turn Black, and

now she wants to be known as Black," Trump said at the National Association of Black Journalists convention in Chicago on Wednesday, 5 presidential election gained momentum with opinion polls showing that Harris has narrowed the gap with her Republican rival.

"So I don't know - Is she Indian? Or is she black?" Harris' mother is originally from India, and her father is from Jamaica.

As an undergraduate, Harris attended Howard University, a historically black school in Washington, and belongs to Alpha Kappa Alpha, the country's oldest Black sorority. She was also the president of the Black Law Students Association while studying at the University of California's law school in San

Francisco, and a member of the Congressional Black Caucus during her time in the Senate. When one of the journalists who was interviewing Trump on stage tried to tell him that Harris had always identified as Black and had attended a historically Black university, the former president continued: "I respect either one, but she obviously doesn't. Because she was Indian all the way, and then all of a sudden, she made a turn, and she went — she became a Black person. And I think somebody should look into that too."

Trump's comments prompted immediate criticism. Speaking at an event in Houston Wednesday for the Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, a historically Black sorority, Harris told the crowd that "this afternoon, Donald Trump spoke at the

annual meeting of the National Association of Black Journalists, and it was the same old show." "The divisiveness and the disrespect, and let me just say, the American people deserve better," Harris, 59, did not directly address the content of Trump's words but said that Americans "deserve a leader who tells the truth, a leader who does not respond with hostility and anger when confronted with the facts, we deserve a leader who understands that our differences do not divide us, they are an essential source of our strength."

Harris campaign communications director Michael Tyler earlier said the "hostility Trump showed on stage today is the same hostility he has shown throughout his life, throughout his term in office, and throughout his campaign for president."

"Trump lobbed personal attacks and insults at Black journalists the same way he did throughout his presidency — while he failed Black families and left the entire country digging out of the ditch he left us in," Tyler said. "Donald Trump has already proven he cannot unite America, so he attempts to divide us." At the White House, press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre responded to Trump's jab at Harris, calling the former president's comments "insulting."

"As a person of colour, as a Black woman, who is in this position that is standing before you at this podium, behind this lectern — what he just said, what you just read out to me is repulsive, it's insulting," Jean-Pierre said. "No one has any right to tell someone who they are, how they identify."

Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Chhatra Shibir banned

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh on Thursday banned the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir under anti-terrorism law following nationwide unrest over the quota system for government jobs, accusing the fundamentalist party of instigating protests that left at least 150 people dead.

A notification issued by the Public Security Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday confirmed the ban on the Islamist party, a key ally of former prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The ban on Jamaat, Chhatra Shibir and other associated groups came through an executive order under Section 18(1) of the Anti-Terrorism Act. "They (Jamaat and BNP) just used the students as their shield," Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Thursday when Italian Ambassador Antonio Alessandro called on her at her official residence Ganabhaban here.

A Home Ministry spokesman said that the government on August 1 banned all political activities of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and its various wings. The Bangladesh government on Tuesday decided to ban the

Jamaat-e-Islami following the deadly nationwide students' protests over quotas in government jobs, accusing it of exploiting the movement that left at least 150 people dead. The development comes after a meeting of the ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance passed a resolution earlier this week that Jamaat must be banned from politics.

The decision to ban Jamaat comes over 50 years after its initial prohibition in 1972 for "misusing religion for political purposes". The Jamaat opposed Bangladesh's 1971 independence from Pakistan and sided with the Pakistani troops during the Liberation War.

The party, founded in 1941 in undivided India, was first banned in 1972, the year Bangladesh framed its Constitution, which disbanded the functioning of any association or union or political party based on religion.

But the subsequent military government led by General Ziaur Rahman revoked the ban by issuing a martial law proclamation, which allowed Jamaat to refloat and years later became a crucial partner of the then prime minister Khaleda Zia's 2001-2006 four-party alliance government. Two senior Jamaat leaders

were inducted into her cabinet. Top leaders of the ruling Awami League, who have been in power for the past 15 years, have supported the ban on the Jamaat because of its role in the Liberation War.

The Jamaat remained active despite losing its registration and being barred from elections due to court rulings. The party was allegedly involved in the recent violence surrounding the protests of the quota reform movement, which the government has cited as a reason for the ban, the report added.

Violence gripped Bangladesh for almost the entire of July when the protests that had started in universities and colleges earlier this month, quickly turned into a widespread agitation against Prime Minister Hasina and her government's policies.

The government called in the Army to quell protests against job quotas after the unrest left at least 150 dead and several thousand people, including policemen, wounded and major government installations damaged. Law Minister Anisul Huq said on Tuesday the ban is being imposed because of the recent violence associated with the quota reform movement and will be enacted through an executive order.

Xi for smart system to boost border defence

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for greater use of technology and the deployment of a "smart system" for border defence to meet "new opportunities and challenges", amidst Beijing's unresolved land and maritime territorial disputes with its neighbours.

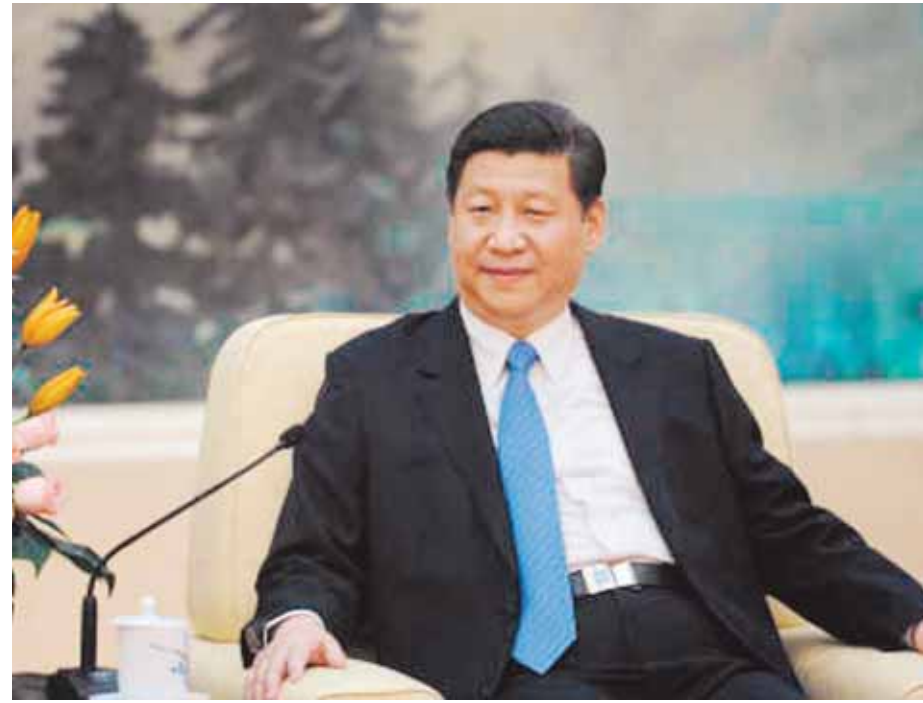
The instructions were made during a group study session on Tuesday attended by the Communist Party's 24-member Politburo, its top policymaking body.

Xi highlighted the need to "strengthen technological empowerment" in border defence, "enhance the development of new methods and conditions for border, maritime, and air defence, and build a comprehensive and smart management and control system," Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Thursday.

This aligns with Xi's repeated calls to improve the use of advanced technology in the armed forces to meet modernisation goals by 2027 and achieve the goal of building a world-class military by 2050.

Tuesday's meeting lacked details about what the "smart" systems would entail, the Post report said.

However, an article published last year in the PLA Daily, the official newspaper of the People's Liberation Army, said



technological advancements for border defence included modernised reconnaissance, surveillance, and early warning networks for efficient monitoring, as well as unmanned weapons incorporating AI.

Xi called for efforts to build a "strong, stable, and modern" border defence, as well as air and sea defence, to safeguard the country's national security and interests.

"As the world undergoes a cen-

so far held 21 rounds of Corps Commander-level talks to resolve the standoff. The two sides so far agreed to disengage from four points, namely the Galwan Valley, the Pangong Lake, Hot Springs, and Jianan Daban (Gogra) in eastern Ladakh.

India is pressing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to disengage from the Depsang and Demchok areas, maintaining that there cannot be the

restoration of normalcy in its relations with China as long as the state of the borders remains abnormal.

