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THE UNYIELDING SPIRIT OF MILITARY FAMILIES

WORLD 8

STRIKES ON GAZA KILL 18; TWO DEAD IN TEL AVIV

MONEY 10

RBI LIKELY TO KEEP INTEREST RATE UNCHANGED AT 6.5%: EXPERTS

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADALate City Vol. 13 Issue 213
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RAIPUR, MONDAY AUGUST 5, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

Established 1864

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

SEN FALLS TO AXELSEN IN SEMIS
12 SPORTS

Fresh violence rocks Bangladesh



People participate in a rally against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Government demanding justice for the victims killed in the recent countrywide deadly clashes, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Sunday AP/PTI

PTI ■ DHAKA

At least 91 people, including 14 policemen, were killed and hundreds injured on Sunday in fierce clashes between protesters demanding Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation and the ruling party supporters in different parts of Bangladesh on the first day of the non-cooperation movement over a Government jobs quota system. The clashes broke out this morning when protesters attending the non-cooperation programme under the banner of the Students Against Discrimination with the one-point demand of the Government's resignation faced opposition from the supporters of the Awami League, Chhatra League, and Jubo League activists. So far, 91 people have been killed in day-long clashes across the country, the leading Bengali-language daily Prothom Alo reported. According to the police headquarters, 14 policemen have been killed across the country. Of them, 13 were

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killed in Sirajganj's Enayetpur police station. One person was killed in Comilla's Elliotganj, the paper said. As violence escalated, the Home Ministry imposed an indefinite countrywide curfew from 6 pm on Sunday. A Government agency has ordered the shutdown of Meta platforms Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram. The mobile operators were ordered to shut down 4G mobile internet, the paper added. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Hasina said those engaging in "sabotage" across the country

in the name of protest are not students but terrorists and asked people to suppress them with a firm hand.

"I appeal to the countrymen to suppress these terrorists with a firm hand," she said. Hasina called a meeting of the National Committee on Security Affairs at Ganabhaban, the paper reported citing sources from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). The meeting was attended by the chiefs of the Army, Navy, Air Force, police, RAB, BGB, and other top security officers. The meeting came as renewed violence spread to several parts of the country.

The Government has announced a three-day general holiday on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to ensure public safety amid the ongoing violent protests across the country. Giving details, the paper said at least five people were killed in Feni, 22 including 13 policemen in Sirajganj, four in Kishoreganj, four in Dhaka, four in Bogura, three in Munshiganj, four in Magura, three in Bhola, four in Rangpur, three in Pabna, four in Sylhet, three in Cumilla, one in Joypurhat, one in Habiganj and one in Barisal.

Six Awami League leaders and activists were beaten to death and several others injured in a clash between the ruling party supporters and protesters in Narsingdi, the paper reported.

Team Hockey keeps India's Olympics Gold dream alive

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

If Tokyo 2020 was resurrection, Paris 2024 is turning out to be reaffirmation that the Indian hockey team is well and truly on its way to becoming a global giant again.

Down to 10 men for close to 40 minutes in a 60-minute game, Harmanpreet Singh's men didn't just hold off Britain 1-1 in regulation time, they outplayed the old foes 4-2 in the ensuing shootout to enter the Olympic semifinals for a second successive edition. The win was special in more ways than one because an average hockey fan in India is not used to seeing the team show such tenacity in a high-pressure situation. The bronze that these men pulled off in Tokyo was a first in 41 years. It was an emotional revival for a sport, whose glorious past of eight Olympic gold medals, the last of which came in 1980, had become a source of nostalgia and grief in equal measure.

The win in Paris is a reassurance that the side is on the right track. Little wonder then that the hockey fraternity as well as the average man on the street was left in awe of mental toughness and unity that India showed on Sunday.

"Words cannot express the sort of tenacity, fighting spirit and unity these players have displayed today. Every



India's captain Harmanpreet Singh (C) celebrates a goal with others during the Hockey Men's Quarterfinal match between India and Great Britain at the 2024 Summer Olympics, at Yves-du-Manoir Stadium, in Colombes, France, on Sunday PTI

player was backing each other after they were one player down," Ajit Pal Singh, captain of the 1975 World Cup-winning team told PTI. "The way they defended was world-class and Sreejesh was simply at different level. In all the matches from pool stages they only got better and the nation is expecting another medal from the team.

"The performance so far in

Paris is a testament to the fact that we can now beat any side in the world and it all started from Tokyo," he added.

Great Britain dominated possession and played with man-to-man marking, not allowing India to attack much. In the absence of Rohidas, Manpreet Singh, who plays in mid-field, was asked to man the defence. Reduced to 10 men on the

pitch, India could not play scoop balls, a strategy that worked for the side in previous matches, but it managed to escape without getting hurt.

It all boiled down to how Sreejesh would perform and the veteran goalkeeper did not disappoint, blocking the third and fourth attempts by Connor Williamson and Phillip Ropper after the score was tied 2-2 in the shootout.

James Albrey and Zach Wallace had scored earlier for Great Britain while skipper Harmanpreet Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, Lalit Upadhyay and Rajkumar Pal sounded the board for India. "We had no option but to keep the score tied till the end. We focussed on defence, we played to a structure and today communication between the players was pretty good. It was a team effort," Harmanpreet said.

The skipper said they had to forget the red card and move forward.

"We could not change what had happened. It was a team effort, it was our best defence, playing with 10 men, that was a hard part." "At this stage, we can't afford to be nervous, no matter who we play or we play extra man or not. That mind-set will remain in the next match."

Harmanpreet acknowledged Sreejesh's role in the win but insisted that it was not a one-man show.



Officials and others during a search and rescue operation following a recent cloudburst, in Shimla, on Sunday PTI

Death toll rises to 11 in Himachal cloudbursts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SHIMLA

With the recovery of two more bodies from Mandi district, the death toll due to flash floods triggered by cloudbursts in three districts of Himachal Pradesh has increased to 11.

Over 40 people are still missing after a series of cloudbursts occurred in Kullu's Nirmand, Sainj and Malana, Mandi's Padhar and Shimla's Rampur subdivision on the night of July 31 and wreaked havoc. The bodies of Sonam (23) and three-month-old Manvi were recovered from Rajbhan village in Padhar area of Mandi district, officials said.

The rescue operations are still underway and sniffer dogs, drones and other equipment are also being used to locate the missing people.

According to officials, 410 rescuers from teams of the Army, NDRF, SDRF, ITBP, CISF, Himachal Pradesh Police and home guards are involved in the hunt.

Over 30 people are missing in Samej village in Gram panchayat Sarpara in Rampur subdivision. More machines have been deployed and the rescue operations are going in full swing. As the flow of water has reduced, now machines have reached the spot where the missing persons could be possibly found, Up-pradhan Sarpara C L Negi said.

The State Government on Friday announced an immediate relief of ₹50,000 for the victims and said they would be given ₹5,000 monthly for rent for the next three months along with gas, food and other essential items.

The State has suffered a loss of ₹662 crore since the onset of monsoon on June 27 till August 3.

Assam to bring law soon for life term in 'love jihad' cases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday that his Government will bring a new law that would criminalise "love jihad". The proposed law will have provision for life imprisonment if found guilty. Sarma's statement comes days after the Uttar Pradesh Assembly passed the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024, providing for a maximum punishment of life imprisonment to the offenders convicted under certain circumstances. Speaking at the State BJP executive meet held at the Assam's capital, Sarma said, "We spoke about 'love jihad' during the elections. Soon, we will bring a law, which will award life imprisonment in such cases." However, he did not talk about any deadline regarding the proposed law. Sarma also said the Government will also bring in new domicile policy, allowing only those born in the State to be entitled for Government



jobs, he said. The Assam Chief Minister maintained that indigenous people have received priority in the "one lakh Government jobs" provided as per a pre-poll promise, which will be evident when the complete list is published.

The Chief Minister said the Assam Government has also taken a decision regarding the sale of land between Hindus and Muslims.

Earlier this week, Sarma had said the Government will end the VIP culture, and from now on, only vegetarian and satvik food will be served in every Government programme. Sarma also said the State Government will launch a pilot project to simultaneously issue Aadhaar cards and birth certificates to newborns in 13 medical colleges.

Wall collapse kills 9 kids making Shivlings in MP

PTI ■ SAGAR

Some 15 children happily engrossed in making 'parthiv shivling' (creating shivlings out of clay) in Shahpur in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district on a wet Sunday had no inkling that a cruel twist of fate would snatch nine of their friends forever. Nine children in the 10-15 age group were killed and two injured after a wall of a dilapidated house near a temple collapsed between 8:30am and 9am, wiping out the happiness residents of Shahpur town were deriving from the three-day 'parthiv shivling nirmaan' programme, a staple of the month of 'Saavan', underway at Hardoi Temple.

"I was returning after offering



Rescue work underway after a wall collapsed at Shahpur village, in Sagar district, on Sunday PTI

water to the shivling when a wall collapsed, trapping several children who were making clay shivlings under a tent. I was stunned and could not fathom

what was happening. The urn in which I had taken water for the offering fell from my hand. I shouted and people for all around rushed to help," said an

eyewitness, who was one of the organisers of the religious event.

A video of his narration of the incident to local police at the site, in which he can be heard saying the programme was on for the past three days, went viral on social media soon after.

"The wall collapse took place in a dilapidated house belonging to one Patel. We did not know how precarious its condition was or else we would never have erected a tent using it as support. Constant rains further weakened the structure," he said.

At the local primary health centre, a tearful parent said there was no one to bandage the wound on her niece's hand, adding that the facility was a neglected one.

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IMD issues red alert for Rajasthan, MP, Gujarat, Goa, Maharashtra

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

After Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Kerala where rains have caused havoc in the past few days, now it's the turn of the western Madhya Pradesh, eastern Rajasthan, Gujarat, the Konkan region, Goa, and central Maharashtra to brace for heavy rainfall. The

Meteorological Department on Sunday issued a red alert for these States.

The most severe category, a red alert, indicates extremely heavy rainfall exceeding 204.5 mm within 24 hours. This poses a significant threat to life and property. Widespread flooding, disruption of essential services, and evacuation orders become

likely. In the coming days, heavy rainfall is also expected in Kerala, Coastal Karnataka and Tamil Nadu while in Maharashtra, a red alert has been issued in Palghar, Pune, and Satara, while an orange alert for very heavy rains has been issued in Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Nasik.

Continued on Page 2



Bulldozers erase Khyber Pass residents' homes, memories

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A demolition drive in Khyber Pass, located in the Civil Lines area, carried out by the Land and Development Office on Sunday, left a trail of devastation that extended far beyond the physical destruction of houses and shops. It obliterated the cherished memories of residents who had called this place home for generations. The morning calm was shattered as locals woke to the alarming sight of bulldozers lined up in their neighbourhood, poised to demolish their homes. These structures held not just their belongings but the essence of their lives, their memories intricately woven into the very walls that now lay in ruins.

Among the many hit was Bhupinder Singh Bhatia, a small shop owner whose livelihood and legacy were

reduced to rubble. He stood amid the debris, gazing at the remnants of his life with despair. His small shop, a cornerstone of his existence, was now nothing more than a pile of broken bricks and shattered dreams.

"I have been living here for 70 years. I built this house and shop with my hard-earned money and today, it is gut-wrenching to see the house being demolished," Bhatia said. A large-scale demolition drive at Khyber Pass was also carried out last month which led to over 250 houses being razed and hundreds of residents being displaced.

Shahana Begum, 55, said she has been living in the area for decades but a demolition drive last month razed all her memories. "Last month, they demolished my house in the Civil Lines area and today, they demolished my daughter's house," she said,



A police personnel during a demolition drive at Khyber Pass area, in New Delhi, on Sunday Ranjan Dimiri/Pioneer

expressing her grief over the drive that has left her with nothing.

While some of the houses and shops were demolished on Sunday, the residents of the area said many of them have

received notices about demolition to be carried out in the coming days. A father of two children, Mohit Gupta is worried about his children's future. They are studying in a nearby school in the area.

He said, "This is my only shop, Gupta Store, which will be demolished on August 13. I am very worried as to how I will earn and support my family." The demolition scare has made Gupta move to Burari area for the time being.

"The rent there is so high that all my savings are spent paying it. For how long can I sustain? I have to pay the fees for children's studies too," he rued. At the site, the air was dense with dust as machinery demolished buildings. Several residents were seen sitting among the rubble that was once their home.

Many of the children who have moved from the area are now returning worried for their parent's security. Nisha, who returned from Dubai on Saturday night after learning about the demolition of her parents' house, was worried about her elderly parents. "Where will I take my

family now? My father is not keeping well. They razed my house in no time and many useful things have been destroyed," she said.

Nishant, 40, was in despair seeing his house being razed. He said while he had built a proper house with all the papers, no one came to their rescue. "We had all the papers for the house but now all my belongings have gone. No one came to help us. What do I do now? This was my home for all my life and now I am left with nothing," he said.

A petition in this regard was filed in the High Court in 2010 and the court had directed that "no coercive steps be taken" against the petitioners. However, the petitioners filed an application in the matter for clarification, after authorities passed an order earlier this year threatening removal of alleged unauthorised occupation and construction from the area.

LG inspects three major drains in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Sunday inspected three major drains in the national Capital including Barapulla, Kushak and Sunehri Nalla and directed for comprehensive cleaning of these drains. During his visit, Saxena, who was accompanied by officials of the concerned drain-owning agencies like Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Irrigation and Flood Control Department (I&FC), was appalled to see the pathetic condition of these drains that were heavily choked with debris, silt deposit and a heap of construction and demolition waste. "The drains that carry the storm water into the Yamuna have not been desilted and declogged over several years, which in turn, result into backflow of water in the city and the flooding of their catchment colonies which includes a large part of the South East and New Delhi areas," a statement by the Raj Niwas stated. The LG also oversaw the commencement of the desilting works on these sites and directed the agencies to complete the works positively within 15 days. "The respective District



Magistrates have been directed to submit daily reports on the cleaning operations with photographs," it stated. LG also directed officials of the I&FC Department, which owns the Barapulla Drain to clean all the bays immediately which were found lying heavily choked with silt, debris and garbage dumping from the adjoining slums. He also visited the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)-protected Old Barapulla Bridge. "He directed District Magistrate (South East) to get all the encroachment cleared by joint action with I&FC, MCD, PWD and ASI and restore the bridge to its original state within a week," the statement said. Four JCB machines were

deployed to clean the drains at Sunehri Nalla while the LG has directed for deploying more machines to declog the drains. "Expressing his displeasure at the condition of drains and the inaction on part of the concerned agencies, LG directed for urgent corrective measures to ensure smooth flow of water to mitigate flooding," it said. Officials were instructed by Saxena to clear the encroachment along these arterial drains. He directed the officials to fence the drains so as to prevent the dumping of garbage and debris in the drains and asked them to monitor the drains through CCTV cameras and take action against those found dumping waste into the drains.

DDA, MCD spar over drowning of woman, son in open drain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Sunday slammed the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) with regard to the drowning of a mother and her three year old child in the open drain, calling MCD's claim of the drain belonging to DDA 'totally wrong and a blatant attempt to shift responsibility'. "The document being circulated in public domain after a press conference is an internal MCD paper which has neither been seen nor signed by any official of DDA," a senior official of DDA said, adding that at no point did the DDA officials, either in writing or verbally, acknowledge or accept that the claimed accident spot pertains to the DDA. "Therefore, the facts presented in the report of the Executive Engineer, MCD dated August 1, claiming that the DDA accepted that the site of the incident pertains to it, are entirely incorrect and a blatant attempt to shift responsibility," the statement said. A meeting was chaired by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Mayur Vihar with regard to waterlogging prevention in Mayur Vihar sub-division on August 1 at the Gazipur police station in the presence of officials



from Delhi Police, DDA, Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Public Works Department (PWD), Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and MCD. "Following the meeting, water logging sites at various locations were visited. The team also visited the location claimed by the MCD as the accident spot. This fact is corroborated by the Minutes of the Meeting circulated by the office of DM (EAST) (Annexure A), which contains no record of either acceptance by the DDA of ownership regarding the site in question or statement to that effect that the site belongs to DDA," it added. It claimed that the open drain where this accident occurred falls under the jurisdiction of MCD. "This drain in question along with 9.9 km of roads was transferred by the DDA to MCD in March 2023 by paying deficiency charges of Rs. 26.05 Crore," a senior official claimed, adding that the portion of the drain with MCD is uncovered.

Forged caste certificate by AAP Councillor: Court directs cops to register FIR

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hearing a plea alleging HAAP Councillor Bobby Kinnar used a forged schedule caste certificate, a court here on Saturday directed the Delhi Police to register an FIR as there were two "different reports" by the certificate-issuing authority. The court, which directed the police to probe the matter and find whether any offence was committed, said that a detailed investigation was required to unearth the entire story. Judicial Magistrate Sanya Dalal was hearing the application for the issuance of directions to the police for the registration of FIR because the councillor obtained the scheduled caste (SC) certificate using "forged and fabricated documents". "The allegations made by the complainant are that a false caste certificate has been illegally obtained from the tehsildar, district Gautam Buddha Nagar and within five days of the same, a second caste certificate was issued from an authority at Delhi," the court said. The court's direction came on a complaint of Varuna Dhaka, who lost the Sultanpuri ward 43 MCD polls to Bobby Kinnar. Varuna is a relative of senior Congress leader Jai Kishan.



It noted the allegations, according to which, the second caste certificate had been issued based on false or fabricated documents. The court said according to the reports of the tehsildar dated June 26 and July 7, 2023 which was filed with the application, the record regarding the first certificate was unavailable upon online verification by the official and the certificate's applicant (Councillor Bobby) was also not found residing at the address mentioned on the certificate. But according to the action taken report (ATR) filed by the investigating officer (IO) dated February 28 this year, the certificate was issued from the Dadri tehsildar's office, it said. The court said, "Now, it is pertinent to note that two reports qua the same certificate in question has been presented by the same office i.e., office of tehsildar Dadri and they are completely contradictory in nature."

TMC asks Min to resign after foul mouthing officer

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress has asked Bengal Jai Minister Akhil Giri — who earlier threatened and used abusive languages against a forest ranger — to resign and apologise to the public servant. On Sunday however said he would indeed accept the party decision and resign but would never make an apology to the official. "The party never endorses such deplorable conduct from a minister ... Akhil Giri has made certain unparliamentary remarks while dealing with a government official ... following this State Trinamool Congress president Subrata Bakshi has telephonically asked him to resign and tender an apology to the official," Bengal TMC vice president Jayprakash Majumdar said. When told that the erring minister had offered his resignation but refused to tender apology, Majumdar said the party would "deal with all kinds of situations." Refusing to take lessons from his earlier misdeeds drawing nationwide condemnation, Giri who had hit the national headlines last year after making objectionable remarks against

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday lambasted a lady Forest Department officer calling her "Janoar" (animal) and Beadop (indecent). During a heated exchange the Minister had told Manisha Sau a Forest Ranger, "You are indecent ... an animal ... you will not live (in the post) for more than seven days ... I will see how to teach you a lesson." The official was found guilty of razing down some shops near the Tazpur sea beach in East Midnapore. The shops were constructed on an encroached Forest Department land. When the official refused to listen to the Minister a heated exchange followed leading to use of foul words by Giri. "I admit that my words as a Minister were inappropriate... the party has asked me to resign and I will do so by tendering my resignation to the Chief Minister via email ... But there is no question of me apologising to her," Giri said. TMC spokesperson Shantanu Sen however said that "Inspired by the ideals of Mamata Banerjee the TMC never endorses such conduct and has taken immediate action ... this is a message enough for the party leaders, workers and the opposition."

Cornered in Congress, Adhir getting feelers from BJP, others

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With the Congress literally sacrificing its firebrand former Bengal president Adhir Chowdhury at the alters of the Trinamool Congress (read Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee), overtures have begun from sections of the BJP and other parties to draw him close to their respective outfits. According to sources some BJP leaders have been privately sending feelers to Chowdhury join that party. This, after he was removed as the PCC president a couple of days ago. An apparently surprised and disgruntled Chowdhury who was a five-time MP from Behrampur in Murshidabad district before losing out to TMC's Yusuf Pathan in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections said that he was not aware of the national leadership's decision and that he came to know about his removal from the post only when he was referred to as "former" PCC chief in a meeting attended by the Congress' charge d' affairs of Bengal Gulam Ali Mir. Lending credibility to the political scuttletbutt regarding Adhir's future plans, BJP Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya



said "There is no doubt that Adhir Chowdhury is the right man in the wrong party ... there is no doubt that there are only a handful of leaders left in Bengal politics of his stature ... there is also no doubt that he did not deserve the shabby treatment that was given to him for the political integrity and sincerity that he has shown in his fight against the Trinamool Congress ... he is a genuine fighter ... but all said and done Congress is too small a place for a leader like him and if he has to fight the demonic rule of Mamata Banerjee then he will have to find a political party to join which can take on the might of the Trinamool Congress." "The BJP being the largest political party with the real capacity to dislodge Mamata Banerjee Adhir Chowdhury should sincerely think about his

future course of action ... and there will be no problem if he chooses BJP," Bhattacharya said. Another TMC MP Soumitra Khan said that though he did not think that the former Behrampur MP would immediately leave the Congress and join the BJP for "the constituency he represents will not permit him to do so," but "in future if he thinks about joining us he will not be doing the wrong thing and no one should be surprised ... after all the Congress has exploited him for the past so many years and jettisoned him when he needed his party the most." While some TMC leaders like MLA Apurba Sarkar too have invited Chowdhury to join hands with Mamata Banerjee saying, "there is future only with TMC and none else as the BJP will never come to power in Bengal and the Left have virtually vanished from the scene ... it will be right for Adhir babu to join the development army of Mamata Banerjee," the Congress leader is unlikely to join hands with the Chief Minister the person who is primarily responsible for his present discomfiture and the person against whom he had been fighting from the beginning.

Five years of abrogation of Article 370

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Ahead of the completion of five years of Abrogation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, there are murmurs in political circles that the much-awaited Assembly polls are round the corner. In the absence of a popular government unrest among different sections of society is growing. The last Assembly elections were held in the year 2014. The BJP-PDP alliance government formed in March 2015 lasted till June 19, 2018. A year later, the erstwhile state was reorganised into two Union Territories. Since then the common people have been waiting to elect their public representatives. The term of 4,892 panchayats expired on January 9, 2024. Along with the Block Development Council, the term of elected Urban Local Bodies, including municipalities, municipal councils and municipal committees, also ended in December 2023 leaving behind a large vacuum. After the announcement that a high-level team of the Election Commission of India (ECI) is scheduled to visit Jammu & Kashmir on a three-day visit from August 8 to review preparedness for the much-awaited Assembly polls



in the Union Territory, the common people are keeping their fingers crossed. The Election Commission is expected to hold meetings with political parties and officials to review preparedness for the polls. They will also hold discussions with police to review security arrangements for the elections. On ground zero, three rival political parties namely the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Congress and the Bharatiya Janta Party have already set up their election manifesto committees. Some of these parties have also started holding meetings with different stakeholders to include their charter of demands in their manifestos. Meanwhile, the biggest challenge remains the prevailing security scenario, especially across the Jammu region. Since January 1, 2024 14 terror attacks have taken place across six districts of the otherwise peaceful Jammu region,

which have resulted in the deaths of 27 people, including 11 security personnel, a village defence guard, and five terrorists. To contain the situation, the Union government is rushing additional troops to be deployed atop Jammu Heights to flush out the foreign terrorists from their safe hideouts inside thickly forested areas of Rajouri, Poonch, Reasi, Udhampur, Doda, Kishtwar and Kathua. Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to rush two battalions of the Assam Rifles to be deployed in the Machhedri area of Kathua and other upper reaches. Three thousand additional army troops and 2000 BSF men have been deployed across the region to plug the gaps and launch anti-terrorist operations across different sectors. In contrast, Kashmir valley is witnessing peace and hosting an increasing rush of tourists. Last week Lieutenant Governor Manoj Singh unveiled Film Policy 2024 in Srinagar to enhance opportunities for the growth of cinema in Jammu and Kashmir. Investors from different parts of the country and abroad are queuing up with their proposals to set up shops and production units to tap the rich potential of the region.

