

'Parent-teachers coordination must for creative development'



STAFF REPORTER n JASHPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said on Tuesday that the more teachers and parents coordinate, the better it will be for children to grow creatively.

He urged the teachers to satisfy the children's curiosity and told the parents to be more involved in school life. Work is on to improve skill development of students to increase employment opportunities for them, he said.

education will be promoted in local dialects, schools will be upgraded through PM Shri Yojana, meritorious children will be honoured and supplies will be distributed. On this occasion, Sai announced a fully equipped bus stand, solar street lights, increasing the capacity of Ashram hostel from 50 to 100 seats and a mini stadium in Bandarchua.

Minister Netam seeks Centre's assistance for tribal welfare

STAFF REPORTER n RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Tribal, Scheduled Caste and Minority Development Minister Ramvihar Netam on Tuesday met Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jui Ram in New Delhi and discussed the issue of development of weaker and backward classes, including Scheduled Castes and Tribes, in the state.



STAFF REPORTER n SUKMA/DANTEWADA

The Chhattisgarh government is implementing the principles of AYUSH in 146 villages, an official communiqué said on Tuesday. The goal is to transform these villages into AYUSH Villages. The AYUSH Directorate held a workshop in Raipur to track progress and brief about planned activities.

Eight Maoists with Rs 5L bounty surrender

STAFF REPORTER n SUKMA/DANTEWADA

Eight Maoists, three of them carrying a cumulative reward of Rs 5 lakhs on their head, surrendered on Tuesday in Sukma and Dantewada districts of Bastar division in Chhattisgarh.



the Maoist ideology, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai said. She was Chikpal RPC KAMS head under the Katakalyan Area Committee of the Maoist organisation.

146 villages to embrace AYUSH lifestyle



STAFF REPORTER n RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government is implementing the principles of AYUSH in 146 villages, an official communiqué said on Tuesday. The goal is to transform these villages into AYUSH Villages.

in ayurveda, yoga and ayush methods to help them live long and healthy lives. Officials said they will educate villagers about medicinal plants. Villagers will be encouraged to cultivate and preserve medicinal plants.

Public Works Department Sector-19, North Block, Naya Raipur (C.G.) E-Procurement Tender Notice. NIT No.066/TC/EinC/PWD/2024-25 Dated- 31.07.2024

Class 5 student demonstrates e-Jaadui Pitara to CM. STAFF REPORTER n JASHPUR. A Class 5 student on Tuesday demonstrated and apprised about the features of digital app e-Jaadui Pitara at Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai at the Government Higher Secondary School Bandarchua in Jashpur district.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग, मण्डल क्र. 1 रायपुर (छ.ग.) दस्तावेज: (0771) 2331431 फ़ॉर्म: (0771) 4055885 ईमेल: se1.raipur@gov.in. निविदा निरस्तीकरण सूचना

Table with 5 columns: Sr No, System No, Tender No, Name of work, Probable Amount of Contract. Lists various construction and repair work items.

सकूल बैंक ऑफ़ इंडिया Central Bank of India शाखा-फाफादीह (छ.ग.) Branch- Fafadih (C.G.) APPENDIX-IV [RULE - 8 (1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immoveable Property)

Registered Office : 6th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400013. DCB BANK POSSESSION NOTICE

CAN FIN HOMES LTD. Shop No. 255-258, First Floor, Chouhan Estate, Supela, Bhilai (C.G.). POSSESSION NOTICE [(Rule 8(1))] (For Immoveable Property)

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda Regional Office, Jeevan Prakash, L.I.C. Building, Pandri, Raipur (C.G.). POSSESSION NOTICE

CAN FIN HOMES LTD. Shop No. 255-258, First Floor, Chouhan Estate, Supela, Bhilai (C.G.). POSSESSION NOTICE [(Rule 8(1))] (For Immoveable Property)

CAN FIN HOMES LTD. Shop No. 255-258, First Floor, Chouhan Estate, Supela, Bhilai (C.G.). POSSESSION NOTICE [(Rule 8(1))] (For Immoveable Property)

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is given in good faith and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not have any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work.