On Wednesday, India and China held a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) in New Delhi.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two sides reviewed the current situation along the LAC with a view to finding an early resolution of the outstanding issues. In the South China Sea, China has ongoing territorial disputes with the Philippines, and in the East China Sea, it is at odds with Japan over the contested Diaoyu Islands, known in Japan as the Senkaku Islands. Xi called for strengthened "overall coordination" to secure the borders, according to state news agency Xinhua.

Xi said on Tuesday that managing China's border defence involved multiple military and civilian departments. He called for "combined" efforts by the military, police, civilians and local governments.

He praised the achievements of recent reforms in border defence management systems, force structure and national defence policies, adding that "a series of significant actions have been carried out to effectively safeguard our territorial sovereignty and maritime rights," the Post report said.

British journalist deported from Pak after seeking meeting with Imran Khan in jail

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A 73-year-old British-American author and journalist, who sought an interview with Pakistan's jailed former premier Imran Khan, has been deported after his tourist visa was revoked, a media report said on Thursday.

Charles Glass, an author, journalist, broadcaster, and publisher who specialises in the Middle East, was told by law enforcement agencies on Wednesday that his visa had been cancelled and he had five hours to leave the country, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Glass has served prominent media organisations such as Newsweek, ABC TV, and The Telegraph, among others, and currently works as a freelance journalist. He had been trying to secure a meeting with Khan. Sources told the paper that

Glass, who was recently spotted outside Adiala jail in Rawalpindi alongside Khan's sister Aleema, was at the residence of Islamabad-based senior journalist Zahid Hussain when they were visited by a large police contingent.

Around noon on Wednesday, a team led by an assistant superintendent of police (ASP) arrived, initially saying they wanted to meet the foreign journalist.

They then informed Glass that his visa had been cancelled. After arguing for nearly an hour, the ASP reportedly told the journalist he had to leave the country by 5 pm.

"Mr Glass wondered how he would secure a flight and said his luggage is still at [his lodgings]. The ASP offered to accompany him to the hotel to collect his luggage and informed him that there was a

flight to Abu Dhabi available at 4 pm, which he should take to leave the country. The ASP said he had a clear order to deport the journalist," the paper quoted sources as saying.

Sources said that Glass was initially taken to his lodgings to collect his luggage, and then deported to the Middle East. Shahzad Akbar, a former aide of ex-PM Imran Khan, also mentioned the incident on social media. "There are reports of the deportation of British journalist Charles Glass who was visiting Pakistan to see @ImranKhanPTI at Adiala prison," he wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Sources said that Glass had been trying to secure an interview with Khan, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, and it was possible that his tourist visa was cancelled because of this.

Rainfall breaks 44-year record in Lahore

Lahore (PTI): Monsoon rains on Thursday broke the 44-year record for maximum rainfall in a day for Lahore, flooding streets, homes, and even public hospitals in the capital city of Pakistan's Punjab province, which also killed three persons, officials said. More rains are forecast for a few days and the authorities have warned of moderate to high flooding in Jhelum river at Mangla.

According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) spokesperson Mazhar Hussain, the 44-year record for maximum rainfall in a day during monsoon was broken on Thursday with maximum rainfall — 337 millimetres — recorded at the Lahore airport area.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said, "Strong monsoon currents from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal are expected to

bring torrential rains to upper parts of the country from August 1 to 6, with intermittent breaks."

"Rain flooded streets, homes, and even public hospitals, disrupting electricity supply across Lahore. Around 300 feeders have tripped in the city. Three people were killed in rain-related incidents in the city," officials said.

Flight operations in Lahore too were suspended for several hours due to heavy rains. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed the officials concerned to remain in the field 24/7 to drain out rainwater-inundated areas.

The PDMA said water levels in rivers, dams and streams are rising due to the monsoon rains. "Moderate to high-level flooding in the river Jhelum at Mangla from August 1 to 4 can be witnessed," it said.

China sanctions US lawmaker for 'interference' in domestic affairs

AP ■ BANGKOK

China has sanctioned a United States lawmaker for "frequently interfering" in China's domestic affairs, in its latest effort to express displeasure with US politicians who have criticised China's policy and practice.

The sanction against Rep Jim McGovern, a Democratic congressman from Massachusetts, is symbolic, since the congressman has no assets in China or business dealings there. The sanction includes freezing his assets and properties in China, prohibiting any organization or individual in China from conducting transactions or working with him, and denying him and his family a visa to enter the country, according to a statement from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the social media platform X, McGovern called the sanctions "absurd" and said he would wear his "as a badge of honour."

"If (Chinese) leaders don't like it when people speak out against their horrific human rights record, maybe they should improve their horrific human rights record," McGovern wrote on X. "They can start by ending their oppression of Tibetans, ending their genocide in Xinjiang, and ending their crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong."

McGovern is the ranking member of the House Committee on Rules, and he co-chairs the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. He also is a member of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, which focuses on China's human rights record.

Beijing has previously sanctioned a number of US lawmakers, former Trump administration officials, and companies. It sanctioned Rep. Michael McCaul, also chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and former Rep. Michael Gallagher over their support for Taiwan, a self-governed democracy that China claims as its own. In 2020 it sanctioned Rep Chris Smith and several US senators, including Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. McGovern and McCaul, along with two senators, last year introduced bicameral legislation calling for stronger US support for Tibet, a region in China where human rights groups have criticized authorities for the treatment of ethnic Tibetans. Congress approved the bill in June, and President Joe Biden signed it into law in July.

Russia launches biggest drone barrage in seven months

Kyiv (AP): Ukrainian forces shot down all 89 Shahed drones launched by Russia in a nighttime attack on the country, Ukraine's air force said Wednesday, in what was one of the largest drone barrages this year. No damage or injuries were immediately reported in the bombardment, which mostly targeted the region of Kyiv, the capital. Russia used the same number of Shahed drones in a Jan. 1 attack, an air force statement said. Both Ukraine and Russia have relied extensively on explosive drones during the war and have scrambled to come up with more countermeasures. The Russian drones are being shot down by Ukraine's Soviet-era aircraft, according to Anatolii Khrapchynskyi, an aviation expert in Kyiv. "The air force is using electronic jamming against the drones' GPS which forces the drones to fly at a higher altitude, which then makes it easier for Ukrainian aircraft to strike them down," he told The Associated Press.



In this photo released by the Telegram channel of the head of Nizhny Tagil Vladislav Pinyavov on Thursday, August 1, 2024, Russian Emergency Ministry workers are seen near a multi-storey building partially collapsed presumably due to gas explosion in Nizhny Tagil, 1400km (870mi) east from Moscow, Sverdlovsk region, Russia. Three people have reportedly been rescued from under the rubble, information about the victims is being clarified AP/PTI

Singapore Airlines resumes standard inflight services

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore Airlines (SIA) on Thursday resumed its standard in-flight service procedures following adjustments made in the wake of the inflight turbulence incident in May that hit flight SQ321 badly, leaving one passenger dead and several others injured.

The airline had stopped serving meals when the seatbelt sign was turned on as part of a more cautious approach after the incident during the London-Singapore flight on May 21.

"SIA flights will end its safety time-out and revert to standard in-flight service procedures from Aug 1, 2024, 0001hrs, Singapore time," said an SIA spokesperson in a statement on Thursday. SIA's pilots will continue to decide to either sus-

pend or continue with the inflight service when the seat belt sign is switched on, depending on their assessment of weather and operational conditions, the spokesperson added.

Hot beverages, including soup, will not be served when the seat belt sign is on.

Shortly after the SQ321 incident, SIA tightened its in-flight turbulence response procedures as a precautionary measure. The safety time-out implemented was to allow the airline time to "thoroughly review" its turbulence management protocols, SIA said in its statement.

"We have verified that SIA's turbulence management protocols are in line with the industry's best practices and safety protocols," said SIA. "To reinforce these procedures among our staff, all our pilots and cabin

crew have undergone additional refresher courses over the last four weeks."

The courses covered topics such as recognising and handling risks associated with turbulence, assisting passengers during such instances and how to maintain safety throughout the flight. The airline has also introduced periodic reminders to its passengers via its in-flight entertainment system screens to reinforce the importance of keeping seat belts fastened while seated. "Customers should always follow the instructions of our pilots and cabin crew, and keep their seat belts fastened while seated at all times," the Channel News Asia quoted the spokesperson as saying. Safety of passengers and staff remains SIA's top priority, said the airline.