IN BRIEF

RPF RECOVERS CONTRABAND GOODS

Maligaon: Continuing the fight against contraband/smuggled goods in trains, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has recovered contraband goods worth over ₹1.63 crore in July 2024. RPF also apprehended 24 persons for alleged involvement during different drives in trains and railway stations in NFR, who along with seized items were handed over to respective OC/GRP or local police station. Between January to July, 2024, RPF recovered contraband and smuggled goods worth more than ₹19.70 crore and apprehended 261 persons for alleged involvement in its transportation. In 2023, they recovered goods worth over ₹25.43 crore and apprehended 392 persons for their involvement.



ASSAM'S FAKIRAGRAM STATION BEING REDEVELOPED



Maligaon: To further enhance rail facilities in Northeast and Assam, ₹10,369 crores have been allocated in the Interim Budget 2024-25 for Railway infrastructure projects. Under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), 60 stations in Northeast are being redeveloped with world class amenities/facilities. Fakiragram railway station in Assam will also receive a significant facility under ABSS to provide state-of-the-art amenities to railway users of the nearby areas at a cost of ₹34.60 crores. Fakiragram is an important station in Kokrajhar district on the New Jalpaiguri-New Bongaigaon section under Alipurduar Division of NFR. The station building will be extended with retiring rooms and waiting room with latest amenities. Divyangjan friendly ramps and toilet facilities with modern amenities like lifts and a 5-meter-wide Foot Over Bridge will also be provided.

Wall collapse kills 9 kids...

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"There is no one in the hospital to take care of the injured children. Doctors don't turn up here for months, and if they do, they arrive at 11am and leave by 3pm. A single doctor runs this PHC," the parent claimed. Another video showed a person claiming that some children would have been alive had doctors been available, and sought the suspension of health and civic authorities of the area for the tragedy. Local BJP MLA and former state minister Gopal Bhargava told reporters some of the deceased were from one-child families, highlighting the intensity of the pain the event has brought to the area and its residents. These children got crushed under the tent and the debris from the wall, Bhargava pointed out. Collector Deepak Arya said two children died on the spot, while seven others succumbed on the way to hospital or on reaching there. Two injured children were admitted in the district hospital and are out of danger, Arya added. The deceased have been identified as Dhruv Yadav (12), Nitesh Patel (13), Ashutosh Prajapati (15), Prince Sahu (12), Parv Vishwakarma (10), Divyansh Sahu (12), Dev Sahu (12), Vansh Lodhi (10) and Hemant (10), local officials said. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has announced financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh each to the kin of the deceased.

IMD issues red alert for Rajasthan...

From Page 1

IMD scientist, Dr Naresh Kumar said, "Monsoon is in its active phase. There is a deep depression in North East MP. There is low pressure in Southwest Rajasthan. We expect extremely heavy rainfall in western Madhya Pradesh, eastern Rajasthan, Gujarat, Konkan region, Goa and Central Maharashtra for which we have also issued a red alert. There will be no rain in Delhi-NCR in the next two days." He further said that in the coming days, heavy rainfall is expected in Kerala, Coastal Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. "Heavy rainfall is expected in Kerala, Coastal Karnataka and

Tamil Nadu in coming days. In north-eastern states, heavy rainfall is expected. When the monsoon trough comes to its near position, light to moderate rainfall is expected in Delhi," he added. In recent days, heavy rainfall has led to cloudbursts, flash floods, and landslides in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Kerala's Wayanad where death toll has crossed 350. Fifteen people have died in Uttarakhand, and 9 deaths with 47 missing in Himachal Pradesh. In these areas, the weather department has issued a heavy rain warning for Sunday. As per IMD, the monsoon trough at mean sea level now passes through Bikaner, Jaipur, Satna, the Centre of Depression over north Jharkhand and the neighbourhood, Bankura, Canning, then southeastwards

to the northeast Bay of Bengal. The weather department has predicted isolated heavy rains over Jammu-Kashmir until August 5 while Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan will face heavy rains until August 10. Similarly, Punjab has been predicted to witness heavy rains on August 4 and 7th. In North East India, very heavy rains are very likely over Assam, and Meghalaya on August 6th and 7th and Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura on August 5th. In addition to this, isolated heavy rains have been predicted over Odisha from August 6 to August 8; Gangetic West Bengal on August 6th, Jharkhand on August 6 and 7; Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya during August 3 to August 10.

Inspectors caught 'together' in Govt accommodation, attacked by family

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a dramatic incident in Agra, a woman caught her husband, a police inspector, with another female police inspector inside a government accommodation. The confrontation escalated when the woman's family members arrived, dragged both inspectors outside and physically assaulted them. The altercation, captured on video, has since gone viral on social media. Taking serious cognisance of the incident, senior police officers registered cross-cases and on Sunday and also arrested the inspector's wife and her family members after the medical report of the female inspector confirmed that her hand was fractured during the assault. Action was also taken against over half a dozen policemen for making video instead of trying to defuse the situation. According to reports, Rakabganj police station in-charge Shaili Rana has a government residence in the police station premises. She lives alone in it. On Saturday evening at four o'clock, two women and some youths suddenly reached the police station and went straight towards Rana's residence. In the video circulated on the internet media, the women open the gate of the inspector's residence while abusing her. In the video, the women are seen dragging Rana out of the residence in lower and T-shirt along with another man, identified as police Inspector Pawan Kumar Nagar. In the video, one of the youths is heard saying that he had doubts since the marriage and he has grown so old that he doesn't even feel like beating him up. While saying this, he picks up a brick but does not hit him. Meanwhile, the medical report confirmed that Rana's hand was fractured in the assault. On the basis of her complaint and medical report,

Inspector Pawan Kumar Nagar's wife Geeta Nagar, brother-in-law Jwala Nagar and sister-in-law Sonia Nagar have been arrested and the nephew and his driver who fled from the spot are being searched. Commissioner of Police J Ravinder Gaur has said that no one has the right to take the law into their own hands. He said if the inspector's wife had any complaint against the female inspector, she should have complained as per the rules but assaulting the inspector in her house was wrong. Gaur also suspended head constable Vishal and Harikesh for making the video and remaining silent during the assault on both the inspectors. Inspector Sunil Lamba, Inspector Devendra, head constable Rekha, constable Ankit, constable Girish posted in PRV and driver Rajendra have also been suspended. A complaint has also been written for action against a home guard present on the spot and orders have also been given for departmental inquiry against all the above men in uniform for defaming the department. Sources in the police confirmed that there was a "friendship" between the lady inspector and the male inspector but the relationship took an ugly turn when Rana had some dispute with a clerk of the police station recently. Sources said that some policemen of Rakabganj police station had informed the wife of Inspector Pawan Kumar Nagar that his car was parked outside Shaili Rana's residence. Inspector Pawan Kumar Nagar, who was posted in Muzaffarnagar, was recently transferred to Meerut Vigilance, and he is currently on medical leave. Sources also said that a video had gone viral in which a woman in civilian clothes is seen dancing to a film song and has been described as Inspector Shaili Rana.

Services of DTC bus route 848 extended till Gubhana-Majri village

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government's Transport Department on Sunday extended the service of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus route number 848 till Gubhana-Majri village in Haryana in a bid to benefit over 50,000 residents of the village and surrounding villages on the Delhi-Haryana border. Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot, along with the villagers, flagged off the bus and said, "The Delhi Government is committed to improving connectivity and accessibility for all residents. Extending Bus route 848 to Gubhana Village in Haryana is a step towards fulfilling our promise to ensure that public transport services reach every corner where there is demand. We are dedicated to addressing the needs of the people and enhancing their daily commute." This extension was approved following requests made by villagers from Gubhana and Majri to Gahlot during his visit to the villages on July 29. "Previously, the last stop of Bus route number 848 was Bakargarh in Delhi. Given that Gubhana village in Haryana is merely two kilometers away from Bakargarh, villagers had long requested the extension of bus services," a statement said.



Our goal is farmers' prosperity: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said on Sunday that his government's goal is to ensure the prosperity of farmers. He said this at his residence in Raipur on the occasion of the first festival of Chhattisgarhi folk culture 'Hareli'. Speaker Raman Singh, BJP state chief Kiran Singh Deo along with ministers and others were present. Chhattisgarh is an agriculture-based state and the livelihood of 80 percent of the population depends on it, he said. Sai highlighted the steps he has taken during his tenure towards farmers' welfare.



He also visited an exhibition of advanced agricultural equipment and distributed keys to tractors and harvesters to farmers. The event was celebrated with traditional folk music, dance, and Chhattisgarhi delicacies.

The event was celebrated with traditional folk music, dance, and Chhattisgarhi delicacies.

Chhattisgarh DGP's tenure extended for six months

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government on Sunday extended the tenure of Director General of Police (DGP) Ashok Juneja by six months. An extension order was issued by the home department following the approval of the Central government. The extension was granted on Saturday following approval by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). The extension was granted to Juneja for the period of six months in relaxation of rule 16 (1) of All India Service (Death-cum-



Retirement Benefits) Rules in public interest. He was scheduled to retire on August 5 this year. With this, the DGP will now retire on February 3, 2025. This is the first time the state government has extended

the tenure of Chhattisgarh DGP for six months. A 1989-batch IPS officer of Chhattisgarh cadre, he took charge as acting DGP on November 11, 2021 and was appointed as full time DGP on August 5, 2022.

Couple killed, son injured in mud house collapse

STAFF REPORTER ■ GAURELA

A couple was killed and their minor son was injured on Sunday after their mud house collapsed in Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district in Chhattisgarh. Due to incessant rainfall, a portion of the house in Ramgarh village came down when the family was asleep, Superintendent of Police Bhavna Gupta said. The incident led to the death of Dinesh Vakre (45) and his wife Sharda (35) while the 8-year-old son Jay Kumar received injuries.



New laws will ensure speedy justice: Dy CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao said on Sunday that the implementation of the three new laws was a huge step towards ensuring quick justice. He was addressing the concluding day of a three-day national conference on 'Decoding the Challenges of India's New Criminal Laws' at Anjaneya University in Raipur. Sao rewarded the researchers and participants who excelled in the conference. He said that Indian Judicial Code, the Indian Evidence Act, and Indian



"The new laws have been made keeping in mind the present-day needs. They contain provisions for scientific techniques and digital and electronic evidence"

Civil Security Code, which came into effect on July 1, will revolutionise the judicial

system. The need to reform the old laws had been felt for a long time, he said. The new laws have been made keeping in mind the present-day needs. They contain provisions for scientific techniques and digital and electronic evidence, he said. They will expedite the investigation and trial processes as well as promote justice and transparency, he said. University Chancellor Abhishek Agarwal said amendments to laws are necessary with time. The Indian government has made these changes for public welfare and to make the judicial system more effective.

535 doctors get contractual appointment

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

To improve health services, the Chhattisgarh government on Sunday gave contractual appointment to 535 health officers. The Department of Public Health and Family Welfare has given two years of contract service to the medical graduates of the MBBS 2018 batch. An official communiqué said the goal is to improve health services in remote areas. Of these, 22 have been posted in Balod district, 10 in Bemetara, 6 in Dhamtari, 55 in Durg, 6 in Gariaband, 20 in Kabirdham, 8 in Khairagarh-Chhuikhadan-Gandai, 34 in Mahasamund, 3 in Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki district, 42 in Raipur, 22 in Rajnandgaon, 3 in Balodabazar-Bhatpara, 15 in Saranghar-Bilalgarh, 22 in Bilaspur, 12 in Janjgir-Champa, 4 in Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, 32 in Korba, 3 in Mungeli, 42 in Raigarh, one in Sakti, 17 in Bastar, 5 in Bijapur, 13 in Dantewada, 19 in Kanker, 7 in Kondagaon, 11 in Narayanpur, 11 in Sukma, 19 in Balrampur, 16 in Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur, 21 in Jashpur, 6 in Korea, 6 in Surajpur and 32 in Surguja district.



Chhattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka delivered an in-depth presentation on implementation of welfare schemes and programmes for tribal development in the state at the Governors' conference in New Delhi.

Bear kills man, two injured

STAFF REPORTER ■ GAURELA

A 28-year-old man was killed and two others were seriously injured on Sunday when they were attacked by a wild sloth bear in Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district of Chhattisgarh. The incident took place near Badraudi village when Chhablal (28) along with Ghasiram (45) and Santlal (42) went to collect wood, Marwahi Divisional Forest Officer Raunak Goyal said. After coming face to face with the bear, the three tried to confront the animal. Chhablal was mauled to death while Ghasiram and Santlal sustained critical injuries. The injured persons were shifted to the community health centre in Marwahi and then to Bilaspur for advanced treatment. The kin of the deceased will be given compensation.

The incident took place near Badraudi village when Chhablal (28) along with Ghasiram (45) and Santlal (42) went to collect wood

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower & Guarantor	Property Address on which Loan Availd	A) Date of Notice (with effect from)	B) Date of NPA (with effect from)	Balance O/S (Claimed) in Rs.	Loan Disbursed
1	SPS Trans India Private Limited SPS Trans India Private Limited Shop No 407 Luxora Colony Main Road Mowa Raipur Chhattisgarh 492001 India Ph:- 9826900269	Details of the Asset Vehicle: HYUNDAI CAT B, Reg No.: CG04MU8898; Engine No.: -G4LAKM410151 Chassis No.: -MALB351CYKM0175917H	A) 05-01-2024 B) 30-10-2022	A) 05-01-2024 B) 01-04-2021	Rs. 264079/- (Rupees Two Lakhs Sixty Four Thousand Seventy Nine Only) as on 02/01/2024	Rs. 806212/-
2	Suresh Kumar Bagari, (Borrower) So Durga Prasad Pandey Ward No 12 Near N 78 Kalkona Lalpur Shahdol Madhya Pradesh Shahdol Madhya Pradesh 484110 India Ph:- 9951315273 Also At Work Address Govt Secondary School Anupur City Anupur Shahdol Madhya Pradesh 484224 India	SCHEDULE - A Details of the Asset Vehicle: FORD FORD CAT C-ECOSPORT; Reg No.: -MP18CA3960; Engine No.: -L155090; Chassis No.: -MAJAXMRKALL55090	A) 05-01-2024 B) 08-09-2022	A) 05-01-2024 B) 01-12-2020	Rs. 565569/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Fifty Six Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Nine Only) as on 02-01-2024	Rs.1139031/-
3	Ravindra Kumar Sangartan, (Borrower) 260 Near Jati Kham Hatwara Para Mandhar Raipur Chhattisgarh 493111 India Ph:- 9851222228 Also At Work Address Govt Middle School Near Rangmangham Village Korbi Raipur Chhattisgarh 493111 India	SCHEDULE - A Details of the Asset Vehicle: HONDA HONDA CAT C-AMAZE; Reg No.: -CG04NC7755; Engine No.: -N15A13900904; Chassis No.: -MAJAXMRKALL55090	A) 05-01-2024 B) 11-04-2021	A) 05-01-2024 B) 01-12-2020	Rs. 1139197/- (Rupees Eleven Lakhs Thirteen Thousand Nine Hundred Seventeen Only) as on 02-01-2024	Rs.79356/-
4	Krishna Gedam, (Borrower) H No 212 A Lalur Ram Colony TP Nagar Korba Korba Chhattisgarh 495677 India Ph:- 8678803073 Also At Permanent Address So Yado Rao Ward 06 Tarbahar Sirgiti Ti Bilaspur Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495001 India Also At Work Address Axis Bank Ltd Korba Branch Korba Chhattisgarh 495677 India	SCHEDULE - A Details of the Asset Vehicle: MARUTI MARUTI CAT B-ALTO; Reg No.: -cg11ak5176; Engine No.: -f8dn5827602; Chassis No.: -m39ea61s00a69927	A) 05-01-2024 B) 01-12-2020	A) 05-01-2024 B) 01-12-2020	Rs. 393710/- (Rupees Three Lakhs Ninety Three Thousand Seven Hundred Ten Only) as on 02-01-2024	Rs.273024/-
5	Premaya Bhagat, (Borrower) So Sonra Bilagat Ward No 11 Nilkanthpur Katma Balrampur Pin Code 497224 Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495001 India Ph:-7697536481 Also At Work Address Government Of C.N. School Education Department Principal Govt Girls HSS Manipur Ward Ambikapur Chhattisgarh 497001 India	SCHEDULE-A Details of the Asset Vehicle: HYUNDAI HYUNDAI CAT B-SANTRO; Reg No.: -CG15DT3620; Engine No.: -GAHGLM061101; Chassis No.: -MALAF51CCLM114408	A) 05-01-2024 B) 31-05-2021	A) 05-01-2024 B) 01-12-2020	Rs. 222991/- (Rupees Two Lakhs Twenty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety One Only) as on 02-01-2024	Rs.488696/-

Sl. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower & Guarantor	Property Address on which Loan Availd	A) Date of Notice (with effect from)	B) Date of NPA (with effect from)	Balance O/S (Claimed) in Rs.	Loan Disbursed
1	Nikhil Kumar Koshle (Borrower) H No 208 Sector 04 Lords City Electricity Office Karnal Vihar Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001, India, Ph.-8839022290 Also at: Rio Mall First Floor, Off No. 26 Infront of Food Market, Lalpur, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001	Details of the Asset Vehicle: MARUTI CAT C XLE ZETA Reg. No.-CG04M20652 Engine No:-K18SN01731 Chassis No:MAJ3NC29KL212522	A) 29.04.2024 B) 06.01.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 02.05.2022	Rs. 1104622/- (Rupees Eleven Lakhs Four Thousand Six Hundred & Twenty Two Only) due as on 24.04.2024.	Rs. 1055991/-
2	Pratap Sakseena (Borrower) Ward No. 04 Bazar Para Budgahan, Janjir- Champa, Budgahan, Chhattisgarh, Baloda, Chhattisgarh-495559, India, Ph.-7987520224	Details of the Asset Vehicle: MARUTI CAT B-VI Reg. No. CG11BD4647; Engine No.: -F8DN659584 Chassis No:MA3EUAE150UJ53776	A) 30.03.2024 B) 02.05.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 02.05.2022	Rs. 470876/- (Rupees Four Lakhs Seventy Four Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Six Only) due as on 29.03.2024.	Rs. 442440/-
3	Mohammad Hashim Khan, (Borrower) Near Masjid Noorani Chowk Rajatalab Raipur Phone No-0771-4266314 Raipur Chhattisgarh 492001 India - Ph.-4266344. Work Address :Noorani Complex Noorani Chowk RajatalabRaipur Phone No-0771- 4266663, Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001	Details of the Asset Vehicle: HYUNDAI CAT B- HYUNDAI CAT B 120, Reg. No. CG04H22300, Engine No. - D4FCFM396251 Chassis No. - MALBMS1RFLM149589H	A) 30.03.2024 B) 16.03.2021	A) 30.03.2024 B) 16.03.2021	Rs. 104912/- (Rupees One Lakh Four Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Only) due as on 29.03.2024.	Rs. 778986/-
4	Bhagwat Sahu, (Borrower) H No 1154 Dewanganra Dewkar Ward No 7 Devkar Bemetara Saja C G City Bemetara Durg Chhattisgarh 491331 India - Ph.-7826650390. Work Address: Sbi Customer Care Point Neargovt. School Beside Newjain Mandir Devkar C G City Bemetaradurg Chhattisgarh 491331	Details of the Asset Vehicle: HYUNDAI CAT B SANTRO MAGNA Reg. No. CG04NG4134 Engine No: -G4HLMO81994 Chassis No: MALAF51CCLM134185	A) 30.03.2024 B) 08.01.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 08.01.2022	Rs. 199046/- (Rupees One Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Forty Six Only) due as on 02.01.2024.	Rs. 445000/-
5	Mukesh Kumar Tamrakar, (Borrower) H No 134 Dewanganra Dewkar Ward No 7 Devkar Bemetara Saja C G City Bemetara Durg Chhattisgarh 491331 India - Ph.-7826650390. Work Address: Sbi Customer Care Point Neargovt. School Beside Newjain Mandir Devkar C G City Bemetaradurg Chhattisgarh 491331	Details of the Asset Vehicle: HONDA CAT C HONDA VXR12 VX MT(- VTEC) Reg. No. CG04L39900 Engine No: -L12B43000876 Chassis No: MAKGL173BH4000511	A) 30.03.2024 B) 30.07.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 30.07.2022	Rs. 821489/- (Rupees Eight Lakhs Twenty One Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Nine Only) due as on 29.03.2024.	Rs. 652515/-
6	Bhupendra Singh Chouhan, (Borrower) House No 1828 Bharu Para Pendra Pendra Bilaspur Pendra C G Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495001 India - Ph.-9833131184. Shikhar Singh Chouhan, Co-Borrower Bharrapara Behind Garg Motors, Pendra Pendra Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, Pincode: 495119 Ph:-9780578750	Details of the Asset Vehicle: ASHOK LEYLAND-CABIN CHASSIS:AL E1615 Reg. No. CG04N6345, Engine No: - NMH2400595 Chassis No: MB1A3GCDONRMU2176	A) 30.03.2024 B) 18.08.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 18.08.2022	Rs. 2535089/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakhs Thirty Five Thousand Eighty Nine Only) due as on 29.03.2024.	Rs. 2040051/-
7	Lalit Kumar Suman, (Borrower) Makan 334 1 Ward 13 Kirari Bilaspur Masturi Chhattisgarh Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495551 India - Ph.-7024822575. Anita Suman, Co-Borrower Makan 334 1 Ward 13 Kirari, Bilaspur Masturi Chhattisgarh, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, Pincode: 495551 Ph:-8225849390	Details of the Asset Vehicle: ASHOK LEYLAND-CABIN CHASSIS:AL E1615 Reg. No. CG04N6345, Engine No: - NMH2400595 Chassis No: MB1A3GCDONRMU2176	A) 30.03.2024 B) 18.08.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 18.08.2022	Rs. 2535089/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakhs Thirty Five Thousand Eighty Nine Only) due as on 29.03.2024.	Rs. 2058467
8	Dhirendra Kumar, (Borrower) C/O Mani Prasad Singh Kbt Mig 325 Dindyal Chhattisgarh Bilaspur Chhattisgarh 495001 India Ph:-7903190772. Permanent Address: Village Parari Yawan Po Wazir Pur Ps Birkam Dist Patna Bihar Patna Bihar 801104 India. Work Address: Alkem Labo Ratories Ltd Lh No 105ground Floor SSR Logistic KC Raipur Chhattisgarh493111	Details of the Asset Vehicle: MARUTI CAT B-SWIFT VXI BS 6 Reg. No. CG10A77702, Engine No: -K121277435MP Chassis No:MBHCZC63SLK653342	A) 30.03.2024 B) 08.06.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 08.06.2022	Rs. 515686/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Fifty Six Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Six Only) due as on 29.03.2024.	Rs. 581832/-
9	Paul Construction, (Borrower) 13/224 Mahavir Chowk Baikunthpur Raigarh Raigarh, Chhattisgarh 496001 India - Ph:- 9853372913. Work Address: 4 No 1 Dimradar Chowk Dindal Roadraigarh Raigarh Chhattisgarh496001	Details of the Asset Vehicle: ASHOK LEYLAND-TIPPE -AL M2820 TIPPER Reg. No. CG13AN6845, Engine No: -LMP2110613, Chassis No:MB1H3DH6MPLM1904	A) 30.03.2024 B) 18.09.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 18.09.2022	Rs. 2390163/- (Rupees Twenty Three Lakhs Ninety Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Three Only) due as on 29.03. 2024.	Rs. 3537150/-
10	Gloria Pereira George, Co-Borrower H No 13/224 Mahavir Chowk Baikunthpur Raigarh, Raigarh, Chhattisgarh, Pincode: 496001 Ph:-9827415868	Details of the Asset Vehicle: MAHINDRA CAT C-MAHINDRA XUV300 AMT D Reg. No. CG07CE5204 Engine No: -EUJZD46512, Chassis No:MA1NMZEU4M2D67547	A) 30.03.2024 B) 08.09.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 08.09.2022	Rs. 1102141/- (Rupees Eleven Lakhs Two Thousand One Hundred Forty One Only) due as on 29.03.2024.	Rs. 1000000/-
11	Nishi Tiwari, (Borrower) 153 Ward No 13 Arya Nagar Durg Durg Chhattisgarh 491001 India - Ph:-6263139525. Work Address: Chai Pe Charcha Ward No 13 Aryanagar Durg Durgchhattisgarh491001 Namrata Yadav, Guarantor 420, Swami Vivekanand Ward No 9, Shankar Nagar Durg Durg, Chhattisgarh, Pincode: 491001 Ph:-9171700829	Details of the Asset Vehicle: MAHINDRA CAT C-MAHINDRA XUV300 AMT D Reg. No. CG07CE5204 Engine No: -EUJZD46512, Chassis No:MA1NMZEU4M2D67547	A) 30.03.2024 B) 08.09.2022	A) 30.03.2024 B) 08.09.2022	Rs. 1102141/- (Rupees Eleven Lakhs Two Thousand One Hundred Forty One Only) due as on 29.03.2024.	Rs. 1000000/-

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Goa Assembly ST quota Bill likely in LS this week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Bill to provide reservation to Scheduled Tribes in the Goa Legislative Assembly is likely to be introduced in the Lok Sabha this week. As of now, the ST community has no seats reserved in the Goa assembly. Amid demands from the community, the Readjustment of Scheduled Tribes Bill, 2024 has been listed in the Government business for the remaining part of the Parliament session. The session is scheduled to conclude on August 12. The law Ministry Bill will empower the census commissioner to notify the population of STs in Goa. Based on it, the Election Commission will amend the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 2008, to make way for ST reservation in the 40-member Goa Assembly.



The Election Commission will take into consideration the revised population figures of the Scheduled Tribes and readjust the Legislative Assembly constituency once the Bill becomes a law. The proposal to bring the Bill was cleared by the Union Cabinet in March this year days before the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections was announced on March 16. As

of now, no seat in the 40-member Goa assembly is reserved for the ST community while one seat is reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The ST community has been demanding that four out of the 40 seats in the Goa assembly be reserved for them. It is estimated that Goa has an ST population of 1.5 lakh.

Main reservoirs' level less than 2023, but above decade's average: CWC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Despite significant rainfall across India, the average water level in the country's 150 main reservoirs is currently lower than last year's levels but remains above the average for the past decade, according to the Central Water Commission (CWC). The total live storage across the 150 monitored reservoirs is at 91,496 billion cubic meters (BCM), which represents 51 per cent of their total capacity. This is 94 per cent of the storage recorded during the same period last year and 107% of the average storage for the last decade. According to a CWC report, the live storage available in these reservoirs stands at 91,496 BCM, or 51 per cent of their total capacity. This is 94 per cent of the storage levels recorded during the same period last year and 107 per cent of the normal storage based on the last decade's average. Last year, the live storage during the same period was 83,987 BCM, and the normal



storage was 72,411 BCM. Thus, the storage levels this week represent an increase from the previous week but remain lower than both the corresponding period last year and the normal storage. In the northern region, which includes Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Rajasthan, there are 10 reservoirs with a total capacity of 19,663 BCM. Currently, they hold 6,532 BCM, which is 33 per cent of their capacity, significantly lower than last year's 76 per cent and the normal storage of 53 per cent for this period. The eastern region, comprising Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, and Bihar, has 23 reservoirs

with a combined capacity of 20,430 BCM. The western region's Gujarat and Maharashtra -- 49 reservoirs have a total capacity of 37,130 BCM. They are at 19,863 BCM, or 53 per cent of capacity, down from last year's 63 per cent but better than the normal storage of 48 per cent. This week's storage shows an increase from the previous week's 15,274 BCM (41 per cent of capacity). The central region, which comprises Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, has 26 reservoirs totalling a capacity of 48,227 BCM. They are currently storing 23,102 BCM, or 48 per cent of capacity, less than last year's

55 per cent and the normal storage of 50 per cent. This week's storage marks an increase from the previous week's 16,042 BCM (33 per cent of capacity). The southern region, covering Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, has 42 reservoirs with a total capacity of 53,334 BCM. They currently hold 35,010 BCM, or 66 per cent of capacity, which is better than last year's 50 per cent and the normal storage of 47 per cent. This week's storage shows an increase from the previous week's 26,538 BCM (50 per cent of capacity). Some States like Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tripura, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu showed improved storage levels compared to last year. Conversely, States like Rajasthan, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh have reported lower storage levels.



CDS to chair tri-service finance conference

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan will chair an apex level tri-service financial conference on Monday here. The meet is aimed to enhance cohesion and synergy in financial issues of the Armed Forces, Defence Ministry said here on Sunday. Giving details, officials said the conference will see the participation of senior officials from MoD, MoD (Fin), Controller General Defence Accounts, Integrated Financial Advisers of Services, Government e-Marketplace, Service Headquarters, and Indian Coast Guard Headquarters. The CDS will also deliver the keynote address. The conference, aligned with the objectives set for the ongoing drive on integration and jointness in the Armed Forces, is being coordinated by HQ IDS to enhance cooperation and have greater synergy on financial issues. Discussions are scheduled on aspects of Understanding the Perspectives of various stakeholders in Defence Finance and Finding Solutions to challenges faced in defence procurements. The Financial Advisor (Defence Services) and Director General (Acquisitions) will also give specific talks on the roles and actions undertaken by their organisations in expeditious procurement.

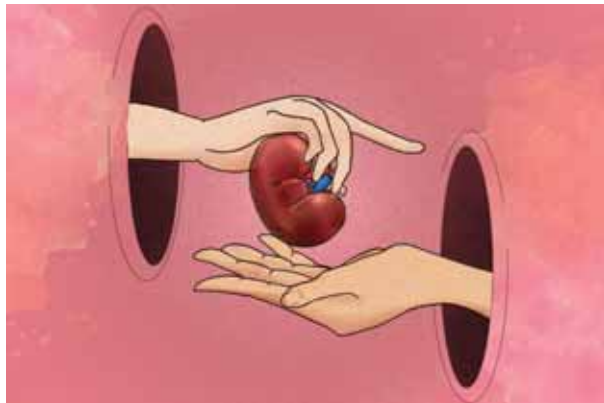
India ranks third globally in organ transplants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's organ transplants have more than tripled over the past decade, reaching 18,378 in 2023, up from 4,990 in 2013. The country now ranks third globally in overall transplants and second in corneal transplants. Key figures include 13,426 kidney transplants and 4,491 liver transplants. Among the States, Telangana accounted for the highest number of deceased donors in the year at 252, followed by both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka at 178, Maharashtra at 148, Gujarat at 146 and Delhi at 66. The num-

ber of transplants to foreigners was recorded at 1,851 with most of them being in Delhi at 1,445. Despite these advances, the organ donation rate remains under 1 per million. Highlighting the need for increased awareness and improved donation rates, according to a report by the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO). It calls for stepping up efforts to promote organ donation from deceased persons to take care of the huge organ requirement due to the increasing burden of non-

communicable and lifestyle diseases. Such conditions are leading to a high number of patients suffering from end-stage organ failure disease, the report stated. On the positive side, the number of deceased-donor transplants has increased from 837 in 2013 to 2,935 in 2023. According to data, the number of kidney transplants in 2023 stood at 13,426 while liver transplants were at 4,491, heart transplants at 221, lung transplants at 197 and pancreas transplants at 27. Among living donors, the number of females (9,784)



was almost double the number of males (5,651) in 2023. However, among

deceased donors, males outnumbered females at 844 compared to 255.

The total number of living donors in 2023 was 15,436 while deceased donors stood at 1,099. The number of heart transplants increased from 30 in 2013 to 221 in 2023. Heart transplants were higher in 2018 at 241. Tamil Nadu topped the deceased donor transplants at 595 followed by Telangana (546), Karnataka (471), Maharashtra (426) and Gujarat (421) in 2023. Delhi-NCR has the most number of living-donor transplants at 4,275, followed by Tamil Nadu (1,833), Maharashtra (1,493), Kerala (1,376) and West Bengal (1,021).

Organs are best donated from brain stem dead persons before the heart stops beating and there are many myths and misconceptions regarding organ donation which need to be taken care of, it said. Standard Operative Procedures have been drafted, which prescribe that every concerned Ministry will have a nodal officer and State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO) will coordinate with a nodal officer to facilitate organ transport, it said. No screening of organs will be done at the airport, the report added.



Experts raise alarm on vapes, e-cigarettes' promotion

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With traditional tobacco products under scrutiny for their severe health impacts, the tobacco industry is now promoting e-cigarettes and vapes as healthier alternatives, health and child rights experts have raised alarms, urging the Government to address this growing threat on an urgent basis. They warned that despite being banned these products are being strategically marketed to attract and entrap the young population, especially those aged 10 to 19 years. "E-cigarettes and vapes are as dangerous as tobacco and drugs for our country. Once a child is addicted to these products, they can easily be drawn to other forms of tobacco," said Priyank Kanoongo, Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), at a webinar organised by Tobacco Free India, a citizens' initiative, recently. Kanoongo highlighted the urgent need for vigilance while Dr Naveen Thacker, President of the International Pediatric Association (IPA), voiced serious concerns about the tobacco industry's tactics. "The industry is falsely promoting e-cigarettes and vapes as 'healthy' and harmless alternatives to traditional tobacco, with a relentless focus on targeting the youth. This is a blatant lie. These products are just as harmful, and their deliberate targeting of children is unmistakable," he stated.

WII launches first-ever Master's course in freshwater ecology, conservation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Aiming to bridge gaps in scientific understanding and conservation planning for freshwater ecosystems—an area that has been relatively overlooked despite the increasing pressures from energy projects, agricultural demands, and domestic use, the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has launched the first-ever much-needed two-year Master's Degree Course in Freshwater Ecology and Conservation in the country, starting this academic year. Dr Ruchi Badola, Dean of WII, emphasised the course's role in developing a new generation of professionals capable of understanding and managing freshwater ecosystems effectively. With several water resource project coming up to address the energy security, water demand for agriculture and domestic use in the country and with 82 wetlands of International importance



(Ramsar wetland) in the country the need for trained human resources for conservation of freshwater ecosystem in India was felt, she said talking about the need to launch such a course. A batch of 14 students has already been enrolled with the course. Director Virendra R Tiwari highlighted the course as a significant step in line with the Institute's new vision plan, marking a milestone in the development of human resources for managing the country's freshwater biodiversity.

Good diet with yoga boosts physical, mental health, say AYUSH experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Integrating a well-considered diet with yoga practice not only supports physical health but also enhances mental clarity and spiritual progress, ayurveda and yoga experts said here at a recent event organised by the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), an autonomous body under the Union Ayush Ministry. Vaidya Kamlesh Kumar Sharma from Jaipur's National Institute of Ayurveda emphasised that diet is integral to balancing the body's five elements ('pancha bhutas') and affecting both the conscious and unconscious mind. He stressed that proper dietary habits are crucial for achieving harmony in yoga practice, as they align with the principles of 'yama' and 'niyama' (ethical and personal conduct). Sharma noted that adhering to a diet that suits one's 'dosha' (body constitution), weather, and geographical conditions can help prevent many disorders and enhance yoga's effectiveness in alleviating



sorrow and fostering happiness. Dr Kashinath Samagandi, MDNIY Director, highlighted that according to the 'Yuktahara' from the Bhagavad Gita, focusing on proper diet and conduct (Achaar-Vichaar, Ahaar-Vihar) is essential for successful yoga practice. He recommended consuming two meals a day to align with the digestive cycle. He elaborated that the morning meal should be substantial and nutritious, eaten approximately 1.25 hours after sunrise while the evening meal should be lighter and half the size of the morning meal, ideally between 7:30 and 8:15 p.m.,

or before sunset. At the same time, Dr Arpit Kumar Dubey of MDNIY discussed the concept of 'Yuktahara' from the Bhagavad Gita, which emphasises a balanced diet as key to achieving yoga goals. "If we pay attention to the food habits in terms of what to take, when to take, how much to take and how to take, then the Yoga Sadhana becomes the Samadhi (the ultimate goal). As has been said in Changogyia Upanishad - whatever we consume through our five Gyanendriyas, the same helps us in the growth of our personality," he added.

SC verdict today on AAP plea against LG's order on MCD alderman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to pronounce its verdict on August 5 on a plea of the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi Government challenging the Lieutenant Governor's decision to nominate aldermen in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi without the aid and advice of the council of Ministers. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha, JB Pardiwala had reserved its verdict in the matter on May 17, last year. As per the apex Court's website, a bench headed by Justice PS Narasimha will be pronouncing the verdict. On May 17, last year the top Court said giving the Lieutenant Governor the power to nominate aldermen to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) will mean he can destabilise an elected civic body. The MCD has 250 elected and 10 nominated members. In December, 2022, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) defeated the BJP in the civic elections, winning 134 wards and ending the saffron party's 15-year run at the helm of the MCD. The BJP won 104 seats and the Congress finished a distant third with nine. "Is the nomination of specialised people in MCD of that much concern to the Centre? Actually, giving this power to the LG would effectively mean that he can destabilise the democratically elected Municipal Committees because they (aldermen) will have voting powers also," the top Court had said. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Delhi Government, had contended that no separate powers have been accorded to the State Government to nominate people to the MCD, and for the past 30 years, the practice of the LG nominating aldermen on the aid and advice of the city Government has been followed. Then Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, appearing for the LG's office had submitted that just because a practice has been followed for 30 years



does not mean it is correct. The bench had observed that giving the LG the power to nominate aldermen will effectively mean that he can destabilise a democratically-elected MCD because these aldermen get appointed to the standing committees and have voting power. Earlier, the top Court had asked about the "source of power" of the LG under the Constitution and the law to nominate aldermen to the MCD without the aid and advice of the elected Government. The ASG had referred to the reply filed by the office of the LG and the constitutional scheme to assert the concept of 'aid and advice', in the context of the administrator's power to nominate members to the MCD, is different from the one which has been projected by the Delhi Government here. He had argued that the file pertaining to nominations to the MCD come directly to the office of LG as he is the administrator, and the concept of aid and advice is not applicable in this case. Singhvi had referred to the 2018 constitution bench judgement of the apex Court and its recent verdict on control over services to claim the LG has to act as per the aid and advice of the Government. The senior lawyer contended the LG should have taken back the nominations by now. "There are 12 zones, 12 ward committees and aldermen can be appointed to any committee... For the first time in the last 30 years, the LG has directly appointed members in the MCD and earlier it was always based on aid and advice (of the Government)," Singhvi had said in this arguments.

Govt to revoke Nicholson statue's national monument status

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a dramatic twist, the Government has launched the process to strip the Nicholson Statue of its status as a Monument of National Importance, revealing a striking lapse in historical oversight. The statue, once proudly standing at Kashmiri Gate in the national capital to honor John Nicholson—a British officer notorious for his role in the 1857 Mutiny—was clandestinely shipped to Northern Ireland in 1958. Despite its absence for so many years, it remained on India's list of significant monuments until now. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has however moved to issue a draft notification proposing the removal of the statue from its prestigious list. Nicholson, who led the British forces in recapturing

Delhi during the mutiny, had been celebrated for his controversial role. However, the official stance now acknowledges the statue's non-existence at its original location. "The statue's removal and its absence from Kashmiri Gate necessitate its declassification as a monument of national importance," admitted an official from the ASI. The draft notification issued on July 25 and signed by Yadubir Singh Rawat, Director General says, "whereas, the Central Government is of the opinion that monument namely Nicholson Statue and its



platform, and the surrounding gardens, paths and enclosure wall, outside the Kashmiri gate, Delhi, declared protected vide notification..... in 1913, in

the Gazette of India, Calcutta... have ceased to be of national importance." "Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 35 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (24 of 1958), the Central Government hereby gives notice of its intention to declare that the said monument has ceased to be of national importance for the purposes of said Act." The draft notification opens a 60-day window for public objections, inviting feedback to the Director General of ASI. What is more intriguing

is that the ASI's move to delist the statue from the list of monuments of national importance follows a scathing report from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), which exposed the ASI's shocking oversight. The CAG highlighted that several monuments, including Nicholson's, were listed as important despite being missing. The report disclosed that, out of 1,655 protected sites, 92 were unaccounted for, underscoring a severe lapse in the ASI's records. The CAG report also said that on more than one occasion the culture Minister has told Parliament that 35 of its monuments have gone missing. When the CAG checked about 1,655 protected monuments and sites—comprising 45 per cent of the total—they found 92 monuments missing.

Wayanad death toll crosses 370

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Sunday, the sixth day of the landslide and deluge in Wayanad district, turned out to be a heart-rending day as the district administration performed mass burial of eight unidentified bodies out of the 40 retrieved by the rescue team National Disaster Response Team. Unconfirmed reports said that the death toll in Tuesday's landslide and deluge crossed 370 by Sunday though the district administration remained tight-lipped about the number of lives lost in the disaster.

It is believed that the bodies belonged to the residents of Mundakkai and Chooralmala villages that perished in the landslide. There were parts of human bodies like hands, legs etc which were accorded the status of a human body for last rites. Nearly 60 cents of the Harrison Plantation was earmarked for the burial, since 35 bodies are yet to be identified, the district administration has held back the burial for collecting the DNA samples for future needs. The last rites of the eight unidentified bodies



were performed with all-religion prayers. The function was attended by hundreds of people from the other parts of the district and those who had lost their near and dear ones in the mishap. The State Government announced that a new and secured township would be developed at a safe location for those who lost their houses. V Sivankutty, the education minister, declared that he would undertake the reconstruction of a higher secondary school in Mundakkai which was washed away in the deluge. Arif Mohammed Khan, the

governor of the State, who had been to the national capital to attend the Governors' Conference convened by the President, told reporters that the Centre would do everything that is needed for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the disaster stricken Wayanad district. Governor is closely monitoring the situation in Wayanad district on an hourly basis. Governor Arif Mohammed Khan was the first authority to reach the disaster site on Tuesday and spent a whole day supervising the rescue operations. It was taking a cue

from him the State cabinet and other political leaders reached the inaccessible terrain.

Officers and engineers of the Indian Army continue scanning the region with thermal imaging radar and scanners to find out whether any more persons remain trapped in the flood affected regions.

Two more dead bodies and remains of some persons were retrieved from the Chaliyar Puzha (River).

According to unconfirmed reports, 2250 persons have been accommodated in relief camps in Wayanad and Malappuram district. Kerala Finance Minister K N Balagopalan said on Sunday that funds would not be an issue for rebuilding a new Wayanad.

P A Mohammed Riyaz, minister for public works, who is the second-in-command of the Kerala Government, issued a stern warning to the people asking them not to visit the mishap site till further orders. "I will not allow the promotion of disaster tourism in Wayanad," said Riyaz, who is also the son-in-law of chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

BJP, JD(S) continue protest march against Mysuru site allotment scam

PTI ■ RAMANAGARA (KARNATAKA)

The opposition BJP and JD(S), on Sunday continued their week-long protest march from Bengaluru to Mysuru for the second day, against alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority site allotment scam, seeking to corner the Congress government and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The 'Mysuru Chalo padayatre' against the alleged fraudulent allotment of sites to land losers by MUDA, including to Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi and demanding his resignation -- on the second day, began at Bidadi here and is scheduled to cover a distance of 22 km to reach Kengal.

BJP State President and MLA B Y Vijayendra, JD(S) State President and Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy, Opposition Leader in Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanswamy, JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy, several legislators, leaders and workers from both parties



took part. A large number of workers and leaders from both parties were seen marching, shouting slogans against Siddaramaiah and the Congress government led by him, holding BJP and JD(S) flags and placards, amidst drum beats. The stretch through which the march passed was decked up with flags of both parties, bunting and portraits of prominent leaders at several places. Kick-started on Saturday at Kengeri near Bengaluru, the march on its first day covered a distance of 16 km to reach Bidadi.

Addressing the gathering ahead of the march, Vijayendra said the ruling Congress, Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar are "trembling", following the opposition's protest march. "I have seen in the media that the CM and DCM are now questioning the opposition parties as we have begun the protest march, it is for the first time probably the ruling party is questioning the opposition. We are raising our voice against the corrupt Congress government, in favour of SC/STs, backward classes, poor and

downtrodden people," he said.

Alleging that the Congress after coming to power has indulged in loot, Vijayendra accused Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar of offering the looted money to the "Gandhi family" (Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi). "If we question them about the loot, they (govt) are running away from answering it. They are questioning us today." The Congress is holding public meetings to counter the BJP-JD(S) foot march to Mysuru, by targeting both parties and the Union government.

Kumaraswamy, in his address said, the day the Congress came to power in the state, it opened its "shop of corruption". He accused it of looting the money that was to be used for the welfare of the people of the state.

"There is competition among the Ministers, they are indulging in corruption. We have accused the government with records. But, they are making false allegations against the opposition without any document or proof," he said.

Govt incorporated employee suggestions in revised Budget: Rajasthan CM Bhajanlal

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma on Sunday said keeping in mind the interests of the state's employees and pensioners, the government has made provisions by incorporating their suggestions in the revised state Budget 2024-25, he said. Sharma was addressing the thanksgiving meeting on budget announcements for state employees and pensioners at the chief minister's residence on Sunday. In a statement, he said the state government is committed to the interests of the employees and their families.

He said pensioners are a source of inspiration for society. The experience and knowledge of pensioners is an invaluable asset for the development of the state.