UK family docs vote to limit services to patients in row over funding

London (AP): Family doctors in England have voted to limit the number of patients they see and refuse extra work to protest a "broken" funding model, their union said on Thursday. The British Medical Association said 98.3 per cent of the 8,500 general practitioners who voted backed the work-to-rule action, which falls just short of a strike.

The open-ended action is due to start immediately.

The state-funded National Health Service said doctors' offices would remain open and the impact would vary from place to place. The union described the collective action as "an act of desperation." It said a new contract between doctors and the government, which will see services given a 1.9 per cent funding increase for 2024-25.

Police fire tear gas as protests break out in Nigeria

Abuja (Nigeria): Thousands of mostly young people poured onto the streets across Nigeria on Thursday as they protested against the country's worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation. Security forces fired tear gas to disperse protesters in several places.

In Abuja, where a court granted an order late Wednesday to restrict the protest to a stadium, Nigerian police officers were seen firing tear gas to disperse a crowd of protesters that gathered a few kilometers (miles) from the Presidential Villa.

The police also fired tear gas at protesters in Bauchi and Borno states in the conflict-battered

northeast. It was not immediately clear if security forces made any arrests.

Nigeria's public officials, frequently accused of corruption, are among the best paid in Africa, a stark contrast in a country that, despite being one of the continent's top oil producers, also has some of the world's poorest and hungriest people.

Roads were blocked in parts of the country by either placard-carrying protesters or armed security forces, who were deployed overnight after days of mobilization for protests against the government of Nigerian President Bola Tinubu. Some

groups also staged protests in support of the Nigerian leader. Rights groups and activists had raised concerns about a possible clampdown on the protests. Comments in recent days suggest "a troubling readiness to stifle dissent, heightening fears of a violent crackdown," the international rights group Human Rights Watch said.

Many businesses across the country were also shut on Thursday amid fears the protests could be a replay of the deadly 2020 demonstrations against police brutality in the West African nation — or a wave of violence similar to last month's protests in Kenya,

where a tax hike led to chaos in the capital, Nairobi. Though originally planned for 10 days, Omoyele Sowore, a former presidential aspirant and one of the protest organizers, said they won't back down until their demands are met.

The protesters said they are also aggrieved over the country's deadly security crises in the conflict-battered north, which Tinubu had promised to end when he was campaigning for president. Fourteen months into office, the country's security and economic crises have persisted, and even worsened in some instances, official statistics show. AP

S Korea offers humanitarian aid to flood-affected North

AP ■ SEOUL

South Korea on Thursday offered to send aid supplies to North Korea to help the country recover from heavy rains and floods that submerged thousands of homes and huge swaths of farmland. It's unclear whether North Korea would accept South Korea's proposal for help. Animosity between the warring rivals is at its highest in years over the North's growing nuclear ambitions and the South's expansion of combined military exercises with the United States and Japan to counter the North's threats.

South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said the South was willing to swiftly provide supplies to address the "humanitarian difficulties"

facing North Korean residents following the recent storms. The ministry in a statement urged North Korea's Red Cross to promptly respond to its calls for discussions to determine the types and amounts of South Korean supplies and how to deliver them.

North Korea didn't immediately respond to the South's offer.

North Korean state media said Wednesday that recent heavy rains left 4,100 houses, 7,410 acres of agricultural fields and numerous other public buildings, structures, roads and railways flooded in the northwestern city of Sinuiju and the neighboring town of Uiju.

The North has not reported details about casualties.

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E-Tender (Short Term) Enq. No. 539/P-2/EMPW-12715 Dated 05.07.2024
Dy. Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Purchase Cell-2) GGSSTP, Rupnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2024_POWER_124154_1 for Repair/Overhauling including replacement of spares O2 no. Transmission Assemblies of Sr. No. 384A94 and Sr. no. 2523B13 of BEML make Bulldozer Model 8D-155 as per tender specifications.
For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 29.07.2024 onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> RTP-70/24

76155/12/3213/2023/36278 Dated CHD :- 8/1/2024

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NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that 23rd Annual Representative General Body Meeting (RGB) of National Yuva Cooperative Society Limited will be held on 25th August, 2024 at 10:00 am at National Cooperative Union of India, 3, August Kranti Marg, New Delhi - 110016.

All the Members of the RGB and Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies are requested to participate in the meeting.

Detailed agenda of the meeting can be viewed in the website: www.nycsindia.com
Date: 02nd August 2024
Place: New Delhi
Prakash Chandra Sahu
President, NYCS Ltd.

Sensex rises for 5th day

Nifty scales historic 25K mount on US Fed rate cut hopes

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex advanced 126 points to close at an all-time high while broader Nifty scaled the historic 25,000 mount for the first time in a volatile trade on Thursday following gains in banking and oil shares as the US Federal Reserve hinted at a rate cut by September.

Extending its winning run to the fifth day in a row amid weak global trends, the 30-share Sensex climbed 126.21 points or 0.15 per cent to settle at a new lifetime high of 81,867.55. The index opened higher and rallied 388.15 points, or 0.47 per cent, to hit an all-time intra-day high of 82,129.49 in the morning session. The NSE Nifty rose 59.75 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 25,010.90. Intraday, it scaled the record 25,000 level for the first time, rising 127.15 points, or 0.50 per cent, to 25,078.30. From the Sensex stocks, Power Grid, NTPC, HDFC Bank, Nestle India, Adani Ports and



Special Economic Zone, Maruti Suzuki India and Reliance Industries were the major gainers. In contrast, Mahindra and Mahindra, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Motors were the laggards. "The benchmarks started positive taking cues from the global market following the Fed Chair's indication that a rate cut might be considered at the September meeting due to easing inflationary pressures.

"However, the broader market closed on a negative bias due to escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East leading to rising crude oil prices," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said. The BSE smallcap gauge fell 0.70 per cent and MidCap by 0.80 per cent in the broader market. During the day, BSE MidCap hit its all-time high level. Among the indices, utilities zoomed by 2.04 per cent, power by 0.86 per cent, energy by 0.80 per cent, oil &

gas by 0.59 per cent and metal by 0.35 per cent. Realty, capital goods, industrials, auto, telecommunication, and consumer discretionary were among the laggards. "Indian equity indices rose for the fifth consecutive session. Indian markets opened higher on the back of positive cues from US markets where FOMC Chair Jerome Powell said a cut as early as September was a possibility," Devarsh Vakil, Deputy Head Retail Research of HDFC Securities, said. Maruti Suzuki India shares settled 1 per cent higher after the homegrown automobile major reported a 47 per cent jump in net profit to Rs 3,650 crore for the June quarter. During the day, the stock hit a 52-week high on the bourse. Shares of Omx declined 5 per cent -- its lower circuit limit -- in the second straight day following Sebi restrictions on the realty firm, its Chairman, the MD, and three others from the securities market for two years for misrepresenting the company's financials.

Strategic reforms needed to enhance India's appeal to global investors, attract FDI: GTRI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Strategic reforms are needed to enhance India's appeal to global investors as despite having huge potential, FDI data shows that the country has not fully capitalised on its opportunities, think tank GTRI said on Thursday. Suggesting a four-step plan, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that measures which can help India position itself as a leading choice for foreign investors include reducing cost disadvantages for companies relocating to India, improving the Ease of Doing Business throughout the business lifecycle, and establishing a framework for evaluating investment proposals. India attracted USD 44.4 billion in FDI (foreign direct investment) in FY2024, which is only 1.1 per cent of its GDP. The country lagged significantly behind countries like China (USD 189.1 billion), Brazil (USD 86.1 billion), Australia (USD 61.6 billion), and Canada (USD 52.6



Billion) as noted in the World Development Report 2023, it said. It suggested that India must offer a more competitive cost structure to attract businesses shifting from China or considering alternative production locations. For this, India needs to address the four cost-related components - labour, rate material, energy and financial costs. "In India, raw material costs are higher for non-traditional productions due to import dependence and high tariffs. China benefits from lower

costs due to large-scale local production and efficient supply chains, while Vietnam offers competitive costs with low or zero tariffs on imports," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said. He said that the financial costs in India are the highest, with lending rates around 9-10 per cent, while China enjoys lower interest rates at 4-5 per cent, and Vietnam's rates are moderate at 7-8 per cent. "India needs to address these costs and strive to be the most cost-effective option," Srivastava added.