The chief minister said the state government has made many important announcements in this Budget for the welfare of employees and pensioners like salary discrepancy reform, increase in maximum gratuity amount, increase in pension, and improvement in medical facilities.

He said that in the state, there is a facility of pension at an increased rate for those above 75 years of age. Now, the state government has also announced an additional 5 per cent



allowance for pensioners between 70 and 75 years. Also, in accordance with the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2021, family pension will be available at an increased rate for 10 years in case of death of personnel while in service after April 1, 2024. The chief Minister alleged the previous government made "tempting announcements" without Budget provision keeping only the elections in mind.

Tipra MLA urges Shah to form infiltrator identification committee

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Tipra Motha MLA Ranjit Debarma has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking his intervention to constitute a committee to identify foreigners who have entered Tripura illegally and to deport them to their respective countries.

Debarma alleged that a large number of Bangladeshi nationals from Chittagong hill tracts entered Tripura and are residing in areas like Chawmanu and Gandacherra in Dhalai district and Karbook and Silcherri in Gumati district - all under Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) area and are a threat to the country's security.

"A large number of foreigners are entering Indian territory taking advantage of the weak security system in the Indo-



Bangla border. Infiltration has increased in the last few months," he wrote in the letter to Shah on Saturday.

"There are reports that Rohingyas have entered Indian territory using Tripura and are a threat to the country's security," the Tipra Motha MLA said.

Debarma urged the Union Home Minister to constitute a high power committee

involving civil, police and judicial officers for identification and foreigners who have illegally entered Tripura and push them back to their countries.

Road crash in Rajasthan leaves four dead Jaipur, Aug 4 (PTI) Four members of a family were killed and five others injured when their car rammed into a truck on the Delhi-Mumbai

Expressway in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district on Sunday, police said.

The deceased had gone to Rishikesh in Uttarakhand for a religious programme where a woman of the family died. After cremation, the family members were returning to Vikramgarh-Alot in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district when the accident occurred.

"Prima facie, the car driver dozed off due to which the car rammed into a truck moving ahead near Bhagwatgarh-Trilokpura Banas river falling under Surwal police station," Deputy Superintendent of Police Hemendra Kumar said. The bodies of the deceased and the injured were taken to a hospital of Sawai Madhopur by an ambulance.

The deceased were identified as Rajan (22), his sister Monica (24), Rekha (42) and her mother Dhapu Prajapat (60).



GRP, RPF need valid tickets for train travel, rules tribunal

PTI ■ Ahmedabad

GRP and RPF personnel must obtain a travel authority or purchase a ticket for train travel and carrying only the ID card is not enough, the Railway Claims Tribunal ruled dismissing the plea for compensation filed by a constable who claimed to be on official duty when he fell off a train.

The Ahmedabad bench of the tribunal also underlined the "negligent attitude of Railway" regarding a circular on issuing duty card passes to Government Railway Police (GRP) personnel required to travel frequently. GRP constable Rajesh Bagul had moved the tribunal seeking Rs 8 lakh compensation with interest from Railway claiming he was on official duty on the day of the accident. Bagul went to Surat railway police station for official duty on November 13, 2019.

He was returning from Surat to Bharuch on the Surat-Jamnagar intercity train when he fell off at Palej station, causing serious injuries to his left leg, leading to its amputation above the knee, as per his petition. Tribunal Member (Judicial) Vinay Goel dismissed the petition noting Bagul had failed to provide any valid travel authority to prove his official travel claims.



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PTI ■ JAIPUR

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Court sentences 17 people for stripping woman in Rajasthan

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Nearly a year after a 20-year-old pregnant woman was stripped and paraded naked in Rajasthan, a district court has sentenced 14 men, including her husband, to seven-year imprisonment while noting that it was a "heinous crime" similar to the one committed in Manipur.

Chief Judicial Magistrate, Pratapgarh, Ramkanya Soni on Saturday also sentenced three women involved in the case to five-year imprisonment, Special Public Prosecutor in the case, Manish Nagar said.

While observing that women are revered in the country as goddesses and that the



ancient scriptures also mention honouring women, he said violence and atrocities are continuing on women in 'kalyug' (depraved and final age of Hindu world cycle).

"It was a serious crime committed against the woman by the accused. Similar heinous crime was committed in Manipur. Such crimes cause emotional hurt to the women. Strict steps are necessary to curb crime

against women then only crime will reduce," the judge said in the order.

He was apparently referring to two women being paraded naked in strife-torn Manipur last year.

Besides the victim's husband Kanha Meena, the court sentenced Khetia Meena, Motiya alias Motilal Meena, Punia Meena, Kesra alias Kesrimal Meena, Suraj Meena, Pintu Meena, Nathulal Meena, Manaram alias Veniya Meena, Netia Meena, Rupa Meena, Gautam Meena, Ramlal Meena, Ramesh Meena to seven-year imprisonment.

Three women --Indra Meena, Mirki Meena and Jhumli Meena -- were sentenced to five-year imprisonment.

Coaching centres in basements will be sealed: Patna DM

PTI ■ PATNA

The Patna district administration on Sunday said that any coaching centre found to be running from the basement of a building in the district will be sealed forthwith.

Patna District Magistrate (DM) Chandrashekhar Singh, who has launched an inspection drive ever since three civil servant aspirants died in an institute in Delhi, said that so far no coaching centre here was found to be running from the basement. "Officials of the district administration have been given clear instructions to immediately seal those coaching institutes which are running from the basement. This is simply a violation of



the existing norms of running a coaching institute. However, so far district officials, who are conducting the inspection of coaching centres, have not found even a single institute in the state capital which is running from the basement," the DM told PTI on Sunday. The Patna district administration has given a month to coaching institutes to fully comply with the rules. They must obtain mandatory

registration to run coaching centres in the district. Strict action will be taken against those centres who fail to comply with the existing provisions after a month, the DM said.

"The district administration has so far (in the last six days) received applications from around 1,100 coaching centres in Patna for registration/renewal. Their applications are under process. The district administration has also decided to launch an online system of single Window Clearance' for all mandatory clearances/permissions to coaching institutes in the district ... A portal will be launched for the purpose within a few days," said the DM.

Assam's 30-year-old fake encounter case closed with compensation payment

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

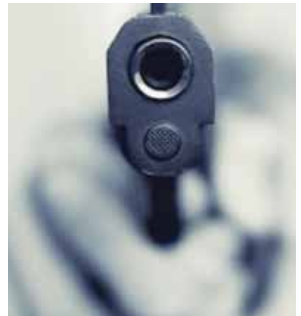
Thirty years after five youths were killed in an alleged fake encounter in Assam, their family members have been given a compensation of Rs 20 lakh each on court's direction, bringing to a close a long legal battle. Seven accused army personnel, including a Major General and two Colonels, escaped from any punishment even though a military court initially and a CBI inquiry found they were involved in the alleged crime.

A review of the case by Court Martial authorities later took some further evidence and announced that the army personnel were 'not guilty'.

All these army personnel are retired now.

Prabin Sonowal, Akhil Sonowal, Debajit Biswas, Pradip Dutta and Bhupen Moran were picked up by a team of army personnel of the 18th Punjab Regiment on February 17 and 19, 1994 from their homes or offices in Assam's Tinsukia district following the killing of a tea garden manager by the banned insurgent group ULFA a few days earlier.

On February 23, 1994, the bodies of the five youths were handed over to the local police station where the army claimed they were killed in an "encounter". "It was not an encounter but a fake encounter as all the



youths were innocent and had no connection with ULFA. As per the post mortem report, the victims were found with their eyes gauged out, nails removed and knees broken. Such things cannot happen in an actual encounter," said the then student leader Jagadish Bhuyan, who filed a habeas

corpus in the case in 1994 in Gauhati High Court.

After an inquiry, the CBI filed a change sheet in a local court in Guwahati in 2002 saying the agency had arrived at its conclusion that it is "disbelievable that the injuries that were found on the deceased persons were caused in any encounter".

Accordingly, the CBI held that five army personnel - the then Captain R K Shivrain (later Colonel), JCOs and NCOs Dalip Singh, Palwinder Singh, Shivender Singh and Jagdev Singh - were "responsible for the killing" of the five persons as they "had actually opened fire on them" and therefore, liable to be prosecuted for murder charges.

Task force to clear encroachments, illegal resorts in forests, western ghats

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Forest Minister Keshwar Khandre on Sunday said the state government has constituted a forests and western ghats encroachment clearance task force to clear illegal resorts, home stays and all forest encroachments in the entire ghat regions of the state, including the western ghats, which covers 10 districts.

This task force has been formed under the leadership of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force, and it will carry out forest encroachment clearance operations in western ghats and other ghat areas from tomorrow itself, the Minister



said in a statement. Khandre had on Friday directed the forest department's additional chief secretary to issue orders for the removal of all forest encroachments that have sprung up after 2015 in the western ghats region, and to submit an action taken report in a month's time. Pointing to terrible tragedies caused by

landslides at Wayanad in neighbouring Kerala and Shirur in Uttara Kannada district, resulting in loss of lives, Khandre said hills that existed for thousands of years have disappeared, landslides are continuously occurring in the western ghats region of the state including Shiradi Ghat, Charmadi Ghat. He said, "if we do not wake up now, the next generation will not forgive us."

The Minister said clear instructions have been given to carry out clearance operations in all the cases where the 64A (of the Karnataka Forest Act) process has been completed with regards to the encroachment in the forests in the Ghat areas after 2015.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

On the brink of war

War clouds hover over West Asia as Iran-backed militias attack Israel following the assassination of a Hamas leader

As Iran-backed militias engage in conflict with Israel, a protracted war looms large over West Asia, one of the world's prominent flashpoints. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been a focal point of West Asian tensions, involving numerous state and non-state actors. Recently, the situation has dramatically escalated following the assassination of a senior Hamas leader, which has ignited a series of violent responses and counter-responses. The assassination of the Hamas leader, who orchestrated militant operations against Israel, was carried out in a covert operation attributed to Israeli forces. Hamas vowed retaliation, and their pledge quickly materialised in a barrage of rockets targeting civilian areas, prompting Israel to activate its Iron Dome missile defence system. The airstrikes and rocket attacks have resulted in significant casualties and damage on both sides. Compounding the situation, Iran-backed militias, primarily from Lebanon and Syria, entered the fray. Hezbollah, a powerful Shia militant group based in Lebanon and backed by Iran, launched a series of rocket attacks into northern Israel. Similar militias in Syria have also increased their operations, targeting Israeli military positions and border areas. These militias have a long-standing alliance with Hamas and other Palestinian factions, often receiving financial, logistical, and military support from Iran. The current escalation can be seen as an extension of Iran's broader strategy to challenge Israeli military dominance.



As a response, Israel has intensified its military operations. Airstrikes on Gaza have become more frequent and devastating, targeting not only military installations but also civil infrastructure. Northern Israel has also

seen a ramp-up in military presence. The war's escalation has had dire humanitarian consequences. Civilian casualties are mounting, and the already dire conditions in Gaza are worsening. Indeed, the situation in West Asia is very volatile and a full-on war can break out anytime which would engulf the whole region. It is not the time to assess who is right and who is not, but to deescalate the tensions, and all must show restraint. It is high time the UN intervenes and the Security Council swings into action to ask all concerns to show restraint. If it is unable to stop the war, the UN would lose its standing and become irrelevant in the present world order. The international community must intervene to convince the two sides to come to the negotiation table. The United States has expressed support for Israel's right to defend itself while also urging caution to avoid a full-scale war. European nations have echoed these sentiments, calling for an immediate ceasefire and resumption of peace talks. The West must take a definitive stand against the war. On the other hand, Iran has condemned the assassination and justified the militias' responses as legitimate defence against Israeli aggression. Diplomatic efforts are urgently needed to deescalate the situation and prevent further loss of life and destruction. The world must put its act together before it is too late.

PICTALK



A woman feeds a goat in her partially submerged house after heavy rains in East Bardhaman

PTI

Green logistics is an environmental imperative

Minimising empty return trips through triangulation technology reduces carbon footprint and also underscores the economic benefits of green logistics

Green freight transport is an important facet of sustainable logistics and enables the reduction of environmental damage and pollution caused by shipping and transportation. Central to enhancing economic efficiency in this domain is the optimization of container movements which can be achieved through innovative strategies such as triangulation solutions.

The need for green freight transport sustainable logistics is crucial to mitigating the adverse environmental impacts of freight transport. Traditional logistics methods often result in significant greenhouse gas emissions and environmental degradation.

By adopting cleaner vehicles, optimising routes, and using eco-friendly fuels, companies can not only reduce their carbon footprint but also enhance their operational efficiency. The business benefits of green logistics are manifold. Companies that invest in sustainable practices can realise substantial savings on fuel costs and improve their corporate reputation. These practices also appeal to



a growing base of environmentally conscious consumers, ensuring loyalty and enhancing brand image. Therefore, the shift towards greener logistics is both an environmental imperative and a strategic business decision.

Optimising container movements: Effective container movement is essential for the economic efficiency of green freight transport. Inefficient container handling can lead to increased fuel consumption, higher operational costs, and elevated emissions. Optimizing these movements involves ensuring that containers are fully utilised and that their transport routes are as direct as possible.

Triangulation solutions: It optimises container movements. This method involves coordinating the movement

of containers in a way that minimises empty return trips. Instead of returning an empty container to its point of origin, triangulation arranges for it to be loaded with cargo headed to a new destination, thus creating a triangular route. Using advanced data analytics, companies can identify routes where triangulation is possible. This involves analysing shipping patterns, cargo availability, and potential destinations.

Matching cargo with containers: After the potential routes are identified, the next step is to match available cargo with containers that would otherwise return empty.

Implementation and monitoring: After matching cargo with containers, the triangulated routes are implemented. Continuous monitoring ensures that the routes remain efficient and adjustments can be made as needed. By minimizing the distance containers travel empty, triangulation significantly reduces fuel consumption and emissions.

A study by the European Commission found that optimizing container movements could cut emissions by up to 30%.

Cost savings: Lower fuel consumption directly translates into cost savings for logistics companies. Additionally, more efficient container usage reduces the need for additional container purchases and maintenance.

Enhanced operational efficiency: Triangulation streamlines operations, leading to better utilization of assets and resources. This enhances the overall efficiency of the supply chain. Advanced data analytics and machine learning algorithms can process vast amounts of data to identify optimal routes and cargo matches. Internet of Things (IoT) devices provide real-time tracking and monitoring of container movements, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of triangulated routes. For instance, AI can optimize routing in real time. IoT devices can monitor and manage energy use across operations. Governments can support these efforts by enacting policies and incentives that encourage sustainable shipping.

(The writer is founder & CEO, MatchLog; views are personal)



DHRUV TANEJA

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The unyielding spirit of military families

Military service comes with 'unlimited liability,' a reality underscored by the valour and ultimate sacrifices of the young soldiers who gave their lives for the country



BHOPIINDER SINGH

Recent martyrdom of four Indian Army personnel i.e., Capt. Brijesh Thapa, Naik Rajesh, Sepoy Brijendra and Sepoy Ajay of the 10th Rashtriya Rifles (Rajput Regiment) are a continuing reminder of the price that a few pay for the entire country. Seemingly service in the Army does not come with a 'Limited Liability' like in a civilian organisation, but with 'Unlimited Liability'. Hardly had the news of Captain Abhimanyu's daredevilry played out in public discourse, earning him the Kirti Chakra, and the news of this Doda operation broke.

Parallels in both cases are significant, even as one was a combat mission, and the other, a rescue mission. The real fire of the Indian Army is not necessarily in its weaponry, training, doctrines, senior leadership etc., but in the proverbial 'junior leadership' of its Young Officers and of Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) who ensure that the institution's youthful iron is tempered into steel. Both Capt. Thapa and Capt. Abhimanyu was from that 'junior leadership' fount, one a combatant and the other a doctor, but warriors in their ways. Both had headed that unsaid call of military leadership to 'lead from the front'. Officers of other militaries tend to lead relatively more entitled and safer lives, which manifests in the Indian Army having the highest 'Officer-to-Soldier fatality ratio'.

This young leadership does not take the backseat of 'ordering' but walks first in harm's way, as this is what Capt. Thapa did, as did Capt. Abhimanyu, who answered his conscience to attempt to save his comrade-in-arms from a fire incident. Such stories are the norm in the Indian Army, but not so, in other militaries of the world. Interestingly, both belong to what is proudly called the 'Military Families', an age-old concept that has survived the vicissitudes and institutional diminutions of time, which would logically expect the end of this noble tradition.

In the USA, the concept of multi-generational soldiers, who fight its bloody wars is a revered concept. Folks within these 'Military



Families' uphold the timeless promise of righteous defence that is passed down through generations. While this solemn tradition of sacrifice is recognised and valorised in the USA, sadly, not so in our Indian context. It is almost unknown and unrecognised. This is particularly surprising because India too has a culture of similar 'Military Families' that dot the mofussil hinterlands. Initially a legacy of the British 'martial caste' regimentation, it is no longer the reserve of any specific societal group, anymore.

The rarefied air within these 'Military Families' still resonates with much-forgotten values like honour, valour, sacrifice, tradition et al, despite many far more compelling reasons to walk a safer and more financially-materially gratifying path. Both Capt. Brijesh Thapa and Capt. Abhimanyu was professionally qualified (the former got through engineering, and the latter, both engineering and medicine) to venture into the lucrative civilian world – yet, both opted for the 'Uniform', knowing what it entailed. They followed the militaristic footsteps of their respective fathers. Gut-wrenching images of Capt Thapa's parents, Col BK Thapa and his wife receiving their



THIS YOUNG LEADERSHIP DOES NOT TAKE THE BACKSEAT OF 'ORDERING' BUT WALKS FIRST IN HARM'S WAY, AS THIS IS WHAT CAPT. THAPA DID, AS DID CAPT. ABHIMANYU, WHO ANSWERED HIS CONSCIENCE TO ATTEMPT TO SAVE HIS COMRADE-IN-ARMS FROM A FIRE INCIDENT

son's coffin was a modicum of dignity, pride and unbearable pain all wrapped in controllable emotions. Col Thapa's moving words about his gallant son, "He always wanted to join the Army and would sometimes wear my uniform, saying one day he would own one", added incalculably to his family legacy, and on to the plans, and to the nation. Capt. Thapa stood tall till the very end as the third generation in service to India. Similarly, both Sepoy Ajay (third-generation soldier) and Sepoy Brijendra were from the traditional soldiering areas of Jhunjhunu District, again from 'Military Families'.

The power of the Indian Army is a testament to these 'Military Families' who have defended the territorial integrity of the nation, for generations. One such typical family is of Mata Deen Singh who joined the Bengal Native Infantry in the early 1890's. He was later declared missing and believed killed in NWFP in 1901. Later four more generations of his served with much aplomb and distinction in the fiery Rajput Regiment. Befittingly, this family claims that there hasn't been a war that India has fought, where a member of the family has not fought! For many in the coun-

try, wars and insurgencies are either far removed or distant abstractions but for these families, the price to keep it 'distant' is personal, real, and never cheap. Col Thapa led the stirring fist-pumped salutation of Bharat Mata Ki Jai with his son wrapped in a Tiranga. People in such 'Military Families' are cut from a different cloth, and the nation can never repay its gratitude to them, ever. Sadly, those in power who are responsible for much of the prevailing mess have very little skin in the game and only play politics ad nauseam. For them, each tragedy is still tradeable to score a partisan point. Beyond

condescending exhortations and appropriations, the politicians (since independence, without any exception) have prioritised financials – what with 'austerity' measures, OROP, Agniveer (with pension bill concerns) et al, but always without adequately thinking about how much it would actually 'cost' to send soldiers in harm's way. The 'Military Families' have persisted, despite all this.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ILL TREATMENT OF ELDERLY

Madam — There are two elements which confirm the government's loyalty and passion towards their people and growth. One the education of children and next comes the health of the elders. The very budget highlights the most dissatisfied segment of elders who are continuously penalized after the GST by levying 18% as tax on health policies. It was 15% prior to GST implementation. Even the heat of it has been felt by the colleague of the Finance Minister, Nitin Gadkari whose plea comes by asking for withdrawal of GST on life and health insurance premiums. There are many who by their fear either avoid taking up the insurance cover or give up when it comes to renewal by disappointing increase in tax rates. When something is being charged extra there needs to be a fair play by servicing the clients. Not only is the service absent and also a survey indicates that 43% of respondents who filed a claim in the last three years are struggling to get their claim settled. Even when the Minister for Road Transport feels this as a bigger toll levied by his colleague FM, the public outcry is obvious by this exorbitant collection by the government.

AP Thirvadi | Chennai

SC'S LANDMARK JUDGEMENT

Madam — The apex court has delivered a landmark judgement in case of reservations. The seven judge bench has clarified that the state governments can classify the list of scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes in to different groups to accord preferential treatment in applying quota. Till now some tribes are being considered as primitive tribal groups and are being given special financial assistance and attention by the Government, but such arrangement is not in case of education and employment. Now the judgement has made it possible to extend such preference in the reservations for education and jobs. Anyway the states have the onus to

Stop anthropogenic disaster



The devastating flood and landslides conditions of Kerala's Wayanad district, which have shocked the entire nation with the tragic count of surmounting death tolls and founding of body parts, has once again raised the heated debate of the Urban Flooding and manmade disasters. Kerala's vulnerability to these natural and anthropogenic disasters had lead to multifold trouble for the local residents. The climate change and Heavy rainfall due to uncertain changes in the Arabian ocean cause unnecessary climatic harassment for

the people. There is no doubt to the fact that Urban environment is purely concrete, well constructed, neatly build up with skyscrapers with adjusted greenery for pleasing eyes. But anthropogenic alterations are always hazardous for the environment and hard to heal and cherish naturally. The scenario of Kerala is nothing less than we had already seen in Uttarakhand. Repeated landslides, flashfloods have caused immense hardships for the local resident. Making strategies, policies and claims will not serve the purpose, if have to be attentive in our actions for healing the climate. Let's stop giving anthropogenic scars to our environment surrounding, our actions for healing climate will serve the cause. The incidence of Wayanad is a lesson for all of us, and we have to take combined responsibility for improve our climate by taking care of its well-being.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

act with care. The identification of groups should be based on unchallengeable evidence and reason. The categorisation should not be made or perceived to be made on political reasons.

DVG Sankar Rao | Vizianagaram

ISRAEL ESCALATING CONFLICT

Madam — It is clear from the assassinations of Hamas' top leaders Ismail Haniyeh and Mohammed Deif and Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur against the backdrop of its genocidal war on Gaza that Israel is a law unto itself and crosses red lines at will and with impunity. The series of extraterritorial assassinations have dashed our hopes of a long overdue ceasefire deal in Gaza and fuelled fears of a wider war.

The nub of the matter is that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who oversees the assassinations and threatens the 'enemy powers' that 'there is no place that the long arm of Israel won't reach' is keen on escalating the war beyond Gaza to prolong his political career. Clearly, US' unconditional sup-

port and its amenability to being dragged into the war that emboldened Israel to conduct itself in gross violation of international laws and flagrant disregard of human life and increase the risk of a broader war.

It would be sheer folly if Israel deludes itself into thinking that its savage acts that are likely to result in a full-scale regional war constitute 'deterrence' and take it nearer to 'total victory', to use Netanyahu's phrase. Israel must end its illegal occupation of Palestinian territories, as told by the International Court of Justice, for the 'axis of resistance' to lose its relevance. The international community must apply enough pressure on Israel to stop the war on Gaza and its attacks elsewhere in 'the Middle East' inviting possible counterattacks and agree to a just peace deal and pull the region back from the brink of a full-blown armed conflict.

G David Milton | Kanniyakumari

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR HEALING A TROUBLED MIND

Through spiritual practices and positive affirmations, one can find the peace



RAVI VALLURI

Recently I received a message on my cell, "I am the son of Lord Krishna, I keep visiting Tirumala, yet I take drugs. Why do I suffer? Kindly help me!" My response was, "Meet a psychiatrist, undergo counselling, and undertake a holistic programme of wellness." But the caller remained unsatisfied and kept pestering me with a flurry of such messages. This person was positively in a state of misery and fear. His crutch and lifeboat were Lord Krishna. The mind of the caller was both fragmented and deeply disturbed. He appeared to be in a state of imbalance. Patanjali Yoga Sutras have identified the following as root causes of miseries in life—Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dwesha and Abhinivesha. 1) Avidya—This is nothing but a lack of knowledge or ignorance. Everything around us keeps changing constantly. It could be our cells, blood, stomach linings, and hair to name some. But we are oblivious to the change. 2) Asmita—This is our intellect and our self. We get stubbornly stuck to our opinions. The caller was fixated on the idea that he was the child of Lord Krishna and stayed put at Tirumala. Yet he was partaking in drugs. 3) Raga—This is nothing but craving. Normally craving arises out of certain pleasurable experiences of the past. It has a deep imprint on the mind. But such impressions only aggravate our wants and misery. 4) Dwesha—Is nothing but hatred. Hatred is antithetical to craving. Though it arises out of craving, the premise is an unpleasant experience. This could be because of certain trag-



ic moments in the past or unrealistic expectations which do not materialise. 5) Abhinivesha—This is fear of the unknown. An emotion that affects all of us. Only a clairvoyant sage through penance and austerity overcomes this barrier. The caller proclaiming to be the son of Lord Krishna was in obvious pain and agony. He could experience ecstasy only through scientific help that is, consulting a psychiatrist, taking proper medication and a wellness programme. The troubled individual's mind could have undergone say the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living or Vipassana to combat fear. But he remained an escapist by not attending either. This is how a fragmented and escapist mind reacts. The caller continued to escape and obviate the inevitable. It keeps hunting for excuses, and alternatives. Invariably the cloak of negativity and ignorance shrouds the mind from combating the problem. Exercising all love, caution, and care, I asked him to chant "Om Namah Shivay", 108 times thrice a day to purge his mind of all negative thoughts and by making positive affirmations through writing "I am happy, healthy and peaceful". This task was also to be done thrice daily 108 times, and the tapas was to be continued for 41 days. In case a day is missed for some reason, repeat the process for 41 days. Such signals to the mind are extremely useful and powerful. The mind then responds to positivity and discards negative feelings and emotions. He has not contacted me thus far. Presumably, he has embarked on the journey of tapas and hopefully has found support and a beacon of light in the dark tunnel. His Ishta Devata, Lord Krishna wielded Sudarshan Chakra wading through negativity and impurity. Sudarshan Kriya, Pranayama, Yoga and Meditation will certainly swathe through the cobwebs of his troubled mind and increase his Prana, Chi, or energy to obliterate the negativity. I am waiting for the 41 days to end so that he can be happy, healthy, and peaceful and lead a purposeful life.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

The global crisis of over-tourism

Around the world, over-tourism is emerging as a big problem. The overwhelming influx of tourists causes significant hardships for local residents and destinations



ARCHANA DATTA



The growing problem of over-tourism across the globe! Archana Datta Recently, thousands of residents of Barcelona in Spain, protested against tourism, urging tourists to 'go home', waving placards and squirting water guns at outdoor diners, averring that tourists increased prices and put pressure on public services in Spain's most visited city. Not, only Barcelona alone, Venice also introduced a five euro entrance fee to dissuade day-trippers from crowding into the city's limited space and public resources. Japan, too, has put up a giant screen to block views of Mount Fuji to discourage tourists from gatherings at the iconic spot. Closer home, in Chikmagalur, Karnataka, police resorted to a special drive at tourist destinations to curb the unruly behaviour of visiting tourists. Now, people have been travelling for centuries, and have traditionally been welcomed to visit countries. While, in India, the spirit of 'atithi devo bhava', treating guests as Gods, prevailed. Over the years, travel as tourism, has turned into one of the most important economic sectors. The ease in global air connectivity and people's increasing craze for exotic visits, adventure and leisure in the internet-connected world, created an unprecedented rise in the number of tourists, which, eventually, evoked a 'tourist phobia', an aversion and social rejection among the locals, as happened in Spain, and elsewhere. In 2019, when, 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded, a hike of 4% from the previous year, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) called for managing 'such a growth of tourists responsibly to best seize the opportunities that tourism can generate for com-



ONE TOURIST PRODUCES FROM 1 TO 12 KG OF SOLID WASTE PER DAY WHEN VISITING A NEW PLACE, DEPENDING ON FACTORS LIKE LOCATION, THE TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION, PERSONAL PREFERENCES, AND THE CHARACTER OF THE STAY

munities around the world'. While, tourism has been described as 'the excessive growth of visitors in areas where residents suffer negative consequences such as permanent changes to their lifestyles, denial of access to civic amenities and damages in their general well-being' (Milano et al., 2019). It has a social dimension too that 'impairs the place-person interrelationships and induces changes in residents' attitudes towards tourism' (Gössling et al., 2020). Over tourism, also makes urban life 'more tense and stressful' and for women 'a concern for safety in public space'. (Maja Hristov, Nebojša Stefanovic, Nataša Danilovic Hristic, Serbia, 2021). However, the present-day discourses predominantly veer around the issue of sustainability (Gowreesunkar & Thanh, 2020), as tourist hotspots are mostly located in sensitive ecosystems. Water, a precious natural resource, gets seriously misused by the tourism sector affecting the water cycle of the area. In Zanzibar, an average household consumes a little over 93 litres of water per day, while, the average consumption per room in a guesthouse is 686 litres, 7 times more, which in a luxurious 5-star hotel room, rises to 3,000+ litres of water per day. Spain, an important producer of vegetables and fruits for Europe, struggles over water utilisation in two competing economic sectors, tourism and agriculture (Water Equity in

Tourism, 2012). While, a 2022 study said that in case of water scarcity, women are the most affected ones, as it worsens their daily life tasks. One tourist produces from 1 to 12 kg of solid waste per day when visiting a new place, depending on factors like location, the type of accommodation, personal preferences, and the character of the stay. If the present trend continues, there will be an increase of 251 per cent in solid waste production because of tourism by 2050 (UNEP). Cruise ships are among the top polluters, and their raw sewage affects the coral reefs. Sewage from Mexico's tourism industry threatens the Caribbean coast, and the Mesoamerican Reef has already lost 80 per cent of corals to pollution. In 2023, Santorini Island in Greece, which has a population of fifteen thousand, received around 800 cruise ships, which caused a layer of pollution around the caldera. Notwithstanding, tourism is an economic powerhouse. The Travel & Tourism sector (T&T) witnessed a boom in 2019, accounting for 10.5% of all jobs (334 million), and 10.4% of global GDP (US\$ 10.3 trillion). In India, in 2019, the T&T sector was worth about \$194.3 billion, added 6.8% to the GDP and employed 40 million people. By 2033, the tourism industry is slated to represent 11.6% of the global economy. While, women comprise 54% of the workforce, but, they are mostly in lower-

skilled, lower-paid and often in informal employment (UNWTO). Now, some cities have gone for new or revised taxation, fines, etc, to de-market tourism. However, tourism de-growth cannot be considered a remedy, which can push tourism-dependent local economies into crisis, as happened in Myanmar's temple city, Bagan, where people suffer to make ends meet for want of visitors, as the country is deep into civil wars. While, regenerative tourism as an antidote, was mooted in 1987 in the Brundtland Report, which set the tone for 'building back better', going beyond the concept of 'not damaging the environment'. The UN called for a holistic understanding of living systems in the entire tourism ecosystem, as everything is inter-connected, the government, private sector, voluntary sector, and the communities'. The tourism industries should also operate in a new way by discarding the 'make-use and dispose' linear extractive model and fit themselves into a circular economy model of 'reuse/no waste', the world body urged. Isn't it high time for the burgeoning tourism sector to follow the path of regeneration, and herald an era of intergenerational equity, without compromising the planet for future generations? (The author is former Director General, Doordarshan, All India Radio)

Jammu and Kashmir post-Article 370: Tackling terrorism and ensuring integration

Recent terrorist attacks in Jammu highlight the necessity for a having deeper emotional connect with the people and addressing their concerns

This is a 'Stop Press' moment for Jammu and Kashmir after the significant and benefiting legislation of the abrogation of Article 370 - a step towards demystifying and demolishing the 'special status' of Jammu and Kashmir which was a hydra-headed invitation to the West to make a spectacle of India's extreme problems of terrorism as it was and is being transported from Pakistan and India's Foreign Minister Dr. Jai Shankar has often enlightened us on our Nation's self-interest. I say the 'Stop Press' moment because there has been a spike in terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in Jammu and has brought under the lens the



PRATIBHA CHOPRA

local support for Pakistan terrorists. So what does the 'Stop Press' moment signify? In this 'stop press' moment, we need to dig deep - the abrogation of Article 370- will not integrate into the body-politic on its own - it has to be integrated as a living experience to attain validation in the Being and Soul of Jammu and Kashmir and its people. The definition of the people

of Jammu and Kashmir is 'Indians' where Indians from the rest of the country also become an active agency. This calls for a few hardcore resolute living and active steps- the foremost being understanding the minds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir - a lot has been done - but we need to engage with this relentlessly and break the ice to pierce their 'special status', 'isolation' and 'exclusivity' which has not done them any good except for dragging them into the mindless narrative of asking for 'autonomy' and realizing it the hard way that Pakistan has always worked out of bounds, and still does so, to 'keep' them in a perpetual zone of con-

flict. This brings us to a preparation for working towards democratic strengthening and consolidation of institutional structures in consonance with the reality of Jammu and Kashmir as the Government of India wants to see it after the abrogation of Article 370. Needless to say, all those developmental questions that are normally addressed in any State or Union Territory of India need to be addressed, foremost being economic egalitarianism. The Congress Party must keep its mouth shut and let the present govt. led by the Prime Minister Modi do its work in Jammu and Kashmir with the infrastructure and development, as



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari would have it. The Congress has through the years mutilated all the Federal aspects of the Constitution of India to politically force a Centralised hegemony. The present Govt. does not intend to treat Kashmir as a communal cauldron and a battleground for Hindutva

and rightly so, therefore it is building infrastructure there. The whole idea of the abrogation of Art. 370 would bear fruit if religious and ethnic exclusiveness were not exploited negatively but used towards international trade and commerce in the best cultural parlance. In the same breath I would say that the Muslim majority

could suggest itself to confine its international commitments to religious brotherhood and political proximities within the respectful questioning bounds and press freedom, this press freedom not being an absolute right but subject to the upholding of the Sovereignty and Integrity of India and its Dignity as envisaged in the Constitution of India. As far as the question of 'Kashmiriyat' is concerned, nobody is stopping or stalling this journey as long as it is within the legitimacy of the Constitutional provisions and the artistic license that it provides. And there may be questions of class and caste here that cannot be ignored if we are

to sound and purport real. We will never forget the Indian Army, the soldiers who never fail us in the treacherous terrains of Jammu Kashmir, Ladhak & Siachen in the said region. We give them the space in our hearts for they do not hide behind any 'political' discourses and tricks and are the first agency of the Social Contract that a Nation State is based on. Their relentless invincibility and risk-taking bravado have no given path to tread but every day is a new challenge. Let all our actions as envisioned in the above paras be a tribute to the soldiers of the Indian Army and it is on us to do our duty now and here. (The writer is a lawyer; views are personal)

Strikes on Gaza kill 18; two dead in Tel Aviv

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israeli strikes killed 18 people in Gaza early on Sunday, including four Palestinians in a tent camp inside a hospital complex, while a stabbing attack by a Palestinian killed two people in a Tel Aviv suburb. Tensions have soared following nearly 10 months of war in Gaza and the killing last week of a senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon and Hamas' top political leader in Iran. Iran and its allies have blamed Israel and threatened retaliation, raising fears of an even more destructive regional war.

"The state of Israel is in a multi-front war," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting, and said the country was ready for any scenario in defence or attack. Jordan's foreign minister was making a rare trip to Iran as the United States and its Arab allies try to prevent a wider conflict. Already, Hamas says it has begun discussions on choosing a new leader. The stabbing attack in Tel Aviv



Palestinians react to fire from an Israeli strike that hit a tent area in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Martyrs hospital in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip, on Sunday. AP/PTI

killed a woman in her 70s and an 80-year-old man, according to Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service and a nearby hospital, and two other men were wounded. The police said the attack was carried out by a

Palestinian militant, who was "neutralised."

In Gaza, an Israeli strike hit a tent camp for thousands of displaced Palestinians in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, killing four people,

including one woman, and injuring others, Gaza's Health Ministry said. An Associated Press journalist filmed men rushing to the scene to retrieve bodies while trying to extinguish the fire.

The Israeli military said it targeted a Palestinian militant in the strike, which it said caused secondary explosions, "indicating the presence of weaponry in the area."

The hospital in Deir al-Balah is the main medical facility operating in central Gaza as many others in the territory no longer function. A separate strike on a home near Deir al-Balah killed a girl and her parents, according to the hospital.

Another strike flattened a house in northern Gaza, killing at least eight people, including three children, their parents and their grandmother, according to the Health Ministry. A further three people were killed in a strike on a vehicle in Gaza City, according to the Civil Defense first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government.

Palestinian militants in Gaza fired at least five projectiles at Israeli communities near the border without causing casualties or damage, the military said. An Israeli strike on Saturday at a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City killed at

least 16 people and wounded another 21, according to the Health Ministry, which announced the toll on Sunday. Israel's military, which regularly accuses Palestinian militants of sheltering in civilian areas, said it struck a Hamas command center. The war in Gaza was triggered by Hamas' October 7 attack into Israel that killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took around 250 people hostage.

Israel's massive offensive in response has killed at least 39,580 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. Heavy airstrikes and ground operations have caused widespread destruction and displaced the vast majority of Gaza's 2.3 million people, often multiple times.

Hezbollah and Israel have continued to trade fire along the Lebanon border since the war began, with the severity growing in recent months. The militant group says it's aimed at relieving pressure on fellow Iran-backed ally Hamas.

100 arrested as anti-immigrant clashes spread across UK

PTI ■ LONDON

Police forces across the UK have made at least 100 arrests as violent clashes and unrest involving anti-immigration far-right groups continued to spread over the weekend, with Prime Minister Keir Starmer offering his full support to officers to take firm action against the "extremists".

Bricks being hurled, fireworks thrown, windows of a hotel housing asylum seekers smashed, shops attacked and set on fire and several scuffles breaking out between mobs and the police were among the scenes of confrontation that played out in Liverpool, Hull, Bristol, Leeds, Blackpool, Stoke-on-Trent, Belfast, Nottingham and Manchester on Saturday.

UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper warned the mobs they will "pay the price" for such "criminal disorder and violent thuggery".

"Addressing the scenes of disorder we have seen, the Prime Minister set out that the police have our full support to take action against extremists on our streets who are attacking police officers, disrupting local businesses and attempting to sow hate by intimidating communities," Downing Street said after a high-level meeting of ministers convened by Starmer on Saturday.

"The Prime Minister ended by saying the right to freedom of expression and the violent disorder we have seen are two very different things. He said there is no excuse for violence of any kind and reiterated that the government backs the police to take all necessary action to keep our streets safe," the statement added.

Groups that monitor anti-Muslim incidents across the UK have said there has been an increase in reports from British Muslims expressing concerns for their safety, with many scared to visit their local mosques. "People particularly are frightened because of the

colour of their skin, and that cannot be right and that is something this government will take every action to deal with," UK Policing Minister Diana Johnson told the BBC. "When I saw people looting some of the shops in the city centre, that's nothing to do with genuine protest or people having different opinions about immigration. That's about criminal behaviour that needs to be dealt with," she said, warning the culprits there are "sufficient prison places" for such "criminal behaviour".

Officials at the UK Ministry of Justice are said to be in discussions with the judiciary, as well as police chiefs and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for magistrates' courts to open longer hours to speedily process the expected surge in the number of people in custody for riot-related offences.

Wales-born Axel Muganwa Rudakubana, 17, from Lancashire, has been charged with the stabbing attack on the Taylor Swift theme children's dance workshop in Southport, north-west England, which was the first site of the unrest earlier in the week.

It was triggered after false claims spread online that the suspect, who is of Rwandan heritage, was an asylum seeker who had arrived in the UK on a small boat. Since then, misinformation has continued to spread across social media and resulted in violent demonstrations involving anti-immigrant chants by protesters in different parts of the country.

Merseby Police in Southport publicly identified the English Defence League (EDL) as a key factor — a group that does not exist in a formal sense but its founder, Tommy Robinson, is associated with using the social media space to whip up far-right sentiments. Stand Up to Racism, among the groups organising some of the counter-protests, has warned that the activities of the extremist mobs must not be "unopposed".

Jordan's top envoy to make rare Iran visit

Tehran (AP): Jordan's foreign minister is expected in Iran on Sunday, as the United States and its Arab allies try to prevent a wider war after the back-to-back killings of top Iran-allied militants sparked vows of revenge against Israel.

Ayman Safadi would be the first senior Jordanian official to pay an official visit to Iran in over 20 years. Jordan is a close Western ally and helped intercept scores of missiles and drones fired by Iran toward Israel in April. Iran said it was retaliating for the killing of its generals in an Israeli strike in Syria.

Many fear Iran and its regional allies could launch a similar attack following the killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in an Israeli strike on Beirut last week and of Hamas' top political leader in an explosion in Tehran a day later.

Both attacks were widely blamed on Israel, which has acknowledged killing the

Hezbollah commander. Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas have vowed to avenge the killings. Safadi "will deliver a message from His Majesty King Abdullah II to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the situation in the region and bilateral relations," Jordan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Safadi is expected to meet with his counterpart, Ali Bagheri Khan, and other senior officials in Tehran later on Sunday, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported. The last time a senior Jordanian official traveled to Iran on an official visit was in 2004 when then-Prime Minister Faisal al-Fayez went to Tehran. Last week, Jordan sent a lower-ranking official to the inauguration of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, who was also in Tehran to attend the ceremony, died in an explosion that Iranian authorities have said was caused by a short-range projectile.

Suspected missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels hits container ship

AP ■ DUBAI

A suspected missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck a container ship traveling through the Gulf of Aden, authorities said on Sunday, likely the first assault by the group since Israeli airstrikes targeted them.

The Houthis have offered no explanation for the two-week pause in their attacks on shipping through the Red Sea corridor, which have seen similar slowdowns since the assaults began in November over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. But the resumption comes after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran, the Houthis' main benefactor, amid renewed concerns over the war breaking out into a regional conflict.

The attack on Saturday happened some 225 kilometers (140 miles) southeast of Aden in a stretch of the Gulf of Aden that has seen numerous Houthi



Smoke rises after a strike in an area in Lebanon next to the Israeli-Lebanese border at the Galilee region on Sunday. AP/PTI

attacks previously. A security official on the vessel said a missile struck the vessel, but "no fires, water ingress or oil leaks have been observed", according to a statement from the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre, a clearinghouse for information on attacks in the Mideast. The UKMTO did not

immediately identify the vessel hit. The private security firm Ambrey also reported the attack. Details reported by the two organisations suggested the vessel targeted was the Liberian-flagged container ship Groton, which had left Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates bound for Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Groton's Greek

managers did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Houthis did not immediately claim the attack Saturday. However, it can take the rebels hours or even days before they acknowledge an assault.

The rebels have targeted more than 70 vessels by firing missiles and drones in their campaign that have killed four sailors. They have seized one vessel and sunk two in the time since. Other missiles and drones have been either intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or splashed down before reaching their targets.

The Houthis maintain that their attacks target ships linked to Israel, the United States or Britain as part of the rebels' campaign they say seeks to force an end to the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the war — including some bound for Iran.

Harris rejects Trump's offer to shift presidential debate

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris has rejected her Republican rival Donald Trump's offer to shift the presidential debate to the Fox News channel, media reports said on Sunday.

Trump, 78, and President Joe Biden — who was then in the race to the White House — agreed in May to participate in two presidential debates. The first was in June, hosted by CNN, and the second — to be hosted by ABC News — was scheduled for September 10.

Biden withdrew from the race last month, following which Vice-President Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, was declared the 2024 presidential nominee of the ruling Democratic Party after she won enough votes from Democratic delegates in a virtual roll call. On Saturday, Trump said that he has agreed to an offer from

Fox News to hold a debate with Vice President Harris on September 4, shifting from the original plan, CBS News reported.

"I have agreed with FoxNews to debate Kamala Harris on Wednesday, September 4th. The debate was previously scheduled against Sleepy Joe Biden on ABC, but has been terminated in that Biden will no longer be a participant, and I am in litigation against ABC Network and George Slopodopoulos, thereby creating a conflict of interest," he said. Meanwhile, Harris took to X to turn down Trump's debate offer on Fox News.

"It's interesting how "any time, any place" becomes "one specific time, one specific safe space." I'll be there on September 10th, like he agreed to. I hope to see him there," Harris said. The Harris campaign also said it will stick to the original plan for an ABC News debate.

It said that "Donald Trump is running scared" hoping that Fox News will "bail him out" of the debate he had already agreed to with ABC News, according to the report.

"He needs to stop playing games and show up to the debate he already committed to on Sept. 10," the report quoted Michael Tyler, the Harris campaign communication director, as saying.

"The Vice President will be there one way or the other to take the opportunity to speak to a prime-time national audience," Tyler said, adding that the campaign is open to discussing further debates but only after the one both campaigns have already agreed to takes place. Last month, Harris challenged Trump to a debate, provoking him to say whatever he had "to say to her face".

Harris would face Trump in the general elections on November 5.

Trump tears into Georgia's Republican governor

AP ■ ATLANTA

Former President Donald Trump picked a new fight with Georgia's Republican governor as he campaigned in the key swing state where he's looking to avenge his narrow 2020 loss — a defeat he continues to blame on Republican officials based on his false theories of election fraud.

Governor Brian Kemp, Trump wrote on his social media site, "should focus his efforts on fighting Crime, not fighting Unity and the Republican Party!" He also criticised Kemp's wife, Marty, and alleged that both Kems were once grateful for his endorsement when Brian Kemp won the 2018 governor's race.

In a subsequent post, Trump railed on Kemp for defying his demands to help overturn Trump's narrow 2020 loss in the state. And at his rally, he went on about Kemp for several minutes and blamed him for his loss to Democratic President Joe Biden and for

not stopping a local district attorney from prosecuting him and several associates for his efforts to overturn the results.