To further improve the ease of doing business, the GTRI suggested the identification of priority sectors, particularly those where India's manufacturing and export capabilities are currently weak, such as Electronics, computers, telecom, precision equipment, and factory machinery. Secondly, invite top global firms as anchor manufacturers. These firms can drive technological innovation and improve productivity across sectors. "Additionally, there is a need to ensure quick factory-to-ship movement. Improving logistics through dedicated freight corridors and strategically locating industrial zones near ports will streamline port and customs processes, facilitating faster shipments," it added. Recommending to create a framework for evaluating investment proposals, it said investments involving technology transfer must be assessed for their potential to enhance local technological capabilities, especially in high-tech areas where India aims to close gaps.

Domestic travel operators to see 15-17% revenue growth this fiscal: Crisil Ratings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rising domestic tourism and increasing propensity to travel overseas will expand the revenue of India's tour and travel operators by 15-17 per cent this fiscal, Crisil Ratings said on Thursday. Factors like improving infrastructure, rising disposable incomes, a behavioural shift in travel patterns, and the government's increasing focus on boosting domestic tourism will further support the sector's revenue growth. The assessment was based on an analysis of the country's four major travel operators, who account for about 60 per cent of the sector's revenue.

"The credit profiles of travel operators, too, are expected to remain healthy, supported by strong balance sheets and steady operating margins of 6.5-7 per cent, in line with last fiscal, resulting in sizeable cash flows and continuing low reliance on debt," Crisil Ratings stated. In the domestic tourism market, growth is being fuelled by 'micro holidays' (e.g., quick getaways or staycations over long weekends), growing spiritual tourism, and better infrastructure (improved last-mile connectivity) facilitating travel to newer destinations. An increase in inbound travel (foreign tourist arrivals) to pre-pandemic levels and high demand from the corporate and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) segments are also supporting domestic travel, the



rating agency said. For overseas leisure travel, growth is being led by higher disposable incomes, visa-free facilities from 37 countries, simplified visa processes, including visa-on-arrival and e-visa facilities, among others, and easing visa-related challenges related to long-haul destinations. In addition, attractive travel packages and increased focus of Indian airlines on new destinations in southeast Asia and central Asia are spurring international trips, driving outbound travel to a record high this calendar year, it said. Poonam Upadhyay, Director at CRISIL

Ratings Ltd, observed that the trend of 'revenge travel' seen after the pandemic has evolved into 'regularised travel' in recent years with a significant shift towards shorter and frequent vacations, for both domestic and overseas trips. "Moreover, growing middle-class aspirations, rising urbanisation, affordable packages, steadily increasing income levels, and the government's focus on boosting Indian tourism will maintain the strong momentum in the tour and travel sector. This will, in turn, ensure healthy double-digit revenue growth for travel operators this fiscal as well," Upadhyay stated.

Sebi fines JM Financial Asset Management, former CEO, others for flouting rules

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets watchdog Sebi has imposed penalty totalling Rs 2 crore on seven entities, including JM Financial Asset Management Ltd, its trustee and its former CEO Bhanu Katoch, for flouting regulatory norms. The fine needs to be paid within 45 days, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its order. Individually, a fine of Rs 25 lakh was levied on JM Financial Asset Management, Rs 10 lakh on JM Financial Trustee Company, Rs 1.1 crore on Bhanu Katoch, Rs 17 lakh on his mother Swarn Lata Katoch and Rs 8 lakh on his wife Sharika Kher. Additionally, the regulator slapped a fine of Rs 22 lakh on Deepen Doshi, who was head of institutional sales at JM Financial Asset Management during the violation, and Rs 9 lakh on his mother Aruna Doshi. In its order, Sebi noted that these five persons invested in certain JM Financial Mutual Fund schemes, holding defaulted Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL) securities before the valuation change, using



unpublished information. This was considered unfair trading. Additionally, their investments were made before informing unit holders, violating Sebi regulations and the AMC's policy on employee investments. Through this act, these five persons made a notional gain of over Rs 1 crore collectively. "The Notice Nos. 1 (Bhanu Katoch) and 4 held (Deepen Doshi) important positions as Chief Executive Officer and Head of Institutional Sales, respectively, during the examination period. By virtue of their positions, they were privy to non-public material information regarding the impending sale of defaulted securities of DHFL.

"However, Notice Nos. 1 and 4 by putting their interests over the interests of unitholders, have misused their positions and taken undue benefits out of the same," Sebi said in its 86-page order passed on Wednesday. Further, the regulator said that JM Financial Asset Management and JM Financial Trustee Company were responsible for promptly and accurately informing all unit holders about the schemes' general affairs, including the reasons for the NAV increase, but failed to do so in a timely manner. Sebi said that JM Financial Asset Management and JM Financial Trustee Company cannot abdicate their

responsibility of disclosing to the investors at large by merely averring that the sale of defaulted securities had a positive impact on the net asset value (NAV). "No doubt Notice Nos. 6 (JM Financial Asset Management) and 7 (JM Financial Trustee Company) had disclosed relevant information in the annual report for FY 2020-21 regarding the sale of defaulted securities, but the fact remains that the said annual report was issued on April 10, 2021, i.e. Almost nine months after the sale of defaulted securities," Sebi added. The order came after Sebi received a news article in July 2020, reporting an unusual 19.9 per cent increase in the Net Asset Value (NAV) of JM Low Duration Fund and other debt funds. This jump was mainly due to the sale of defaulted securities from DHFL, which had matured in 2019. A Sebi circular dated June 23, 2020, allowed transactions in such matured downgraded securities, enabling the sale. Since these securities had a 'Nil' valuation, their sale value was entirely considered a gain, causing the NAV to rise.



Nasscom bats for Infosys, says ₹32k cr GST notice shows lack of understanding of industry model

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Apex IT association Nasscom on Thursday came out in support of Infosys -- which is facing a Rs 32,403 crore GST notice, saying that the move reflected a lack of understanding of the industry's operating model. Flagging the issue of the applicability of GST through the reverse charge mechanism (RCM), Nasscom rued that multiple companies are facing avoidable litigation, uncertainty, and concerns from investors and customers. "Recent media reports of a GST demand of over Rs 320 billion (Rs 32,403 crore) reflects a lack of understanding of the industry's operating model," Nasscom said in a statement, without naming Infosys. The leading industry body asserted that it is crucial that compliance obligations are not subject to multiple interpretations. Accelerating services exports is key to India's ambition of 'Viksit Bharat' and for attracting global tech investment to India, it added.

"This requires a supportive policy environment and ease of doing business. The government circulars issued based on recommendations of the GST Council must be honoured in enforcement mechanisms so that notices do not create uncertainty and negatively impact perceptions on India's ease of doing business," it said. GST authorities have slapped a Rs 32,403 crore notice on Infosys for services availed by the company from its overseas branches for five years starting in 2017. Infosys has called the notice a 'pre-show cause' notice and said that it believes the GST is not applicable to these expenses. The Bengaluru-headquartered IT firm on Wednesday said Karnataka State GST authorities have issued a pre-show cause notice for payment of GST of Rs 32,403 crore for the period July 2017 to March 2022 towards the expenses incurred by overseas branch offices of Infosys Limited and added that the company has responded to the pre-show cause notice.

Domestic food market expected to grow at 47% till 2027: Official

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The domestic food market was expected to grow by over 47 per cent between 2022 and 2027 and expected to touch USD 1,274 billion, a top industry official said. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Foodpro Expo 2024 Chairman B Thiagarajan said the food processing sector was growing at an average annual growth rate of 5.35 per cent between 2015-16 to 2022-23. "In 2022-23, the sector accounted for 7.66 per cent of the GVA (Gross Value Added) in manufacturing at 2011-12 prices," Thiagarajan, also the Managing Director of air-conditioners and commercial refrigerators maker Blue Star Ltd said in a press release on Thursday. "In terms of employment, the sector employs almost 2 million workers in nearly 41,500 registered units. With a market size of USD 866 billion in 2022, the food industry will play a vital role in the economy growth. CII Tamil Nadu Chairman Srivats Ram said currently India is the largest producer of milk, pulses, banana, mango, pomegranate, papaya, lemon, non-food crops like cotton and jute. During 2023-24, India produced 304.4 million tonnes of cereals, 296 million tonnes of pulses, 351.9 million tonnes of horticulture, 230.6 million tonne of milk and 138.4 billion eggs, Ram also the Managing Director of steel wheels manufacturer Wheels India Ltd said.