On X, Kemp told Trump to "leave my family out of it" and urged him to stop "engaging in petty personal insults, attacking fellow Republicans, or dwelling on the past".

The back and forth came just ahead of an afternoon rally, when thousands of supporters packed the same Atlanta arena as Vice President Kamala Harris' backers did four days earlier. Georgia is likely to see another closely contested election as both campaigns push hard in the state, with Democrats riding a new wave of enthusiasm after Biden dropped his reelection bid and endorsed Harris.

Trump's Republican allies have urged him to focus on issues where they see an advantage over Harris, notably the economy and immigration. While Trump attacked the likely Democratic nominee on both

issues, he also again brought up his debunked claims about fraud in 2020 and suggested he regretted endorsing Kemp two years earlier.

And he tied crime in Georgia's capital city to Kemp's inability to turn around what Trump portrayed as lax crime reduction efforts supported by Harris.

"Your governor ought to get off his ass and do something about it," he said. Biden beat Trump in the state by 11,779 votes in 2020. Trump pressured Georgia's Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to "find" enough votes to change the outcome. Trump was later indicted in Georgia for his efforts to overturn the election, but the case remains on hold while courts decide whether the Fulton County district attorney can continue to prosecute it.

Meanwhile, Kemp has proven to be the rare Republican nationally who could hold his ground against Trump



without sacrificing his power or popularity — and ultimately, he has expanded it. Kemp won the governor's office narrowly in 2018, after garnering Trump's endorsement. But Trump blasted him after the 2020 election when Kemp certified Biden's slate of electors, defying the then-president's demands to help overturn Trump's narrow loss in his state.

Trump backed a primary rival

against Kemp in 2022 — former Sen. David Perdue, who spoke at Saturday's rally — but the governor trounced him on his way to defeating Democrat Stacey Abrams, a national star in her party, by 7.5 percentage points, a veritable blowout in a battleground state.

Kemp will chair the Republican Governor's Association for the 2026 election cycle, when he is leaving office. And he's widely known to be national Republicans' top choice to take on Democratic US Sen. Jon Ossoff in that midterm cycle. Erick Erickson, a prominent conservative host in Georgia, said of Trump, "He can't help himself."

"Donald Trump is really trying to build unity in Georgia by attacking the sitting Republican Governor whose ground game he will need to win and also that Governor's wife," Erickson wrote on X. "And if he loses, it'll be because of this stuff, not a stolen election."

Mystery around Pablo González: Spanish journalist or Russian spy?

AP ■ WARSAW

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, reporters from around the world rushed to the Polish-Ukrainian border to cover an exodus of refugees fleeing Russian bombs.

Among them was Pablo González, a freelance journalist from Spain who had been based in Poland since 2019, working for Spanish news agency EFE, Voice of America and other outlets. Warsaw-based reporters knew him as an outgoing colleague who liked to drink beer and sing karaoke into the wee hours of the morning.

Two and a half years later, he was sent to Moscow as part of a prisoner swap, leaving behind both mysteries about who he really was and concerns about how Poland handled a case in which he was accused of being a Russian agent.

González provided stand-up reports to TV viewers in Spain against a backdrop of refugees arriving at the train station in the Polish border town of Przemysl.

But less than week into the war, Polish security agents entered the room he was staying in and arrested him. They accused him of "participating in foreign intelligence activities against Poland" and said he was an agent of the GRU, Russian military intelligence.

Friends were astonished — and, as Poland held González without trial for months that turned into years, some grew sceptical and organised protests in Spain demanding his release. Authorities have never detailed the accusations.

But on Thursday evening, the burly 42-year-old with a shaved head and beard was welcomed home by President Vladimir Putin after being freed in the largest prisoner swap since the Soviet era.

His inclusion in the deal appears to confirm suspicions that González was a Russian operative using his cover as a journalist.

Born Pavel Rubtsov in 1982 in then-Soviet Moscow, González went to Spain with his Spanish mother at age 9, where he became a citizen and received the Spanish name of Pablo González Yagüe. He went into journalism, working for outlets Público, La Sexta and Gara, a Basque nationalist newspaper. It's not clear what led Poland to arrest him. The investigation remains classified and the spokesman for the secret services told The Associated Press that he could not say anything beyond what was in a brief statement. Poland is on high alert after a string of arrests of espionage suspects and sabotage, part of what the authorities view as hybrid warfare by Russia and Belarus against the West.

Polish security ser-

vices said Poland included him in the deal due to the close Polish-American alliance and "common security interests". In their statement, they said that "Pavel Rubtsov, a GRU officer arrested in Poland in 2022, (had been) carrying out intelligence tasks in Europe".

The head of Britain's M16 agency, Sir Richard Moore, said at the Aspen Security Forum in 2022 that González was an "illegal" who was arrested in Poland after "masquerading as a Spanish journalist". "He was trying to go into Ukraine to be part of their destabilizing efforts there," Moore said.

Another hint at his activities came from independent Russian outlet Agentstvo, which reported that in 2016 Rubtsov befriended and spied on Zhanna Nemtsova, the daughter of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, who was murdered in Moscow in 2015.

Poland-based journalists who knew González said he used his base in Poland to travel to former Soviet countries including Ukraine and Georgia. He had a license to operate a drone and used it to film Auschwitz-Birkenau from the air for coverage on the 75th anniversary of the death camp's liberation in 2020.

Voice of America, a US-government funded organisation, confirmed that he worked briefly for them, but they have since removed any of his work from their website.

"Pablo González contributed to a few VOA stories as a freelancer over a relatively short period of time starting in late 2020," spokesperson Emily Webb said in reply to an emailed query. "As a freelancer who provided content to a number of media outlets, his services were arranged through a third-party company used by news organisations around the world."

"At no time did he have any access to any VOA systems or VOA credentials," Webb said. "As soon as VOA learned of the allegations, we removed his material."

Because Poland's justice system was politicized under a populist government that ruled in 2015-23, some activists worried about whether his rights were respected. Reporters Without Borders was among the groups that called for him to be put on trial or released.

The group stands by its position that he should not have been held that long without trial. "You are innocent until a trial proves you guilty," Alfonso Bauluz, the head of the group's office in Spain told AP on Friday. He expressed frustration at the silence around the case, and the fact that there will apparently not be a trial at all, saying Poland has not presented the evidence it has against him.

But the group also says it

expects González to provide an explanation now that he is free. Jaap Arriens, a Dutch video journalist based in Warsaw, hung out with the man he knew as Pablo in Warsaw and Kyiv, as well as in Przemysl shortly before his arrest.

Arriens described him as a friendly, funny man with a macho demeanour and a chest covered in tattoos that he once showed off in a bar. González mostly fit in, but seemed better-off than the average freelance journalist. He always seemed to have the newest and most expensive phones and computers, working at the Poland-Ukraine border with the latest 14-inch MacBook Pro. He had plenty of money to spend in bars. He recalled González once saying: "Life is good, life is almost too good."

"And I thought: Man, freelance life is never too good. What are you talking about? I don't know any free-

lancer who talks like this." González, whose grandfather emigrated from Spain to the Soviet Union as a child during the Spanish Civil War, was known as a Basque nationalist with ties to the region's independence movement.

Russia is suspected of supporting separatist movements in Spain and elsewhere in an effort to destabilise Europe. González' wife in Spain had been advocating on his behalf during his detention in Poland, even though they were not living together at the time of his arrest. Over the past years, the suspect's supporters ran an account on Twitter, now X, to advocate for his release.

When he was sent to Moscow on Thursday, the @FreePabloGonzález account tweeted: "This is our last tweet: Pablo is finally free. Endless thanks to all." Those who have followed the case are now awaiting González's next moves.

Children at risk of dying in famine-hit Darfur

AP ■ CAIRO

Malnourished children in a famine-hit camp for war-displaced people in Sudan's western region of Darfur are at risk of dying, an aid group said Sunday, because it was forced to ration malnutrition treatment due to a blockade imposed by a notorious paramilitary group. Doctors Without Borders said the Rapid Support Forces, which have besieged al-Fasher city as part of its war against the Sudanese military, have blocked three trucks carrying lifesaving medical supplies, including therapeutic food, for the city and the nearby Zamzam camp where famine was confirmed last week. Sudan plunged into chaos in April last year when simmering tensions between the military and the RSF developed into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, before spreading across the northeastern African country. Darfur saw some of the worst and most devastating bouts of fighting in



the war. The conflict has killed thousands of people and pushed many into starvation. It created the world's largest displacement crisis with more than 10 million people forced to flee their homes since April 2023, according to the U.N. Migration agency. Over 2 mil-

lion of those fled to neighboring countries. International experts in the Famine Review Committee confirmed Thursday that starvation at Zamzam camp, where up to 600,000 people shelter, has grown into full famine. International experts use set criteria to confirm the exist-

ence of famines. A famine is declared in an area when one in five people or households severely lack food and face starvation and destitution that would ultimately lead to critical levels of acute malnutrition and death. In Zamzam camp, which has swelled with the arrival of

new displaced people, many children are in critical condition, Doctors Without Borders said, adding that the malnutrition ward at its field hospital in the camp is overcrowded with a 126% bed occupancy rate. The group said RSF fighters have blocked the trucks in the town of Kabkabiya for over a month, adding that it was forced to limit the number of children receiving therapeutic food in the overcrowded camp as its stock of medicine covers only two weeks. "Deliberately obstructing or delaying humanitarian cargo is putting the lives of thousands of children at-risk as they are cut-off from receiving lifesaving treatment," it said on social media platform X. There was no immediate comment from the RSF. The RSF has imposed a siege on el-Fasher in its monthslong attempt to take it from the military and its allied rebel groups. The city, the provincial capital of North Darfur, is the last stronghold for the military in the war-torn Darfur region.

Indian student charged for falsifying records

PTI ■ NEW YORK

A 19-year-old Indian student, who was arrested and charged with falsifying records to gain admission in a US university, will have to return to India under a plea deal entered into with American authorities. Aryan Anand had submitted fake and falsified documents to secure admission into Lehigh University, a private research university in Pennsylvania for the 2023-2024 academic year. A report in the Lehigh University's student newspaper 'The Brown and White', said last month that a police investigation had found that Anand had falsified admission and financial aid documents. He had even "faked his father's death" as part of the conspiracy to obtain admission and scholarship, it said. Anand was arraigned by Magisterial District Judge Jordan Knisley on June 12, with a bail of USD 25,000. He pleaded guilty to one count of forgery. As part of the plea deal, he was sentenced to one to three months in Northampton County Prison, "which amounted to a time-served sentence", lehighvalleylive.com quoted defence attorney Molly Heidorn as saying.

As part of the deal, Anand is required to return to India and Lehigh chose not to seek restitution of about USD 85,000. He was released to the custody of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. According to a release issued by the office of Northampton County's district attorney Stephen Baratta, Anand had created a fake email address impersonating a school principal, the report in lehighvalleylive.com said. The release had said that Anand's father is alive and in India. Anand's forgery came to light after a post he shared on the social media site Reddit titled 'I have built my life and career on lies' prompted the investigation into his case. In that anonymous post, he had laid out the details of his fraudulent scheme. The Brown and White report said that the investigation began when a Reddit monitor notified Lehigh's Admissions Department of the post on April 26. "The criminal complaint revealed the thread was authored by someone with the username 'u/transportationOK4728', and 'the creator was following only one University group of Reddit and that University was Lehigh University,'" the report said.

Further investigation by the Lehigh police identified Anand as the author of the post, which has since been deleted but in which he had outlined his scheme. Anand had indicated that he "created a fake email address in the format of principal@schoolname.com for his application, submitted a death certificate for his father to acquire additional hardship financial aid, falsified tax documentation, altered his secondary school year 1-3 transcripts and created a false 'Senior School Certificate Examination' to show success in his final year of secondary school," the report said. Anand said it was "all for the purpose of securing admission and financial aid to attend a university in the United States." The criminal complaint filed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on April 30 accused Anand of violating the statutes of forgery, tampering with records or identification, theft by deception and theft of services. "Metadata revealed the death certificate and tax documents were altered using the 'iLovePDF' website, and the academic documents were modified using Adobe Photoshop," according to the criminal complaint.

11 killed due to torrential rains in northwest Pakistan



PTI ■ PESHAWAR

At least 11 people died in the last 24 hours due to torrential monsoon rains that caused flash floods and roof collapses in northwest Pakistan on Sunday, authorities said. At least seven deaths were reported from Tank and Karak districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, bordering Afghanistan. Three people died when the roof of their house collapsed due to heavy rains in Tank dis-

trict, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority said. It added that four people died after they were swept away in Karak district. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur expressed grief and sorrow over the deaths and announced compensation for the families hit by the rains. Gandapur also directed the respective district administrations to provide the best possible assistance and relief to the people affected by the rains.

Four years after the Beirut port blast, many decry stalled justice as regional tensions spike

AP ■ BEIRUT

Four years ago, Helen Ata got a call from someone she didn't know telling her that a massive explosion at the Beirut port had caused her building to collapse. Her brothers were trapped under the rubble. One of them, Issam, survived, with a permanent disability in his right leg. Her twin brother Abdo, whom she calls her "other half," died. "We will never feel safe again," she told The Associated Press, sitting next to a portrait of Abdo. The port blast anniversary Sunday comes as the region braces for retaliation after an Israeli strike killed a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut and an explosion in Tehran, widely blamed on Israel, killed top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. For many, the fears of a new escalation come as wounds of the port explosion four years ago remain raw. On August 4, 2020, hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate



detonated in a Beirut Port warehouse. The gigantic blast tore through the Lebanese capital, killing at least 218 people, according to an AP count, wounded more than 6,000 others, and devastated large swaths of Beirut, causing billions of dollars in damages. The blast stunned the nation and a probe by a maverick investigative judge into the explosion shook the country's ruling elite, rife with corruption and mismanagement. However, years of obstructions by top officials to dodge accountability and stall the probe have hampered hopes for justice. "Four years later, there is not a

single detainee," Ata said. "There is a crime, and there are accused, but there are no criminals." Judge Tarek Bitar is the second investigator to lead the probe into the port blast. He has charged over a dozen senior political, security, port and security officials. Most of the families of the victims rallying for justice have backed him, but senior officials have repeatedly refused to show up for questioning since the start of the investigation. Karim Nammour, a lawyer with the Lebanese watchdog group Legal Agenda, said the case has rattled officials because it exposed the dangers of the "criminal incompetence" of how they have run the country for decades. Lebanon's political leadership has accused Bitar, without providing evidence, of being biased in his investigation, and some even demanded his removal while filing legal complaints against him that have stalled the investigation for years.

Imran says 'army should apologise'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan has refused to apologise for the May 9 riots that erupted after his arrest last year and claimed that it was the Army that owed him an apology since he was "abducted" by the paramilitary rangers on the day of the violence. Khan, 71, was on May 9, 2023, arrested by the Pakistan Rangers from the Islamabad High Court premises during his appearance in a corruption case. His arrest sparked countrywide protests and riots by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters who damaged civilian as well as military installations across the country. Army spokesman Maj Gen Ahmed Sharif on May 7 this year said any dialogue with the PTI could happen if the party apologised for its "politics of anarchy". The statement was followed by calls from different quarters that Khan founded PTI to apologise for the "Black Day" violence. Khan during a media talk on Saturday at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi when asked whether he would tender an apology for the May 9 violence, said he had no reason to apologise, further adding that he was arrested by the rangers headed by a serving major general from the premises of the Islamabad High Court, the Dawn newspaper reported. The former premier, who over the past few weeks has repeatedly expressed his willingness to talk to the army and not with the government, reiterating his position, said he would only hold talks with the "real authority" as negotiations with the government were "a futile exercise". He alleged that talks with the government would be counterproductive as there is an unannounced martial law in the field. The cricketer-turned-politician also added that talks with "people in the power corridors"

would be within the ambit of the Constitution. Dawn further reported that responding to a question that senior politician and his ally Mahmood Khan Achakzai has declined to become the focal point for proposed talks with the establishment, Khan said the senior leader had been nominated to negotiate with political parties. Earlier this week, the former premier said his party was ready for talks with the military establishment but laid down preconditions: the return of his party's "stolen mandate", the release of all detained party workers, and the holding of transparent elections. Khan also urged the military to nominate their representatives for talks. Talking about his prison woes, the former prime minister said he twice suffered from food poisoning as he had no refrigerator in his cell to preserve the food properly. Referring to the new Toshakhana reference in which he and his wife Bushra Bibi are the accused, Khan said the case was a "clear violation of the National Accountability Ordinance". He claimed still having in his possession the Graff watch, which he is accused of selling in the NAB reference. Khan said he had moved his valuable possessions to a safer location following a raid at his Banigala residence in March last year. He warned of legal proceedings against the NAB chairman, interior minister and those officers who implicated him in "false cases". Earlier, the accountability court adjourned till August 7 the proceedings in the 190 million pounds Al-Qadir Trust corruption case. Since Khan's counsel was unavailable, the cross-examination of investigation officer Mian Umar could not be completed. The PTI leader's legal team in an application before Judge Nasir Javed Rana requested that Khan be allowed to call his children.

Flood damage: Putin offers disaster aid to N Korea

AP ■ SEOUL

Russian President Vladimir Putin offered humanitarian assistance to help North Korea cope with damages from recent floods, both countries said, in another sign of expanding relations between the two nations. In a message to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Saturday, Putin "extended deep sympathy and support" and conveyed his willingness to provide immediate disaster aid to help North Korea recover from the floods, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported Sunday. Russia's state news agency Tass carried a similar report, saying that Putin told Kim in the message: "You can always count on our assistance and support." Ties between North Korea and Russia have been improving significantly amid widespread

outside beliefs that North Korea has supplied conventional weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine in return for military and economic assistance. During a meeting in Pyongyang in June, Kim and Putin signed a pact stipulating mutual military assistance if either country is attacked, in what was considered the two countries' biggest defence deal since the end of the Cold War. Kim expressed his gratitude to Putin over the offer for aid, saying he "could deeply feel the special emotion towards a genuine friend in the most difficult period." But Kim said North Korea has established its own rehabilitation plans and will ask for Russian assistance later if it is needed, according to KCNA. Heavy rains in North Korea's northwestern region on July 27 flooded 4,100 houses, 7,410 acres of agricultural fields and numerous other public build-

ings, roads and railways, according to KCNA. The scale of casualties isn't known. KCNA recently quoted Kim as saying the flood caused a "casualty that cannot be allowed" but didn't elaborate. On Thursday, rival South Korea also offered humanitarian support to North Korea. Observers say North Korea will likely ignore or turn down the South Korean proposal, as animosities between the two countries are at one of their highest points in years. During a Friday visit to a military unit involved in operations to evacuate residents stranded by the floods, Kim called South Korea "scum" as he lambasted what he called "rubbish" South Korean media for allegedly tarnishing the North's image by exaggerating the death tolls from the floods. Kim didn't mention South Korea's offer to provide aid.

Albanians vote for new mayor of Greek town

Qeparo (AP): Albanians in the southwestern town of Himara are to vote Sunday for a new mayor after their previous choice, a member of the country's ethnic Greek minority, was stripped of his title, convicted and imprisoned on vote-buying charges in what he and neighboring Greece have claimed was a politically motivated case. Voting started on Sunday with less than 7% of about 23,000 voters casting their ballots in the first two hours, according to the Central Election Commission, the country's governing election body. The process is normal and without any problems so far, it said. Some minor technical issues in some polling stations, with the election documentation, management or voters' identity cards have been reported by local media. Media also has reported that at least four buses have come from neighboring Greece with locally registered voters. Both rival

candidates have invested in bringing Albanian immigrants back to cast their ballots, a normal move in every election in the tiny Balkan country. The case against Fredis Beleris, a dual Albanian-Greek national who was elected to the European Parliament with Greece's governing conservative party in June, has strained relations between Tirana and Athens, with Greece threatening to hold up Albania's bid to join the European Union. Beleris, 51, was arrested two days before the May 14, 2023, municipal elections in Himara, a town populated by ethnic Greeks on what has been dubbed the Albanian Riviera, a coastal region with burgeoning tourist development that has been rife with property disputes. He was charged and ultimately convicted of offering about 40,000 Albanian leks (360 euros, \$390) to buy eight votes, and is serving a two-year prison sentence.

Nigerian leader calls for end to hardship protests

Abuja (AP): Nigeria's leader on Sunday called for an end to mass protests over economic hardship, saying the rallies have turned violent and blaming "a few with a political agenda" for driving them. The protests, which began Thursday, have been accompanied by reports of looting and vandalism, as well as accusations that security forces have used excessive force. Amnesty International has reported the deaths of nine protesters in clashes with police, while another four were killed by a bomb. The Nigerian police denied the Amnesty report. "I have heard you loud and clear," President Bola Tinubu said in his first public remarks on the demonstrations. "I understand the pain and frustration that drive these protests, and I want to assure you that our government is committed to listening and addressing the concerns of our citizens."

Debby moving towards Florida with hurricane warnings

AP ■ MIAMI

A tropical depression strengthened into Tropical Storm Debby north of Cuba on Saturday and was predicted to become a hurricane as it moves through the Gulf of Mexico on a collision course with the Florida coast. The National Hurricane Centre said in an update posted at 5 am Sunday that Debby was located about 195 miles (315 kilometers) south-southwest of Tampa, Florida, and about 255 miles (410 kilometers) south-southwest of Cedar Key, Florida. The storm was moving north-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph) with maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (85 kph). The storm was strengthening over the southeastern Gulf and expected to be a hurricane before making landfall in the Big Bend region of Florida, the hurricane centre said. Wind and thunderstorms have spread over a broad area includ-

ing southern Florida, the Florida Keys and the Bahamas. A hurricane warning and tropical storm warnings were in effect for sections of Florida's coast and a tropical storm watch was added for coastal Georgia in the latest advisory. Debby is likely to bring drenching rain and coastal flooding to much of Florida's Gulf Coast by Sunday night and predictions show the system could come ashore as a hurricane Monday and cross over northern Florida into the Atlantic Ocean. Forecasters warn it also could drop heavy rains over north Florida and the Atlantic coasts of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina early next week. Debby is the fourth named storm of the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season after Tropical Storm Alberto, Hurricane Beryl and Tropical Storm Chris, all of which formed in June. The National Hurricane Center in Miami predicted the system

will strengthen as it curves off the southwest Florida coast, where the water has been extremely warm. Intensification was expected to proceed more quickly later on Sunday. A hurricane warning was issued for parts of the Big Bend and the Florida Panhandle, while tropical storm warnings were posted for Florida's West Coast, the southern Florida Keys and Dry Tortugas. A tropical storm watch extended farther west into the Panhandle. A warning means storm conditions are expected within 36 hours, while a watch means they are possible within 48 hours. Tropical storms and hurricanes can trigger river flooding and overwhelm drainage systems and canals. Forecasters warned of 6 to 12 inches (150mm to 300 mm) of rain and up to 18 inches (450 mm) in isolated areas, which could create "locally considerable"

flash and urban flooding. Forecasters also warned of moderate flooding for some rivers along Florida's West Coast. Some of the heaviest rains could actually come next week along the Atlantic Coast from Jacksonville, Florida, through coastal regions of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. The storm is expected to slow down after making landfall. "We could see a stall or a meandering motion around coastal portions of the southeastern United States," National Hurricane Center Director Michael Brennan said in a Saturday briefing. "So that's going to exacerbate not just the rainfall risk, but also the potential for storm surge and some strong winds." Flat Florida is prone to flooding even on sunny days, and the storm was predicted to bring a surge of 2 to 4 feet (0.6 to 1.2 metres) along most of the

Gulf Coast, including Tampa Bay, with a storm tide of up to 7 feet (2.1 metres) north of there in the sparsely populated Big Bend region. Forecasters warned of "a danger of life-threatening storm surge inundation" in a region that includes Hernando Beach, Crystal River, Steinhatchee and Cedar Key. Officials in Citrus and Levy counties ordered a mandatory evacuation of coastal areas, while those in Hernando, Manatee, Pasco and Taylor counties called for voluntary evacuations. Shelters opened in those and some other counties. Citrus County Sheriff Mike Prendergast estimated 21,000 people live in his county's evacuation zone. Officials rescued 73 people from storm surge flooding during last year's Hurricane Idalia. Prendergast said by phone that he hopes not to have a repeat with Debbie. "After the storm surge does come in, we simply don't have

enough first responders in our agency and among the other first responders in the county to go in and rescue everybody that might need to be rescued," he said. Governor Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency for 61 of Florida's 67 counties, with the National Guard activating 3,000 guard members. Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp made his own emergency proclamation on Saturday. The White House said federal and Florida officials were in touch and FEMA "pre-positioned" resources including water and food. In Tampa alone, officials gave out more than 30,000 sandbags to barricade against flooding. "We've got our stormwater drains cleared out. We've got our generators all checked and full. We're doing everything that we need to be prepared to face a tropical storm," Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said.