India's manufacturing sector growth eases slightly in July

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector growth eased slightly in July, on softer increases in new orders and output, while cost pressures and demand strength led to the steepest increase in selling prices since October 2013, a monthly survey said on Thursday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) moderated slightly from 58.3 in June to 58.1 in July. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "India's headline manufacturing PMI showed a marginal slowdown in the pace of expansion in July, but with most components remaining at robust levels, the small drop is no cause for concern," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC, said. Despite slowing since June, Indian manufacturers reported a substantial increase in new work intakes. There were also reports of strengthening demand from clients based in Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East, Indian manufacturers experienced a robust increase in international sales during July.

The overall rate of expansion was marked and the second-strongest in over 13 years, the survey said. On the price front, buoyant demand also exerted pressure on prices. Input costs rose at one of the quickest rates in nearly two years, which contributed to the steepest increase in selling prices since October 2013. Indian manufacturers reported having paid more for coal, leather, packaging, paper, rubber and steel, as per the survey. "The continuous increase in the output price index, driven by input and labour cost pressure, may signal further inflationary pressure in the economy," Bhandari noted. The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent in the June meeting as sticky food inflation continues to keep retail inflation high. The next monetary policy announcement is scheduled for August 8. Going ahead, the survey further noted that the overall level of positive sentiment towards the year-ahead outlook for production was broadly unchanged since June. Growth is expected to be supported by marketing efforts and new client enquiries, it said.

Chandrayaan-3 success encouraged startups to tap space sector: Nambi

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The historic success of ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 mission to the Moon has captured the attention of several startups to tap the Indian space sector, said former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan. Tamil Nadu Minister for Industries TRB Rajaa said the achievements of space scientists and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) should be celebrated. Rajaa and former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan took part in the launch of space technology accelerator 'Vaanam' (Tamil word meaning sky) backed by its co-founders Sameer Bharat Ram and Hariharan Vedamurthy, on Wednesday. The space tech aims to nurture startups in the space sector by offering its expertise including seed fundings among others. "We are evaluating about 6 startups this year (to offer its expertise)," Ram said. According to him, the Indian space economy pegged at USD 13 billion is expected to touch USD 44 billion in 10 years. Ram said Nambi Narayanan and actor Madhavan, who played the role of Narayanan himself, in the multilingual film 'Rocketry', have been inducted into the Board of Vaanam Space Tech accelerator. Narayanan in a 'Fireside Chat' organised at the event observed that though there are about 189 startups in space



technology, 'majority' of them were engaged in what ISRO did 50 years ago. "Why do you want to do something that ISRO did 50 years ago? You need to do what ISRO needs today and in that you will be able to compete globally, particularly with other countries," he said. Narayanan expressed his long-term desire to set up an Asia Aeronautics Space Agency (AASA) comprising Asian countries, in line with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States. "You may induct countries like Maldives, Myanmar if they are interested (to set up the Asian Space Agency)" he said. Welcoming Narayanan's view, Rajaa remarked that the achievements of ISRO and space scientists should be celebrated and showcased to the world. "We need to celebrate these victories, instead of showcasing it as just one event. Achievements of ISRO and space scientists like Narayanan should be told (to the world)" he said.

Chennai holds third position in the presence of startups engaged in the space sector while the majority of such startups were based out of Bengaluru, he added. Narayanan said academic institutions should forge a partnership with space agencies like ISRO to foster education on space technology to students. He said it was the Princeton university that forged a partnership with NASA to tap the space sector allowing students to explore the opportunities in space tech. "We need to tell kids, schools about space technology. It should be taken into the curriculum," he said and opined that a space exploration facility be set up to encourage kids. "Maybe, the space exploration facility can accommodate about 100 students who will get an opportunity to see and feel how it will be in space and how other planets look from Earth. It may be like a simulation. This will encourage them," Narayanan said.



GEETA CHANDRAN'S ARTISTIC LEGACY

Padma Shri awardee **GEETA CHANDRAN**, honored with the **NRITYA CHOODAMANI**, celebrates 50 years of transformative work in Bharatanatyam, underscoring her lasting impact on classical dance and cultural dialogue, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Congratulations on being conferred the **NRITYA CHOODAMANI** title. Reflecting on your 50-year journey in Bharatanatyam, how do you perceive this honour in the context of your career and contributions to classical dance?

Every award is a reminder that the work must continue. But, frankly, after a while, the awards truly cease to matter. One's perspective changes. What is truly exciting is that the body and the mind are so aligned that one can dance only for oneself. That is the most exciting frontier. Everything else feels superficial.

You have received numerous prestigious awards over your career, including the Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. How does the NRITYA CHOODAMANI title compare to these other honours in terms of its significance to you?

The Krishna Gana Sabha is an extremely prestigious dance forum in Chennai. An honour from that Sabha is very significant. In fact, for a Bharatanatyam dancer who has crafted my dance journey completely outside Chennai considered the mecca of Bharatanatyam, this is a nod from that citadel. So, I value it.

Your journey in Bharatanatyam began 50 years ago with your arangetram. Can you share some of the most pivotal moments and challenges you faced during these five decades?

Dance is probably the most fragile of artistic pursuits. That is because its instrument is the body and to keep that tuned constantly in pitch condition is an extremely arduous and daily task. Taming the body constantly for fifty years has been challenge Number 1. The next challenge has been to add layers to the knowledge gained from some of the most wonderful Gurus of those decades. And finally, the search for one's own artistic voice and to keep it sane without compromises has been a wonderful path of self-realization.

As the Founder-President of NATYA VRIKSHA, you have nurtured many young artists. How has your philosophy of holistic dance education evolved over the years and what core values do you emphasise in your teachings?

Dance as movement is only a fraction of my vision of dance. At Natya Vriksha, I have experimented with Bharatanatyam as a 'force multiplier' for the widest range of classical dance



issues that have engaged my focus: exploring linkages between body and mind; forging relationships between solo dancing, group dancing and choreography; actualising the connects between the artist and society; and using dance as a medium for expressing abstract notions of Joy, Beauty, Values, Aspirations, Mythology and Spirituality.

NATYA VRIKSHA's vision statement seeks to probe the continuing relevance of classical tradition in a world of changing values. It showcases the aesthetics of Bharatanatyam and its history, how the tenets of the dance can be employed as a means of communicating issues of contemporary concern, even while exploring linkages between history and continuity, between external body and internal mind-space, between yesterday and tomorrow, between artist and audience.....between roots and wings.

You are celebrated for your dynamic performances that promote societal dialogue and inclusivity. Could you elaborate on how you choose themes and choreograph pieces that transcend linguistic and cultural barriers?

My engagement with contemporary issues led me to create a unique

format which I call performance-dialogue through which I raise contemporary issues through my classical performances. Previous works like **HER VOICE** and **IMAGINING PEACE** raised issues of the meaninglessness of violence. **KAIKEYI** spoke about stigma and villainization. **MYTHOLOGIES RETOLD** addressed the issue of female foeticide. **ANEKANTA** highlighted the Indian Constitution's vision of an inclusive society. And **GANDHI: WARP AND WEFT** was a reminder of Gandhian values and choices. **SIMHIKA: DAUGHTER OF THE FOREST** highlighted the need for justice and rights for forest tribals. **JAYATU BHARATAM** celebrated 75 years of India's independence.

All these choreographies have articulated my conviction that dance can be a vehicle to build social bridges and erase social stigma, amplify gender issues and raise awareness on making sustainable environmental choices. I am currently absorbed with creating a new work that looks at new dimensions of women and conflict.

Preserving and promoting Bharatanatyam is a significant part of your legacy. What specific initiatives or projects have you

championed to ensure the art form's relevance and vibrancy in today's world?

At **NATYA VRIKSHA**, I aim to make youth aware of the immense potential of Bharatanatyam to become a live voyage of learning; make them comprehend the complex ; inter-linkages between the classical dance tradition and its strict grammar with other disciplines: Philosophy, Ritual, Religion, Myths, Ancient texts, Poetry, Literature, Art (Painting and Sculpture), Cultural Studies, Yoga, Handicrafts & Handlooms and Beauty & Aesthetics.

Towards this end, I have evolved a holistic method of transmitting classical dance; an approach that encompasses training students both in dance (theory and practice) and dance aesthetics. They are also made aware of the related fields of music, aharya (costuming & make-up), stage design and sound & light technologies. The aim is to use Bharatanatyam as a tool to wider knowledge, spiritual and physical empowerment

Balancing multiple roles as a dancer, choreographer, Carnatic vocalist and media personality is no small feat. How do you integrate these diverse aspects of your artistic identity into a cohesive whole?

There is no master plan; just efficient management of time to do all these things that I truly enjoy and that imbue my being with meaning. **Curating dance at the Serendipity Arts Festival must be a unique experience. How has this role influenced your perspective on contemporary and traditional art forms and how do you see them converging?**

Serendipity has made me focus on young audiences and their expectations of performance. And what joy it is to see that GenZZZ can equally engage and enjoy the pristine classical and the contemporary and also the experimental. Curating that dizzy mix has brought me in touch with artists from across the spectrum all over India, South Asia and beyond.

What legacy do you hope to leave behind in the world of Bharatanatyam and classical dance, both through your performances and your work with students and the broader community?

I don't yearn for any legacy. The only legacy is constant sweat. If you can do that every single day of your life, you can become a dancer. Everyone else remains an amateur.

A New Path to Inspire

ADAH SHARMA makes her singing debut with a powerful rendition of the **Shiv Tandav Stotram**, showcasing a profound connection to both devotion and artistic expression. In a conversation with **TEAM VIVA**, Sharma reveals her intent to inspire others through her music.



Adah, your recent singing debut with the **Shiv Tandav Stotram** has captivated many. What inspired you to choose the **Shiv Tandav Stotram** for your singing debut?

As an actor I meet so many people who say they saw me do something and got inspired to do it themselves. So I thought this would be nice to inspire people. Also we made this version a version that has a lot of beats so you feel energised when you listen to it .

Can you describe the emotions you felt while chanting the Shiv Tandav Stotram live in a temple and how that experience influenced your recorded performance?

I had shared a version during the lockdown which I sang live in my home and then in a temple last year. Whenever I went for any public appearances people would ask me to chant it. So I thought it would be nice to do a studio recorded version. Chanting the **Shiv tandav** makes me feel focused, strong , energetic and the empowered feeling that all evil will be destroyed.

The video of your live chanting at an event went viral and received widespread acclaim and is trending on instagram since the release. How did that response impact you and did it motivate you to pursue more singing opportunities?

I did this especially for the audience so them enjoying it feels very special. I sing anyway, always. There's always music going on in my head. I've got singing offers before but I thought the first one should be something from me directly to the audience So I decided to release it on my own YouTube channel.

How do you balance your acting career with your newfound interest in singing and do you have plans to explore more musical projects in the future?

I like doing multiple things I enjoy. But I don't know how to plan for the future. I enjoy living in the present and working on becoming a better actor, dancer , singer everyday. I believe opportunities will come if they are meant to.

What was the most challenging part of performing the Shiv Tandav Stotram and how did you overcome those challenges?

For the video I wanted to stand in the middle

of the ocean on a rock. I practice meditation on one foot everyday to increase focus. On the day we decided to shoot it was very sunny and breezy and hot. So that was tough. But somehow the strength just came to push through and I didn't feel like it was a challenge.

How did you approach the task of capturing the essence and energy of the Shiv Tandav Stotram in both your live and recorded performances.

With honesty always, as I do everything in life. I don't know any other way.

Given the positive reception of your live chanting performance, do you plan to incorporate more live chanting or musical elements into your public appearances?

I haven't actually planned anything. We thought we would do a launch but I'm shooting for two big projects and the role in one of them I think is the toughest I've played. So even on days off in preparation. We just put the song out on YouTube and Instagram , no ads, no publicity. But in today's time I think the audience is the best PR.

What message or feeling do you hope to convey to your audience through your rendition of the Shiv Tandav Stotram and how do you feel it aligns with your overall artistic expression?

I am one of those very fortunate actors, I get the opportunity to play different roles because the audience accepts me in them. Just after the Kerala story where I played an innocent college girl I played an evil bar dancer in **Sunflower** season 2 and then I did **Bastar** where I was a soldier fighting for my country. My upcoming projects also have me being different people. On social media I am myself which is so different from all these characters . The audience doesn't allow me to get typecast. I'm very very lucky.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN TWO ARTISTIC VISIONS

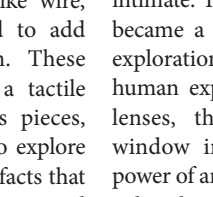
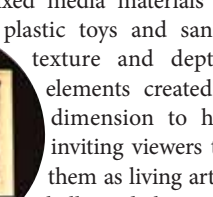
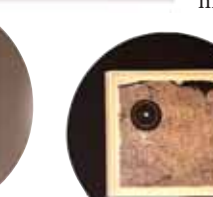
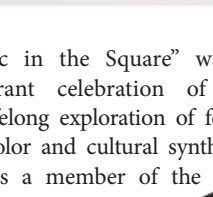
Experience the artistic vision and creative journey of Amitava and Mohan Samant. Their exhibitions remind us that art goes beyond just being a collection of works, it becomes a dialogue between the past, present and future, writes **TEAM VIVA**

The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in New Delhi has hosted two remarkable exhibitions that explore the creative journeys of Amitava and Mohan Samant. These exhibitions, titled "If We Knew the Point" and "Magic in the Square," provided a fascinating look into the world of Indian modern art through the eyes of two artists whose works are both unique and deeply interconnected. The museum presented over 150 works by Amitava and a diverse range of pieces by Mohan Samant, showcasing how each artist has contributed to shaping contemporary Indian art.

Amitava's "If We Knew the Point" was an introspective exploration of his internal landscape, brought to life through a variety of mediums and techniques. The exhibition title itself hinted at a philosophical journey, with the "point" referring to the elusive meaning or direction in life that Amitava seeks through his art. The collection revealed Amitava's versatility and his deep

engagement with materials, ranging from graphite, ink and watercolor to acrylics and burnt marks. His artworks resisted straightforward narratives, inviting viewers to interpret the complex themes and emotions embedded within each piece.

Central to Amitava's work was the color black, used not merely as a tone but as a gateway to deeper introspection. Black served as a canvas for exploring socio-political themes and reflected the tumultuous realities of contemporary society. In works like the "Heads" series, dense, totemic figures emerged from this blackness, their intricate patterns hinting at underlying chaos. Amitava's approach struck a balance between control and spontaneity, as he layered materials to create compositions that were



visually striking and intellectually engaging. Each piece invited viewers to lose themselves in the textures and layers, emphasising that art is more about experiencing than simply understanding. On the other hand, Mohan Samant's

"Magic in the Square" was a vibrant celebration of his lifelong exploration of form, color and cultural synthesis. As a member of the Progressive

Artists Group, Samant embodied a fearless spirit of innovation that cut across traditional boundaries. His art reflected a harmonious blend of Eastern and Western influences, creating a unique visual language that defied categorisation.

Samant's works often drew from a wide array of cultural motifs, incorporating elements from Indian mythology, Egyptian hieroglyphs and Western modernist techniques. Samant's fascination with mythological and ancient themes was evident in his work, where the past and present converged to create symbols and narratives. His art was not just a visual experience but a sensory one, incorporating mixed media materials like wire, plastic toys and sand to add texture and depth. These elements created a tactile dimension to his pieces, inviting viewers to explore them as living artifacts that challenged the conventional boundaries of painting and sculpture.

complexity, Samant's art celebrated cultural synthesis and exploration. Together, these exhibitions provided a holistic view of the diverse trajectories of Indian art, highlighting the personal and cultural narratives that have shaped its evolution.

As viewers navigated these exhibitions, they were encouraged to reflect on their interpretations and connections, making the experience both profound and intimate. In this shared space, art became a journey - a continuous exploration of meaning and the human experience. Through their lenses, the museum offered a window into the transformative power of art and its ability to bridge cultural and personal divides. At the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, these two exhibitions reminded us that art is more than just a collection of works; it is a conversation between the past, present and future, a tribute to the enduring power of creativity and the human spirit.

Photo: Pankah Kumar



INDIANS DISAPPOINT IN 20KM RACE WALK AT OLYMPICS

PTI ■ PARIS
National record holder Priyanka Goswami finished a poor 41st in the women's 20km competition while Vikash Singh and Paramjeet Singh ended at lowly 30th and 37th positions respectively in the men's event as Indian race walkers produced a disappointing performance at the Paris Olympics here on Thursday.