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RBI likely to keep interest rate unchanged at 6.5%, say experts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to keep the key interest rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent on Thursday, and wait for more macroeconomic data before taking a call on rate cut in line with expectations, experts said.

The US Federal Reserve has decided to maintain a status quo on its interest rate for now and indicated there could be monetary policy easing in the coming months. Amid persisting inflationary pressures, RBI will be closely tracking the US monetary policy trajectory before changing its stance on interest rate, which has remained unchanged since February 2023, experts opined.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) may also refrain from rate cut as economic growth is picking up, notwithstanding the elevated interest rate of 6.5 per cent (repo rate).

The meeting of the Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed MPC is



scheduled for August 6 to 8. Das will announce the decision of the rate-setting panel on August 8 (Thursday).

The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at same level in its last seven bi-monthly monetary policy reviews.

"We do expect a status-quo position to be adopted by RBI in the forthcoming credit policy. Inflation remains high even today at 5.1 per cent and

while this will come down numerically in the coming months, it will be more due to the base effect," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda. He further said growth is on the stable path which means that the present interest rate situation does not militate against business.

"The RBI would rather wait and be sure that inflation is on the downward path on a durable basis before taking any action. While we do not expect any change in GDP

forecast, there is a possibility of new guidance on inflation numbers," Sabnavis said.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA, said that high growth in FY2024, combined with the inflation of 4.9 per cent in first quarter of the current fiscal are unlikely to shift the voting pattern of the four members who voted for a status quo in the June 2024 meeting towards a change in stance or rate cut in the August 2024 meeting itself.

"If the food inflation outlook turns favourable on the back of a normal distribution of rains in the second half of the monsoon season, and in the absence of global or domestic shocks, a stance change is possible in October 2024. This could be followed by a 25 bps rate cut each in December 2024 and February 2025, with an extended pause thereafter," she said.

Last month, Governor Das had said the question of change of stance on interest rate is quite premature given the gap between current inflation and 4 per cent target.

India seeks duty concession on cars, machinery, commercial vehicles in FTA with Sri Lanka

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is seeking customs duty concession on a number of goods including cars, commercial vehicles and machinery from Sri Lanka under a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA), talks for which are underway, an official said.

India has also sought easier visa norms to further facilitate entry of professionals from here, the official said. The 14th round of talks between senior officials of India and Sri Lanka was concluded recently in Colombo.

Issues which came up for the talks included rules of origin, goods, services, and technical barriers for trade. On the other hand, Sri Lanka has sought removal of a quota on apparel exports to India. The island nation is also asking for duty concessions on tea and certain agricultural commodities.

The official said that as elections are announced in Sri Lanka, the next round of negotiations between the two countries will be held after that.

The two nations have already implemented a free trade agreement in goods and now



they are negotiating to expand the pact by including more goods and services.

The India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA) came into force in March 2000. It enhanced economic relations between the two countries by reducing tariffs on a wide range of goods.

Since the original ISFTA focused solely on goods, both countries have been negotiating for several years to expand it into a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which would include services, investment, and other areas of economic cooperation.

Under the current FTA, India allowed limited imports of garments from Sri Lanka at a 50 per cent tariff (or customs

duty) concession for up to 8 million pieces annually, with a requirement that 6 million of these pieces use Indian fabric. Additionally, India offered a 50 per cent tariff concession on up to 15 million kg of tea from Sri Lanka each year. Think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that Sri Lanka may be seeking removal of the quota on garments, especially considering that India has allowed duty-free imports of garments from Bangladesh under the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

"However agreeing to this request may not be easy for India as allowing duty free imports has led to a significant increase in

garment imports from Bangladesh, growing from USD 144.25 million in FY2014 to USD 739.06 million in FY2024, a cumulative growth of 412.34 per cent," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Sri Lanka has placed items like automobiles and electrical goods in its negative list, restricting their import.

Since the implementation of the ISFTA, trade between the two countries has experienced fair growth.

India's exports to Sri Lanka increased from USD 499.3 million in FY2000 to USD 4.17 billion in 2023-24, a cumulative growth of 735.2 per cent. Meanwhile, imports grew from USD 44.3 million to USD 1.4 billion over the same period.

In the last fiscal, India's key exports to Sri Lanka included petroleum products (USD 704 million), cotton (USD 260 million), pharmaceuticals (USD 255 million), refined sugar (USD 206 million), fabric (USD 223 million), machinery (USD 171 million), pepper (USD 90.9 million), car and motorcycle parts (USD 79.3 million), onions (USD 63.4 million), and pulses (USD 32 million).

FPIs invest ₹32,365 cr in equities in July on continued policy reforms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors infused Rs 32,365 crore into Indian equities in July on the back of expectation of continued policy reforms and sustained economic growth and better-than-expected earnings season.

However, they pulled Rs 1,027 crore from equities in the first two trading sessions of this month (August 1-2), data with the depositories showed. There has been a mixed trend with respect to FPI flows following the budget announcement on increase in capital gains tax on equity investments. Going forward, developments in the US economy and markets will set the trend for FPI in August, V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

"Weaker-than-expected employment data along with slowing economy has made it certain that the US Fed is expected to cut rates in September. The more important question here is the extent of cut. Currently, there is strong commentary getting built for maybe a 50 basis points rate cut in interest



rates," Vaibhav Porwal, Co-founder of Dezerv, said. According to the data with the depositories, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have made a net inflow of Rs 32,365 crore in equities in July. This came following an inflow Rs 26,565 crore in June driven by political stability and the sharp rebound in markets.

Before that, FPIs withdrew Rs 25,586 crore in May on poll jitters and over Rs 8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields. The resurgence in FPI investment can be attributed to sustained economic

growth, government's focus on infrastructure development, better-than-expected earnings season that has improved corporate India's balance sheet, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research at Morningstar Investment Research India, said. Additionally, upward revisions in India's GDP forecast by IMF and ADB, and a slowdown in China, also works in India's favour, he added.

Apart from equities, FPIs invested Rs 22,363 crore in the debt market in July. This has pushed the debt tally to Rs 94,628 crore this year so far.

Mcap of eight of top-10 most valued firms slump ₹1.28 lakh cr; TCS, Infosys biggest laggards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eight of the top-10 most valued firms together lost Rs 1,28,913.5 crore in market valuation last week, with IT majors Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys emerging as the biggest laggards, amid weak trend in equities.

The valuation of TCS tumbled Rs 37,971.83 crore to Rs 15,49,626.88 crore, the most among the top-10 firms. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Infosys tanked Rs 23,811.88 crore to Rs 7,56,250.47 crore. ITC's mcap dropped by Rs 16,619.51 crore to Rs 6,11,423.11 crore and that of State Bank of India slumped by Rs 13,431.54 crore to Rs 7,56,177.85 crore.

The valuation of Reliance Industries Limited declined by Rs 13,125.49 crore to Rs 20,28,695.57 crore. Bharti Airtel's market valuation went lower by Rs 11,821.5 crore to Rs 8,50,389.88 crore and that of ICICI Bank diminished by Rs 7,843.75 crore to Rs 8,42,176.78 crore. The valuation of Hindustan Unilever dipped by Rs 4,288



crore to Rs 6,32,862.41 crore. However, the mcap of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 32,759.37 crore to Rs 12,63,601.40 crore.

The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) soared Rs 1,075.25 crore to Rs 7,47,677.98 crore. Last week, the BSE benchmark declined by 350.77 points or 0.43 per cent. In the ranking of the most valued firms, Reliance Industries retained the number one rank followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

Spending on outbound tourism to rise 11% annually to reach USD 55 bn in 2034: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spending on outbound tourism is expected to grow from USD 18.82 billion in 2024 to USD 55.39 billion in 2034, a report said.

The 'Navigating Horizons' report jointly prepared by Nangia NXT and Ficci said packaged tours still dominate the outbound market in India, with a share of 39.20 per cent in 2024, as there is a preference for choosing pre-planned tour packages from travel service providers due to greater convenience and customisation.

The report said that availability of Indian or vegetarian food options as well as awareness about niche tourism will help increase the number and frequency of Indians engaging in foreign travel in the coming years. The market has already seen robust growth with rising disposable incomes, an expanding middle class, systemic ease and flexibility in obtaining visas, and a desire for international experiences.

"Countries like Egypt, Azerbaijan and Georgia, among others, known for their rich history, cultural



heritage, natural beauty and unique topographies, are attracting more and more Indians to venture abroad. Such destinations are often more affordable as well," the report said.

With a rising urban and young population, the inclination towards exploring international destinations is expected to continue to grow. Demographic trends thus are likely to support growth in outbound tourism in the near future, it added.

"India's outbound tourism market is showing stellar growth and is projected to reach USD 18.82 billion in 2024. There have also been

measurable benefits to allied industries such as aviation and hospitality. The growth in the industry is bolstered by increased consumer spending, visa reforms, social media visibility and commercial marketing efforts," said Suraj Nangia, Head (Government and Public Sector Advisory), Nangia NXT.

With the Indian outbound market expected to grow at a CAGR of 11.4 per cent and reach USD 55.39 billion by 2034, the outlook is positive with coordinated efforts by all stakeholders propelling the industry forward, Nangia added.

After record profits, State-owned fuel retailers see profit slump in Q1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After reporting record profits, state-owned fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), BPCL and HPCL posted up to 90 per cent slump in their June quarter earnings as margins fell and they booked under-recovery on the sale of domestic cooking gas LPG at government-controlled rates.

IOC, the nation's largest oil firm, reported 81 per cent drop in standalone net profit in April-June - the first quarter of current 2024-25 fiscal year - to Rs 2,643.18 crore as opposed to a profit of Rs 13,750.44 crore a year back, according to a company filing. Net profit also declined sequentially, when compared to an earning of Rs 11,570.82 crore in March quarter.

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) posted 90 per cent drop in profit to Rs 633.94 crore as compared to an earning of Rs 6,765.50 crore in April-June 2023 and Rs 2,709.31 crore in the preceding March quarter. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) net profit dropped to Rs 2,841.55 crore in April-June from Rs 10,644.30 crore a year back and Rs 4,789.57 crore in January-March, its filing showed. The three fuel retailers made extraordinary gains from



holding petrol and diesel prices despite a drop in cost. The price freeze was justified in the name of recovering losses they had suffered in the previous year when they did not raise retail prices despite a surge in cost. The gains arising from the price freeze were eroded with petrol and diesel prices being cut by Rs 2 per litre each just before general elections and a fall in refining margins.

Also, the three had uncompensated LPG subsidy - IOC booking under-recovery of Rs 5,156.23 crore in April-June, BPCL Rs 2,015.10 crore and HPCL Rs 2,443.71 crore, according to the filings.

As per an order of the oil ministry, when market determined price (MDP) of LPG cylinders is less than its effective cost to customer (ECC), oil marketing companies (OMCs) have to

retain the difference in a separate buffer account for future adjustment. However, as on June 30, 2024, the three firms had a net negative buffer as the retail selling price was less than MDP.

The three retailers IOC, BPCL and HPCL had reported record profits totalling about Rs 81,000 crore in FY24 (2023-24), which was far more than their annual earnings of Rs 39,356 crore in pre-oil crisis years. This is because they resisted calls to revert to daily price revision and pass on softening in rates to consumers on grounds that prices continue to be extremely volatile - rising on one day and falling on the other - and that they needed to recoup losses incurred in the year, when they kept rates lower than cost.

IOC in 2023-24 posted a standalone net profit of Rs

39,618.84 crore compared to Rs 8,241.82 crore in 2022-23. While the company could argue that FY23 was impacted by the oil crisis, the FY24 earnings are higher than even the pre-crisis years - Rs 24,184 crore net profit in 2021-22 and Rs 21,836 crore in 2020-21.

BPCL posted a net profit of Rs 26,673.50 crore in FY24, higher than Rs 1,870.10 crore earnings in 2022-23 and Rs 8,788.73 crore in FY22.

HPCL's 2023-24 profit of Rs 14,693.83 crore is compared with a Rs 8,974.03 crore loss in FY23 and a profit of Rs 6,382.63 crore in 2021-22, according to the filings. The losses in FY23 had led to the finance minister announcing Rs 30,000 crore equity infusion in the three firms. Mid-way through the year, that support was halved to Rs 15,000 crore. The support was to happen by way of equity infusion via a rights issue.

But after the record profits of 2023-24, the equity infusion plan has now been scrapped. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had on February 1 last year, while presenting the annual Budget for the 2023-24 fiscal (April 2023 to March 2024), announced an equity infusion of Rs 30,000 crore in IOC, BPCL and HPCL to support the three state-owned firm's energy transition plans.

Rise in construction activities to propel India's cement demand by 7-8% in FY25: UltraTech

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Demand for cement is projected to grow 7-8 per cent in the current financial year, helped by an increase in construction activities throughout the country, UltraTech Cement said in its latest annual report.

To meet this increased demand, the cement industry is expected to add 35 - 40 million tonne capacity in the next fiscal, with 60-65 per cent concentrated in the eastern and southern regions, said the Aditya Birla group flagship firm.

Besides, this demand surge will translate into an increase in capacity utilisation of the industry to 72 per cent in FY25, which was around 68 per cent in FY23.

"In FY 2024-25, cement demand is projected to grow 7-8 per cent driven by an increase in construction activities throughout the country, spread across the infrastructure and housing sector," said UltraTech.

There has been a "concerted focus" on the integrated and coordinated planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, adhering to the principles of PM Gati Shakti. Priority has been given to allocating expenditure towards vital sectors and additionally, the effectiveness of cash management has been enhanced through the timely release of resources



with the significant strengthening of brand equity in the marketplace, positions your company to harness these long-term growth opportunities effectively," he said adding UltraTech's growth trajectory mirrors India's growth story. UltraTech is aggressively expanding its capacity and Birla said "our growth momentum has accelerated, enabling us to be at the forefront of India's infrastructure development."

While mentioning the capacity of UltraTech, Birla said its "scale and capacity footprint is unparalleled" which will further enable it to service India's growing demand for cement across the country.

Last month, UltraTech announced acquiring a majority stake in South-based India Cements Ltd (ICL) and also over Rs 3,000 crore open offer to acquire 26 per cent shares of the company. In FY24, UltraTech recorded net sales of Rs 69,810 crore and crossed the historic milestone of 150 MTPA (million tonne per annum) capacity. "From the first cement unit that we commissioned in the early 1980s with one MTPA capacity to now the world's third largest cement company, outside of China, UltraTech's journey has been marked by scorching growth, ambitious bets and flawless execution," said Birla.

Zomato collected ₹ 83 cr in platform fee from customers till March

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Food delivery aggregator Zomato, which began charging platform fee on orders from last August, collected Rs 83 crore through the new levy till March, the company's annual report has revealed.

Platform fee has been cited as one of the three key factors driving Zomato's Adjusted Revenue, which grew 27 per cent year-on-year to Rs 7,792 crore in FY24.

"Adjusted Revenue as a percentage of GOV (gross order value), continued to increase primarily due to increase in restaurant commission take-rates, improvement in ad monetization and introduction of platform fee from Q2FY24 onwards," the report stated.

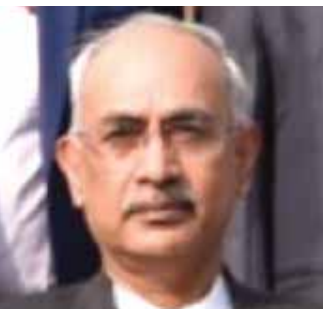
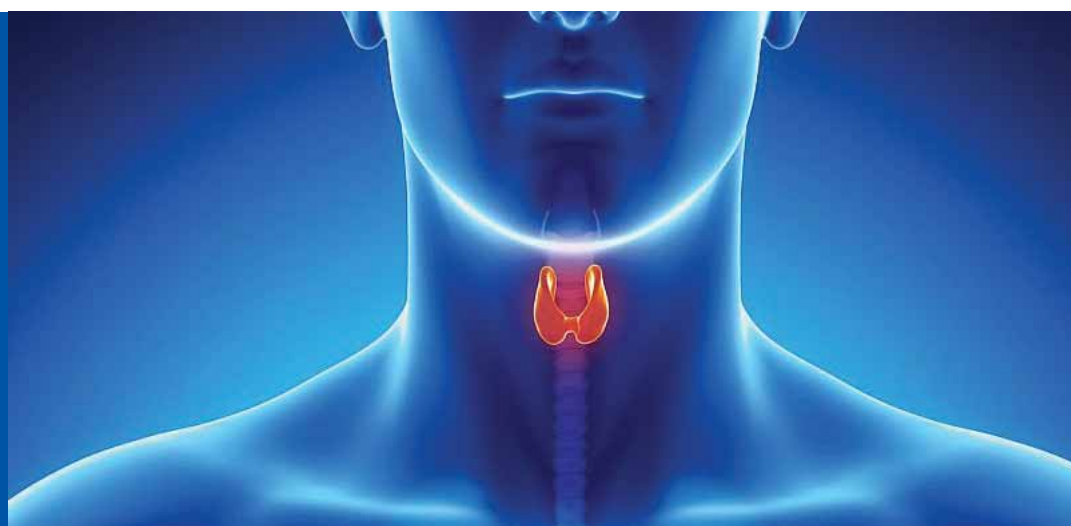
All of these factors more than compensated for the reduction in customer delivery charge per order due to the free delivery benefit available on Gold orders, it added. Interestingly, most late night orders in the last fiscal year came from Delhi NCR, while most breakfast orders came from Bengaluru, Zomato shared in the report.

The food delivery aggregator began levying platform fee at Rs 2 per order last August, which has gradually been increased to Rs 6 now in key markets.



GOITRE

BENIGN GROWTH WITH POTENTIAL RISKS



DR SUNIL CHUMBER
Professor and Head

Characterised by multiple growths in the thyroid gland, multinodular Goitre (MNG) is typically benign but carries a small cancer risk. Factors like family history and nodule features influence cancer risk, necessitating timely imaging and, blood investigations among others. In this second part of the series, **ARCHANA JYOTI** speaks with the team of AIIMS Delhi's Surgical Disciplines Department headed by **DR SUNIL CHUMBER** to get more insight into this

UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS OF CANCER IN MNG

Are All Nodules Dangerous?

Not all thyroid nodules are harmful. In fact, most nodules in a multinodular goitre are benign, meaning they are not cancerous. However, there is a small chance that some nodules can be malignant (cancerous). Understanding this risk is crucial for proper monitoring and treatment. **Potential Complications of MNG:** While MNG itself is usually not life-threatening, it can cause several complications, including:

- **Thyroid Dysfunction:** MNG can sometimes lead to hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid), where the gland produces too much thyroid hormone, causing symptoms like weight loss, rapid heartbeat, and nervousness. Less commonly, it can cause hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid), resulting in fatigue, weight gain, and depression.
- **Cancer Risk:** Although rare, some nodules in a multinodular goitre can become cancerous. Detecting these malignant nodules early is vital for effective treatment.



DR ANKITA SINGH
Assistant Professor

RECOGNISING RISK IN MNG
Several factors can increase the risk of thyroid cancer in



DR AJAY MOHAN
Senior Resident

individuals with MNG:
Family History: A family history of thyroid cancer or genetic conditions that predispose to cancer increases the risk.

Radiation Exposure: Previous exposure to radiation, particularly in childhood, can raise the likelihood of developing thyroid cancer.
Nodule Characteristics: Nodules that are large, rapidly growing, or have certain features seen on ultrasound (such as irregular edges or microcalcifications) may be more suspicious for cancer.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND FOLLOW-UP
Regular check-ups and appropriate diagnostic tests are crucial for managing the risk of cancer in MNG. If you have a MNG, your doctor may recommend:

- **Periodic Ultrasound Exams:** To monitor nodule size and characteristics.
 - **Thyroid Function Tests:** To ensure your thyroid is working properly.
 - **Prompt Biopsy of Suspicious Nodules:** Early detection is key to successful treatment.
- While the majority of MNG are benign, it is important to be aware of the potential risks and complications, including the small chance of cancer. Regular check-ups, appropriate diagnostic tests, and timely treatment are key to managing this condition effectively. If you have a multinodular goitre or notice any unusual symptoms, consult your doctor for personalised advice and care. Staying informed and vigilant can help ensure the best possible outcomes.



BLOOD INVESTIGATIONS

Blood investigations in multinodular goitre form an important part of evaluation. It helps understand the cause of the goitre and the status of thyroid hormone production - increased, normal or decreased. It includes the following:



DR CATHERINE HALAM
Senior Resident

- TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone) - usually remains normal but can be reduced in toxic MNG (increased secretion of thyroxine by thyroid gland) and increased if MNG is associated with hypothyroidism (decreased thyroxine secretion)
- Free T4
- Free T3

Both usually remain normal, increased in toxic goitre, can be decreased in goitres with hypothyroidism.



DR KAMAL KATARIA
Additional professor

investigate the functional status of a patient with a simple diffuse goitre or multinodular goitre may differ depending on the geographic areas of the world. Although serum thyroglobulin correlates with the iodine status and the size of the enlarged thyroid gland, it has little or no value in diagnosis of goitre.