The 28-year-old Priyanka, who has a personal best of 1:28:45, has been based in Australia since early this year after the Mission Olympic Cell approved her high-altitude training last December. Reigning Asian Games champion Yang Jiayu of China won gold with a time of 1:25:54 while world champion Maria Perez (1:26:19) of Spain and Commonwealth gold medalist Jemima Montag (1:26:25) of Australia took the silver and bronze respectively. The competitions were held under warm and humid conditions. When the women's event ended, the temperature rose to nearly 25 degree Celsius while humidity was more than 85 per cent

throughout. Athletics competition of the Paris Olympics began on Thursday. In the men's corresponding event, which started 30 minutes late due to rain, Vikash clocked 1 hour, 22 minutes and 36 seconds while Paramjeet crossed the finish line in 1:23:48sec in the race won by Brian Daniel Pintado (1:18:55) of Ecuador. Caio Bonfim (1:19:09) of Brazil and reigning world champion Alvaro Martin (1:19:11) of Spain took the silver and bronze medals respectively while Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Massimo Stano (1:19:12) of Italy was fourth. National record holder Akshdeep Singh pulled out

after the 6km mark and he was seen in discomfort, holding his abdomen while bending down forward. A team coach told PTI that Akshdeep was having fever for the last two days due to Urinary Tract Infection (UTI). "He was having fever from 30th onwards because of UTI. However, he recovered from fever yesterday," the coach said. India was among the countries which had three full quota of athletes in the men's event but all of them could not match their personal best. The best performance by an Indian in the Olympics was the 10th-place finish by KT Irfan in the 2012 London Games with a timing of 1:20:21.

Nikhat's Olympic campaign ends with shocking loss to China's Yu



PTI ■ PARIS

In one of the biggest upsets of the Olympic Games boxing competition, two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (50kg) bowed out after a 0-5 loss to Asian Games gold-medallist Wu Yu, completely outmaneuvered by the Chinese in a stunningly lopsided bout here on Thursday. Nikhat was unseeded for the Games as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which is holding the boxing competition, doesn't recognise the International Boxing Association (IBA), which conducts the world championship. One of India's strongest medal contenders, Nikhat was put under pressure by the top-seeded reigning flyweight (52kg) world champion in the opening round itself. Yu was quick off the blocks and

though Nikhat tried to counter-attack, she wasn't able to connect. The reason being, Yu's brilliant footwork, which allowed her to consistently switch her stance to avoid the blows. Trailing 1-4, Nikhat found a bit more success in the second round as she landed a few straight punches but Yu managed to connect some telling hooks on the Indian's face. Nikhat ended the round with a few body shots. Not much changed in the third round as Nikhat desperately tried to connect but continued to fail due to Yu's nimble movements. Despite this loss, Nikhat remains one of the most consistent Indian boxers, having won back-to-back gold medals at the world championships and the 2022 Commonwealth Games besides a bronze in the Asian Games last year.



Biggest, most diverse fleet in Olympic sailing gets ready to hit water

AP ■ MARSEILLE (FRANCE)

The biggest and most diverse fleet of the 2024 Olympics' sailing events, the one-person dinghy, is scheduled to hit the water Thursday in sweltering Marseille. The small, white-sailed boats - formerly known as lasers, now called ILCA 6 for women and ILCA 7 for men - go slower, sail deeper into the water and have a less spectacular design than many other vessels in the Olympic marina. But, to the sailors who race them, they are the purest form of the sport. "It's very pure and it's very close - you've got to work for every inch," said Matt Wearn, 28, of Australia. "You're not looking to win by a mile, you're looking to win by a meter." Wearn is seeking to defend the gold he won in the event in the Tokyo Games - and so is Anne-Marie Rindom of Denmark, 33, who in addition to gold from Tokyo has a bronze from Rio de Janeiro and first competed in the London Games in 2012. "It's all about the sailor in the boat," said Rindom, whose parents first took her sailing when she was two weeks old. She competed in her first regatta at age nine. In this class, boats are provided to Olympians only about a week before the Games, leveling the playing field. That makes consistently nailing the smallest tactical detail - an inch of advantage at the starting line, catching a sudden wave to surf ahead, balancing for the additional weight of branding stickers on the sail - the key to medal.

"All these little accuracies make a huge difference," said Micky Beckett, 29, of Britain. "Being on top of your mental game is absolutely everything." That's also because the boats are so versatile and "basically unsinkable," in Beckett's words, that they can - and do - sail in any weather, for hourlong regattas. Not that physical strength is negligible. In big swells, with spray coming straight at the athletes' bodies, races can be "quite battering, like being thrown into a washing machine and spat out the other side," Wearn said. So far in Marseille, the challenge has been the opposite: very low winds under a scorching sun, which can also be draining. The boats are relatively inexpensive to buy and transport, designed to fit the top of a car. So, they're the star of World Sailing's development program, which aims to support athletes from nations without long histories in Olympic sailing, from El Salvador to Fiji to Mozambique. "It's cool to see it's not always the same five nations," said Nethra Kumanan, 26, of India, who qualified for the Games in the ILCA 6 at the so-called last-chance regatta under the program. "We hope we can give them a fight." And a fight it is, because the event features almost twice as many boats as the other sailing categories - more than 80. "It's the hardest to win, it's very equal," said Tom Saunders, 32, of New Zealand, whose brother also was an Olympic sailor but in the two-person boats.

AP ■ PARIS

The U.S. Men's 3x3 basketball team fell to 0-2 in pool play in the Paris Olympics with a 19-17 loss to Poland Wednesday night. Jimmer Fredette cut the lead to 1 with about 90 seconds left before Michal Sokolowski made a free throw a few seconds later to extend the lead to 19-17. The U.S. Had a chance to tie it late, but Fredette's 2-point attempt came up short. Fredette, who was brought in to boost the team after the U.S. Failed to qualify for Tokyo, appeared to sustain an injury with about three minutes left. He looked to be in pain as he was tended to by a trainer but soon returned to the game. He did not speak to reporters after the game and a team spokesman said he was receiving treatment but did not provide any specifics on an injury. The U.S. Team remains confident despite the tough start to the Paris Games. "I don't think we're concerned," Kareem Maddox said. "We just know we have some adjustments to make." The U.S. Was down by 1 after

US men fall to 0-2 in 3x3 basketball pool play at Olympics with 19-17 loss to Poland

a basket by Canyon Barry with about six minutes left before Poland used a 6-1 run to make it 15-9 with four minutes to go. Poland was up by 5 with about 2 1/2 minutes to go when Barry made three free throws to cut the lead to 17-15. Barry shoots free throws underhanded like his father, NBA Hall of Famer Rick Barry. A basket by Adrian Bogucki pushed Poland's lead to 3 and Dylan Travis made a shot for the U.S. Before Fredette's last bucket got team within 18-17. Bogucki had seven points and five rebounds for Poland, which lost to France on Tuesday. Barry and Travis led the U.S. With six points each. Fredette, who is the only player with NBA experience in the 3x3 competition, added three. The U.S. Struggled from long-range, making just 2 of 15 attempts. "We're just not making shots,"



Barry said. "That's what it comes down to. We had a lot of good looks and they just didn't fall tonight." **FRANCE 21, LITHUANIA 19:** Timothy Vergiat scored eight points and his basket with three seconds remaining lifted France to a win over Lithuania and a 2-0 start in pool play. France led by 5 after two free

throws by Lucas Dussoulier with about two minutes left. Lithuania then scored the next five points, with the last three from Evaldas Dziaugys to tie it with less than a minute to play. Lithuania had the ball with 12 seconds left, but Gintautas Matulis turned it over to set up Vergiat's game-winner. Jules Rambaut had nine points with five rebounds for France, which beat Poland on Tuesday. Lithuania got seven points each from Aurelijus Pukelis and Dziaugys. **LATVIA 21, NETHERLANDS 12:** Karlis Lasmanis scored eight points to lead defending champion Latvia over the Netherlands. Nauris Miezijs added five points and six rebounds in the win after Latvia opened the tournament by beating Lithuania. Worthy de Jong made a basket followed by a free throw to get the Netherlands within 1 point with about four minutes to go. Latvia then scored the next nine points, with two 2-pointers by Lasmanis and one from Miezijs to extend the lead to 19-9. Arvin Slagter scored the first points for the Netherlands in more than two minutes on a 2-pointer after that and De Jong made a basket with less than a minute to go to cut the

lead to 19-12. But Lasmanis made a 2-pointer to end it on the next possession. The Netherlands, which beat China in its opener, was led by De Jong's seven points. **CHINA 21, SERBIA 15:** Zhang Ning scored 11 points and added four rebounds to help China beat Serbia. A basket by Mihailo Vasic put Serbia up 9-7 with about six minutes remaining. China took over after that, going on a 10-1 run to take a 17-10 lead. China made three 2-pointers in that stretch to pull away. Marko Brankovic and Dejan Majstorovic made consecutive 2-pointers for Serbia to cut the lead to 19-15 with about two minutes to go. Zhao Jiaren closed it out by making two free throws with 2:05 remaining. Majstorovic had seven points and Brankovic added five for Serbia, the Tokyo Olympics bronze medal winner.