In treating a condition like MNG, doctors often rely on different imaging methods to get a clear picture of what's happening in the thyroid gland. Here's a breakdown of the main ones used:

- **Ultrasound (US):** This is the first imaging investigation to be done in anyone with MNG. It gives a black and white picture of the thyroid gland and allows your doctor to see the size and number of nodules, and even their makeup - whether they're solid, fluid-filled, or a mix of both. Ultrasound images also help identify suspicious features in the nodules that might indicate cancer risk.
- **Computed Tomography (CT):** CT scans provide more detailed images than ultrasound, but is not required for all cases of MNG. Your doctor will ask for this only if required like if the goiter is large, or pressing on other organs, and if cancer is suspected. In these situations, CT scans provide a closer look at the thyroid and nearby

IMAGING MODALITIES



DR. DEVENDER
Assistant Professor

structures to help plan treatment.
● **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI):** This is another way to get detailed images of the thyroid and surrounding areas. Again, it is not performed for all patients and has similar indications as for CT scan and is especially useful when doctors suspect the goiter is growing into other tissues, or if a patient is allergic to dye used in CT scans.



DR AAYUSH NAGPAL
Junior Resident

used to take images of the thyroid. It shows if nodules are "hot" or "cold", which is, whether they are actively working - to produce thyroxine (hot), or not (cold). Hot nodules usually aren't cancerous, but cold ones might need further checking. Each imaging method has its pros and cons, but your doctor often will use a mix of them to get the full picture of what's going on with the thyroid. This helps them make the best decisions about treatment and keep an eye out for any potential problems.
(To be concluded)



RML Doctors Set New Benchmark in Plastic Surgery Arena

In a departure from traditional celebrations such as routine seminars and conferences, doctors at the central government-run Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital in Delhi embarked on a marathon of surgical prowess to mark World Plastic Surgery Day on July 15. The hospital's medical team, led by The Burn and Plastic Surgery Department, set out to demonstrate their expertise in an unprecedented 24-hour surgical session. From 9 am on July 15 to 9 am on July 16, a dedicated team of 17 surgeons tirelessly operated across 24 operating theatres, tackling a spectrum of complex cases ranging from congenital anomalies to severe trauma-induced deformities.



DR AJAY SHUKLA
Medical Superintendent of RML Hospital, Delhi

The department's initiative was aimed to prioritise postponed surgeries and urgent cases, underscoring its commitment to timely treatment and increasing the number of procedures conducted

Among their patients were individuals as young as two years old to adults up to 47 years of age, each requiring specialised care and surgical intervention. Of the two minors (two years of age) bardach's palatal repair and contracture release with skin grafting were done. The oldest male, a 47-year-old patient underwent lymphangioma excision plastic surgery. Dr. Ajay Shukla, Medical Superintendent of RML Hospital, said the initiative aimed to address postponed surgeries and urgent cases. He highlighted the department's commitment to maximising the number of procedures performed, ensuring that patients in need received timely care. Among the day's notable achievements was the successful hand transplantation, a feat requiring intricate precision and coordination of bones, tendons, muscles, blood vessels, and nerves, said Dr. MK Jha, the Additional Director at the Hospital. The surgical marathon also addressed severe facial injuries, correcting not only functional impairments but also restoring essential aspects of patients' appearance and self-esteem. Dr. Samik Bhattacharya, Head of the Department of Burns, Plastic, Maxillofacial, and Microvascular Surgery, underscored the significance of procedures like eyebrow corrections,

crucial for facial symmetry and expression. The marathon session also catered trauma-induced deformities, burns requiring skin grafts, and congenital anomalies such as cleft lip and palate. Dr. Sharma, a seasoned Professor within the department, emphasised the transformative impact of these surgeries, not only improving physical health but also enhancing overall quality of life for their patients. Dr. Neeraj Banerjee, head of Anesthesia, and the team headed by Dr. Rupesh conducted the OT as a mission. Dr. Banerjee said, that reconstructive surgery aims to restore the appearance and function of body parts affected by illness, injury, cancer, tumors, developmental issues, or congenital defects. Commenting on the unique approach, Dr. VK Tiwari, a renowned Plastic Surgeon and former Medical Superintendent of RML Hospital, currently serving as Dean of Hindu Rao College in Delhi, said such initiatives will give idea to more hospitals which will ultimately benefit the needy. "These surgeries often involve more complexity and longer healing times compared to cosmetic treatments," he said.

Plastic Surgery: Transforming Lives and Confidence

DR SANJAY PARASHAR and DR KRITI LOHIA delve into the various benefits of plastic surgery, emphasising its role in improving physical appearance, correcting congenital deformities, boosting self-esteem, and fostering mental well-being for individuals facing personal challenges

Plastic surgery is a subspecialty that focuses on the restoration, reconstruction, or enhancement of the human body and it has evolved significantly over the years. It comprises two broad specialties- Aesthetic surgery, which was once primarily associated with celebrities for beauty enhancements, and Reconstructive surgery, which encompasses a wide range of procedures that significantly impact an individual's life.

augmentation, liposuction, and hair transplantation significantly alter not only a person's looks but also help align their external appearance with their inner self-image. This alignment is like a bullet train to a substantial boost in self-esteem. When individuals feel happy about their appearance, they most definitely experience increased self-confidence, which positively influences various aspects of not only their own lives, from personal relationships to professional endeavors but also a trickle-down effect on people in their circles. For instance, a person who has spent the majority of their life feeling self-conscious about a prominent nasal hump or unbalanced breasts



DR SANJAY PARASHAR

may find that correcting these issues through plastic surgery eliminates a significant source of insecurity. Other skin issues like vitiligo, acne, scars, burns, moles, warts, cysts, mulberry birthmarks, dark spots, etc can be handled through minimally invasive aesthetic dermatology and improve the looks significantly. These procedures become the first step towards their newfound



DR KRITI LOHIA

confidence, which encourages them to engage more freely in social situations, pursue career opportunities with greater vigor, and generally approach life with a more positive outlook. **CORRECTING CONGENITAL DEFORMITIES** Plastic surgery also has a profound impact on individuals who are born

with congenital deformities such as cleft lip and palate, craniostylosis (premature fusion of skull bones), and syndactyly (webbed fingers) that are effectively treated through reconstructive surgery. These congenital issues affect not only their physical appearance but also lead to functional impairments and social stigma. Cleft lip and palate, for example, are among the most common congenital deformities, affecting approximately 1 in 700 babies worldwide. These conditions cause difficulties in feeding, speech, and hearing, and often result in social challenges due to visible facial differences. Reconstructive surgery corrects these deformities,

significantly improving an individual's quality of life or in this case, a child. When you look beyond just the physical benefits, children and adults who undergo successful corrective surgery, time and again report higher self-esteem and better social integration, as they no longer feel defined by their appearance. It is often argued that plastic surgery allowed them to redefine themselves. **ADDRESSING TRAUMATIC INJURIES** Traumatic injuries, such as those sustained in accidents or due to violence, can leave individuals with severe disfigurements that impact their physical and emotional well-being. Reconstructive

plastic surgery repairs damage caused by burns, fractures, and other traumatic injuries, restoring both function and appearance. Consider the case of a burn victim who has suffered extensive facial and body burns. These resulting scars can be physically debilitating and emotionally harrowing. Through skin grafts, tissue expansion, regenerative therapies, and other reconstructive techniques, plastic surgeons and trained dermatologists significantly reduce the appearance of these scars and improve the functionality of affected areas. The psychological impact of such transformations is both immense and priceless.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE The psychological benefits of plastic surgery extend beyond improved self-esteem. Individuals frequently report a reduction in their anxiety and depression following these procedures. This is particularly true for those who have lived with long-term dissatisfaction or emotional distress related to their appearance. By addressing their concerns, plastic surgery helps alleviate negative emotions and promotes mental well-being. (Dr Sanjay Parashar is a well-known plastic surgeon in Dubai and Dr Kriti Lohia is an Aesthetic Dermatologist and Dermato-surgeon. They are co-founders of 'Aesthetics redefined by Cocoon', Gurgaon)

JULIEN SHOCKS SHA'CARRI, WINS WOMEN'S 100 METRE GOLD, BRINGS 1ST OLYMPIC MEDAL TO SAINT LUCIA

AP ■ SAINT-DENIS, FRANCE

Sha'Carri Richardson's comeback story hit a brick wall when Julien Alfred romped in the rain to the 100-meter title in 10.72 seconds to bring the first-ever Olympic medal to her island country of Saint Lucia.

Racing one lane to the left of Richardson, and with water from a fast-moving storm puddling on the purple track in the Stade de France, Alfred got off to a fantastic start, then powered through the rain and beat Richardson by .15 seconds - about three body lengths on Saturday. It was the biggest margin in the women's Olympic 100 since 2008.

Richardson' training partner, American Melissa Jefferson,



finished third in 10.92 seconds. All week long, the field seemed to be clearing for Richardson, the reigning world champion who was making her Olympic debut after a positive test for marijuana cost her a chance to

race three years ago in Tokyo. When Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce abruptly withdrew from the semifinal, which went off about 90 minutes before the gold-medal race, the entire Jamaican team that had swept the podium

in Tokyo was out of the 100. One island's loss is another's gain. The strongest contender left was Alfred, who hails from the Eastern Caribbean island with a population of around

180,000. She was the only Olympic entrant besides Richardson to break 10.8 this year - and when she and Richardson lined up next to each other in the semifinals, it was a preview of things to come. Alfred won that race by .05, then lined up next to Richardson again for the final and tripled that margin. One of the most anticipated races of the Olympic track meet was never a contest.

Alfred had two steps on the entire field at the 40-meter mark, while Richardson, whose starts have been an issue at times this summer, labored to get to full speed. The American, her arms pumping wide in Lane 7, looked to be making up a bit of ground when Alfred leaned

into the finish line. But there was too big a gap between them and the real contest was the one between Richardson and Jefferson for second. America's lone gold medal of the day came from Ryan Crouser, who earned a threepeat in the shot put. Another American silver went to the 4x400 mixed relay team, which got reeled in by Femke Bol of the Netherlands in the anchor lap. Jasmine Moore won a bronze medal in the triple jump competition, won by Thea Lafond, setting herself up for a possible double when she competes in long jump later this week. Earlier in the day, Noah Lyles finished second (10.04) in a sluggish first-round qualifying heat to make the semifinals in the men's 100.

BADMINTON AT OLYMPICS Sen falls to Axelsen in semis, to play bronze-medal playoff

PTI ■ PARIS

India's dream of a first-ever Olympic gold in badminton will remain unfulfilled after Lakshya Sen suffered a straight-game defeat to reigning Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in the men's singles semifinals at the Paris Games here on Sunday. The 22-year-old from Almora, a 2021 World Championships bronze medal, squandered a three-point advantage in the first game and a 7-0 lead in the second to surrender 20-22 14-21 to the two-time world champion Axelsen in a 54-minute semifinal clash. Sen will have another chance to become the first Indian male shuttler to win an Olympic medal when he meets Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia in the bronze medal playoff. India have never won a Olympic gold medal in bad-



minton with PV Sindhu claiming a silver and bronze at the Rio and Tokyo Olympics and Saina Nehwal securing a bronze in London Games.

Lovlina outwitted in QF; India's boxing campaign ends

PTI ■ PARIS

India's boxing campaign at the ongoing Olympics came to a medal-less end after Tokyo edition bronze-winner Lovlina Borgohain (75kg) bowed out following a hard-fought quarterfinal loss to China's Li Qian in the women's competition here on Sunday.

Borgohain, the reigning world champion in the category, went down 1-4 to the Tokyo Games silver-winning 34-year-old in a messy contest during which both the boxers were repeatedly cautioned for clinching and holding.

The 26-year-old's loss ended India's boxing campaign in the Olympics after Nishant Dev was ousted from the men's 71kg quarterfinals on Saturday night, also a close contest.

A six-strong boxing contingent, comprising four women and two men, was representing the country in the Games. Out of these, four had crashed out in the preliminary stage itself.

It was a pacey start to the proceedings as Borgohain and Qian quickly got into a tangle. However, none of the boxers seemed willing to launch the first attack.

The holding and clinching started pretty early in the bout and the referee had to repeatedly step in to separate the two old foes. Qian seemed determined while Borgohain came across the more animated of the two early on.

The Chinese connected some clean combination punches and a left hook towards the end of the first round. She was particularly impressive before she took a 3-2 lead in the contest.

The second round didn't start any different but Qian was more purposeful in her approach. Her right straights were on target while Borgohain was cautioned twice for excessive holding.

It was once again 3-2 in favour

of Qian but with a different set of judges scoring in her favour this time, she only had a slender one-point lead on one card, while the remaining four were tied.

The holding and clinching continued in the third round too and both the women seemed a bit drained.

However, Qian showed great presence of mind throughout to keep Borgohain at a distance. Borgohain was not up to it when it came to controlling the pace of the bout and repeatedly took hits on counter-attacks.

The Assamese had fought Qian in the Asian Games final last year and gone down 0-5. She later beat Qian in the semifinals of the world championship semifinal in 2023.

But more recently, she was bested by the veteran in a pre-Olympic tournament in Czechia in June.

Katie Ledecky swims into history with 800 freestyle victory at Paris Olympics

AP ■ NANTERRE (FRANCE)

Katie Ledecky capped another stellar Olympics by becoming only the second swimmer to win an event at four straight Summer Games, holding off Ariarne Titmus to win the 800-meter freestyle Saturday night. It was Ledecky's second gold medal in Paris and ninth of her remarkable career, which marked another milestone. She became only the sixth Olympian to reach that figure, joining swimmer Mark Spitz, track star Carl Lewis, Soviet gymnast Larisa Latynina and a Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi in a tie for second place.

Ukraine wins its first gold medal of Paris Olympics in women's team saber fencing

AP ■ PARIS

Ukraine has won its first gold medal of the Paris Olympics by defeating South Korea in the final of the women's team saber fencing on Saturday. The Ukrainian team recovered from six points down to beat South Korea 45-42 on 22 points from individual bronze medalist Olga Kharlan. She came in for the final leg of the bout with her team at 40-37 down and went 8-2 to win. Ukraine had two medals before Saturday's final; a silver in shooting from Serhiy Kulish and the bronze that Kharlan won Monday in women's saber. That was a particularly emotional moment for Kharlan, a year after she was disqualified at the world championships for refusing to shake the hand of a Russian fencer, something which briefly put her Olympic



qualification in jeopardy. It was an incident that highlighted the tension over whether to allow Russian athletes to keep competing following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Five-time Olympian Kharlan has her sixth Olympic medal in a career that began with women's team saber gold at the 2008 Olympics, when she was 17. Japan beat France 45-40 for the bronze medal even though the French team had individual gold medalist Manon Apithy-Brunet and silver medalist Sara Balzer.

Viktorija, a former UCF rower with epilepsy, wins Lithuania's first medal in Paris Olympics

AP ■ VAIRES-SUR-MARNE, FRANCE

A former University of Central Florida rower with epilepsy who won Lithuania's first medal at the Paris Olympics on Saturday hopes her achievement will help motivate others with the disorder. Viktorija Senkute, who attended the Florida college from 2015-18, won the bronze medal in the women's singles class. It was also the first medal for any Baltic country at the 2024 Paris Games. "This is insane, I still feel like I'm dreaming," Senkute said. "It's a very big day for Lithuania, for all Baltic countries and for UCF. Everybody from UCF was watching and cheering, everybody from Lithuania. This unites so many



countries, so many people." Senkute said she wants to use her Olympic success to help show that people with epilepsy can live their lives normally and compete at a high level. "It means nothing to me. It's not a limitation at all," she said.

"People who have epilepsy are normal, regular people and they win Olympic medals. So I really hope that this will be a motivation for everyone who at some point people didn't believe in them. I kept doing what I want, what I love. And this being rowing. And this led to fulfilling my dreams." The 28-year-old Senkute was diagnosed with epilepsy, which causes seizures, when she was 15 and has to take medication daily to keep it under control. "I take medication every morning and afternoon, but it's just routine discipline," she said. "I'm just taking it with my vitamins, so I don't even notice. It's really a part of my life, but it gives no limitations." UCF's rowing team won four American Athletic Conference championships while Senkute was on the team.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Registered Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400051
 Corporate Office: ICICI HFC Tower, JG Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai-400059
 Branch Office: 1st floor, Indira Tower, A-26, Zone II, Main Road Vyapar Vihar Bilaspur (C.G.)-495001

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Gore Singh Rajput (Borrower), Ramkumari Rajput (Co-Borrower), LHBSR00001349296.	Na Plot Kh No.157/2 PH No.45 Rm Dhampura Mouja Jogipur Tehsil and Dis Dhampura CG Jogipur 157/2 Bilaspur-495001 (Ref. LAN No. LHBSR00001349296). Bounded By- North: House of Siyaram, South: House of Ramesh Singh, East: C.C. Road, West: Land of Raghuvendra Singh/ Date of Possession- 01-Aug-24	10-01-2023 Rs. 9,14,741/-	Bilaspur-B
2.	Gore Singh Rajput (Borrower), LHBSR00001412529.	Na Plot KH No.157/2 PH No.45 Rm Dhampura Mouja Jogipur Tehsil and Dis Dhampura CG Jogipur 157/2 Bilaspur-495001 (Ref. LAN No. LHBSR00001412529). Bounded By- North: House of Mr. Siyaram, South: House of Mr. Ramesh Singh, East: C.C. Road, West: Land of Raghuvendra Singh/ Date of Possession- 01-Aug-24	10-01-2023 Rs. 9,47,604/-	Bilaspur-B
3.	Gore Singh Rajput (Borrower), Ramkumari Rajput (Co-Borrower), LHBSR00001349297.	Na Plot KH No.157/2 PH No.45 Rm Dhampura Mouja Jogipur Tehsil and Dis Dhampura CG Jogipur 157/2 Bilaspur-495001 (Ref. LAN No. LHBSR00001349297). Bounded By- North: House of Siyaram, South: House of Ramesh Singh, East: C.C. Road, West: Land of Raghuvendra Singh/ Date of Possession- 01-Aug-24	10-01-2023 Rs. 44,922/-	Bilaspur-B
4.	Shankuntala Vaishnav (Borrower), Amlabh Vaishnav (Co-Borrower), LHBSR00001406861.	Na Mouja Lormi, Ward No.08, Canal Road, Mungeli, Khasra No.191/20, P.H.No.23, Ward No.10, Subhash Chandra Ward, Gram Lormi, District Mungeli Lormi 191/20 Bilaspur Chhattisgarh- 495001 (Ref. LAN NO. LHBSR00001406861). Bounded By- North: Remaining Land of Seller, South: Land of Sapan Patel, East: Remaining Land of Seller, West: Nistari Rasta/ Date of Possession- 01-Aug-24	19-04-2024 Rs. 12,67,013/-	Bilaspur-B
5.	Shankuntala Vaishnav (Borrower), Amlabh Vaishnav (Co-Borrower), LHBSR00001406862.	Na Mouja Lormi, Ward No.08, Canal Road, Mungeli, Khasra No.191/20, P.H.No.23, Ward No.10, Subhash Chandra Ward, Gram Lormi, District Mungeli Lormi 191/20 Bilaspur Chhattisgarh- 495001 (Ref. LAN NO. LHBSR00001406862). Bounded By- North: Remaining Land of Seller, South: Land of Sapan Patel, East: Remaining Land of Seller, West: Nistari Rasta/ Date of Possession- 01-Aug-24	19-04-2024 Rs. 82,416,72/-	Bilaspur-B

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/ guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : August 05, 2024, Place: Bilaspur
 Authorized Officer, ICICI Home Finance Company Limited

IDFC First Bank Limited
 (Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) | CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
 Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 7th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai-600031. Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6) & 9 (1)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
 E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) & 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) as per column (iii) that the below described immovable properties as per column (iv) mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 22-August-2024 as described hereunder, for the recovery of amount due to IDFC FIRST BANK LIMITED (Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd) from Borrower (s) and Co-Borrower (s) as per column (i).

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on IDFC FIRST Bank website i.e. www.idfcfirstbank.com.

S. NO	(i) Demand Notice Amount	(ii) Agreement ID	(iii) Name of Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s)	(v) Reserve Price Amount	(vi) EMD Amount	(vii) Date and Time of Auction	(viii) Date and Time of EMD Auction	(ix) Date and Time of Inspection	(x) Authorized Officer Name & Contact Number
1	INR 1455270.79/- Demand Notice dated: 24-Apr-2019	14579602	Devendra Kumar, Bismbhar Chaturvedi & Dhneswari Chaturvedi	INR 393660.00/-	INR 39366.00/-	22-Aug-2024 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM	21-Aug-2024 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM	13-Aug-2024 10:00 AM To 4:00 PM	Name- Vinay Soni Contact Number- 8319378592 Name- Sandesh Jain Contact Number- 8839140796

(iv) MORTGAGED PROPERTY ADDRESS: Plot No. 23 and 24, Khasra No. 20 and 117/2, Situated at Known as Sai City Village Sankra, P.H.No-08, RIC - Bhalai-3, Tehsil - Patan, Dist - Durg, Chhattisgarh-491001

S. NO	(i) Demand Notice Amount	(ii) Agreement ID	(iii) Name of Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s)	(v) Reserve Price Amount	(vi) EMD Amount	(vii) Date and Time of Auction	(viii) Date and Time of EMD Auction	(ix) Date and Time of Inspection	(x) Authorized Officer Name & Contact Number
2	INR 9587860.34/- Demand Notice dated: 17-Jan-2024	41681058	New Balaji Metador Transport, Pushpa Singh(In The Capacity Of Legal Heir Of Late Chandrashekhar Parihar), Pushpa Singh, Digvijay Singh Parihar, Chandra Bahadur Singh, Digvijay Singh(In The Capacity Of Legal Heir Of Late Chandrashekhar Parihar) & Pooja Singh(In The Capacity Of Legal Heir Of Late Chandrashekhar Parihar)	INR 13423320.00/-	INR 1342332.00/-	22-Aug-2024 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM	21-Aug-2024 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM	13-Aug-2024 10:00 AM To 4:00 PM	Name- Vinay Soni Contact Number- 8319378592 Name- Sandesh Jain Contact Number- 8839140796

(iv) MORTGAGED PROPERTY ADDRESS: Item-1:- All That Piece And Parcel Of Plot Nos 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9, Admeasuring 6836.81 Sq. Ft., Khata No. 1150, Land Khasra No. 31/2, 35/3, 35/30, 36, 37/2, Situated At Wake Mauza Gram: Devipuri, P.H.No. 114, Proposed P.H.No. 52, R.N.M-Raipur-2, Tehsil & District: Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001, And Bounded As: East: Remaining Land Of Colony, West: Rasta, North: Rasta & South: Boundary Wall Of Colony Item-2:- All That Piece And Parcel Of Plot No. 10, Admeasuring 25 X 58 = 1449.51 Sq. Ft., Khata No. 1150, Land Khasra No. 31/2, 35/3, 35/30, 36, 37/2, Situated At Wake Mauza Gram: Devipuri, P.H.No. 114, Proposed P.H.No. 52, R.N.M-Raipur-2, Tehsil & District: Raipur, Chhattisgarh-492001, And Bounded As: East: Oepn Land, West: Rasta, North: Plot No. 09 & South: Plot No. 11

Disclaimer: Please note that the said notice is issued for sale of immovable property only and IDFC FIRST Bank Limited has no right to sale of the movable assets, if any, present at the immovable property

Date: 05.08.2024

Sd/-
 Authorised Officer
 IDFC FIRST BANK Limited
 (Formerly known as IDFC Bank Ltd)

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