OTHER SPORTS

India eager to settle Rahul vs Pant debate in ODIs against SL

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Gautam Gambhir-led Indian team management has an opportunity to decide who among KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant will be India's long-term first-choice wicketkeeper-batter in ODIs when the side takes on Sri Lanka in a three-match series beginning here on Friday. There will be clamour around the first sighting of veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli as well, after the recent T20 World Cup triumph. But the think-tank will look to shut out that outside noise, focusing on sorting out the combination in a season that has some marquee one-day events including the Champions Trophy. In that context, the Rahul vs Pant conundrum is certain to get priority treatment in this series. Rahul is the incumbent wicketkeeper-batter and has been assigned to that role by the previous set-up under Rahul Dravid since last year's Asia Cup, a tournament in which he made his comeback from a long injury-forced layoff. Since then, Rahul has done full justice to his duty both in front and behind the wicket. Since the continental showpiece last year, Rahul has made 834 runs from 21 matches at a fine average of 69.50 with two hundreds. Besides, Rahul also captained India in the ODI series against South Africa earlier this year. As a stumper too, the 32-year-old has been pretty good. But will Gambhir follow the same route since Pant is back in the reckoning? Pant's return to India fold through a clutch of T20Is after that horrific accident in 2022 has been heartwarming but he has not set



the field ablaze with his outings. There have been encouraging sparks during the last month or so. But is that enough to convince the powers that be to pick him ahead of Rahul? If Gambhir and skipper Rohit decide to keep both Rahul and Pant in the 11, then they will have to think as to how to accommodate Shreyas Iyer, another formidable player in the 50-over version. In his last ODI outing, Iyer made a 52 against South Africa at Johannesburg, and his record in 2023 is also impressive - 846 runs from 20 matches at an average of 53 with three hundreds. So, it could be a three-way tie between Rahul, Pant and Iyer for two batting slots because if India go ahead with all three of them, then they will have to play with five bowlers. India might not want to walk that rigid path particularly with Hardik Pandya missing this series because of personal reasons. Hence, India might just want to give a run to either Shivam Dube or Riyan Parag at

No. 6. However, the management entrusting Parag with bowling duties in the just-concluded T20Is could be a precursor to the larger role he might get in the ODI series. That Parag can shift between off-spin and leg-spin effectively too brightens his chance, something he was not able to showcase much in the IPL, courtesy the Impact Player rule. But the Assam player has a fairly noticeable body of work in the domestic 50-over competition - the Deodhar Trophy. He took 11 wickets last season to be placed sixth behind Vidwath Kaverappa (13), Shams Mulani (12), Mayank Yadav (12), Shahbaz Ahmed (12) and R Sai Kishore (11) at a good economy of 4.8. In contrast, Dube, who appeared in an ODI five years ago, played only one match in the series against Sri Lanka and was not summoned to bowl. Amid all this, Gambhir will also keep an eye on the outings of Rohit and Kohli, whom he said will have a major part to play going forward. This will also be the first ODI for the duo after that deflating defeat against Australia in last year's World Cup final at Ahmedabad, and they will be eager to mark the return to 50-over format with a special outing. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka, a mixture of young and experienced names, will want to avoid a batting collapse that led them to their doom in the T20I series despite enjoying periods of dominance. However, they will not have the services of pacers Matheesha Pathirana and Dilshan Madhushanka, who have been ruled out of the series with injuries.

My favourite bowler is Bumrah: Dhoni



PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Legendary Mahendra Singh Dhoni picked Jasprit Bumrah as his favourite bowler, but the multiple World Cup-winning former Indian skipper refrained from selecting between Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma as batsman of his choice. Bumrah played a vital role in India's recent T20 World Cup triumph in the Americas, picking up 15 wickets from eight matches at an economy rate of 4.17, best among the regular bowlers in the ICC showpiece. The effort earned Bumrah the player of the tournament award. "It's easy to pick my favourite bowler because Bumrah is there. It's difficult to pick a batsman because we have many good batsmen. But that doesn't mean bowlers aren't

good," said Dhoni during a promotional event here.

NO: 6-2(13)/2019-Estt. 30 July 2024
VACANCY CIRCULAR - 01/2024
Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), an autonomous organization under the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India invites applications UP to **31.08.2024** from eligible employees of Central/State Govt./Autonomous Body/ PSU for filling up **one post of Assistant Director General (Administration) in the Pay Level-12 on Deputation basis including short term contract**, for a period of three years, which may be thereafter extended/curtailed, if required by the ICMR Hqrs.
2. For more detail please visit <https://main.icmr.nic.in>. The application received after the due date of receipt of applications or incomplete or NOC not received through proper channel will not be considered.
Assistant Director General (Admin)
CBC 17152/12/0015/2425

पावरग्रिड POWERGRID
NOTICE
1. Approval under regulation-86 of CERC (Conduct of Business) Regulations'1999 and CERC (Terms and Conditions of Tariff) Regulations'2019 i) Truing up of Transmission tariff for 2019-24 tariff block and ii) Determination of Transmission tariff for 2024-29 tariff block for **Petition-1:** WRSS-I Transmission System, **Petition-2:** Western Region Strengthening Scheme VI, **Petition-3:** Transmission System for connectivity of MB Power (M.P.) Limited in Western Region,
2. The beneficiaries of the above mentioned Transmission system are: (1) MPPMCL, Jabalpur (2) MPPTCL, Jabalpur (3) MPIDC, Indore (4) MSEDC, Mumbai (5) MSETCL, Mumbai (6) GUVNL, Vadodara (7) Electricity Department, Government of Goa, Panaji, (8) DNHDPPCL, Silvassa (9) CSPSTL, Raipur (10) CSPDCL, Raipur (11) CSEB, Raipur (12) GETCL, Vadodara (13) MP Power Limited (For petition no.-3 only)
3. Tariff details:
a) 2019-24 block

Petition no	Asset detail	DOC/ECOD	Completion cost as on 31.03.2024	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Petition-1	Combined Asset	20.07.2008	23765.54	3475.74	3371.28	2350.20	2341.80	2339.33
Petition-2	Combined Asset	01.05.2011	23898.02	4732.47	4667.93	4608.26	4557.12	4496.91
Petition-3	Combined Asset	04.02.2015	42885.05	6798.94	6589.42	6391.93	6206.56	6034.09

b) 2024-29 Block

Petition no	Asset detail	Completion cost as on 31.03.2029	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Petition-1	Combined Asset	23765.54	AFC 2175.75	2195.69	2223.13	2252.04	2283.07
Petition-2	Combined Asset	23898.02	AFC 3176.86	3208.54	3240.86	3274.33	3319.88
Petition-3	Combined Asset	42885.05	AFC 5812.53	5625.27	5422.63	5332.74	5306.71

4. A copy of this notice and of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of the applicant at www.powergrid.in
5. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 6th, 7th & 8th floor, Tower B, World Trade Centre, Naoroji Nagar, New Delhi - 110029 (or other address where the office of the Commission is situated), with a copy to the applicant at the address of its corporate office within 30 days of publication of this notice.
Place: Gurugram Date: 01.08.2024
POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Corp. Office : "Saudamini", Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram-122001, (Haryana) Tel. : 0124-2571700-719
Reg. Office : B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110 016. Tel : 011-26560112, 26560121
www.powergrid.in, CIN : L40101DL1989GOI038121
A MAHARATNA PSU