FIRST COLUMN

ACCEPTANCE - THE KEY TO REDUCING SUFFERING

When we accept reality, our anger tends to decrease and the pain subsides considerably



BY RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

If you ask anyone what is suffering? they would simply say that it is something that's caused by or is a result of negative events that happen in our life. However, this is not so, because in an actual sense, suffering is never what happens, it is how you feel about what happens in your life. We must understand that suffering is a feeling and our strongest feelings are nothing but our emotions, and when emotions get negative, they give pain. So, in simple words, suffering is our resistance to our negative emotions and our pain. It's a pain about our pain. Hence, we must understand the fact that suffering is the result of OUR emotions and not the events of our Lives.

We all experience pain in our day-to-day lives because it's inevitable and it is a part of being human. However, how many of us have pondered over this philosophical question of life - "What Causes Us PAIN?" or "What is the Cause of Our Negative Emotions?". Our pain might stem from losing a dear one, losing our job, a bad breakup, a fatal accident or undergoing any other kind of trauma or situation. However, when we hide from facing or accepting reality, we create suffering. Therefore, it should be clearly understood that we are the sole creator of good and bad in our lives and hence it's futile to blame others by saying things like - "It's not fair, why Me? this shouldn't have happened with me at least or I can't bear this anymore etc..."



There is a deep instinct in most of us to fight the pain we experience deep within, however, in most cases it backfires and we end up experiencing double the pain. The reason behind this is our tendency to avoid and, in some cases, hide our pain or pretend that it isn't present. Deep within we might ruminate about our suffering, without doing anything about it because of our stubbornness to accept it openly.

A wise person would instead accept the reality and become light instead of getting heavy on the mind because accepting simply means that you stop trying to deny your reality and you acknowledge it because sometimes accepting the painful emotions can reduce our suffering because we are no longer running from them or pushing them away. It however does not mean that you approve of a situation or that you don't want it to change, it's all about reducing our suffering, so if you have been hurt by someone, it's best to accept that YES you were hurt and then move on with your life rather than pondering over why, how, what.... Remember! To forgive or not is each one's prerogative, but acceptance is necessary for moving forward in life or else we would get stuck in a quagmire of wasted thoughts.

Once we accept reality, our anger tends to decrease and the painful situation loses the power it has over us. There is no denying the fact that emotional pain is an intrinsic part of all our lives, however, we create needless suffering when we don't accept reality. When we practice acceptance, we let ourselves move on, we open the door to freedom and we take steps to improve our lives. Most of us may find it hard to accept reality and still prefer to wait for time and situations to change, however in doing so, we forget that time does not heal everything, but acceptance will heal everything.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist views are personal)

Need for rationalising taxes on fertilisers

The GST Council, responsible for tax rate decisions has yet to resolve the tax discrepancies despite multiple discussions and recommendations



UTTAM GUPTA

For over five years now, the fertilizer industry has been facing an 'inverted duty structure'. Inverted duty structure refers to a situation in which raw materials (RMs) are taxed at a higher rate than finished products in whose manufacture these are used. But, there was little that the Budget presented by the Union Finance Minister (UFM) Nirmala Sitharaman on July 23, 2024, could do to address it.

Fertilizers and RMs used in their making are mostly taxed under the GST (Goods and Services Tax) regime. The GST Council - headed by the UFM that includes finance ministers from all States and UTs - has the mandate to fix tax rates besides deciding the procedures for registration, payment of taxes, GST return filing, and other related matters. So, the responsibility for fixing any anomalies in their taxation also lies with the GST Council.

The issue was discussed in the 45th (September 2021) and 47th (June 2022) meetings of the GST Council; but no decision could be taken.

Meanwhile, on August 9, 2023, the Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers recommended that the Union Government propose to the GST Council to reduce tax rates on fertilizers as well as RMs used in their making. In its 53rd meeting held on June 22, 2024, the Council referred the matter to the Group of Ministers (GoM) on rate rationalization to take holistic view.

At the outset, let us look at the present structure of taxing fertilizers.

To make fertilizers affordable to farmers, the government controls their maximum retail price (MRP) at a low level, unrelated to the cost of production and distribution, and reimburses the excess of the cost over MRP as a subsidy to the manufacturers. In the case of urea, the MRP is about one-tenth of the cost, whereas for all other fertilizers, the price is nearly one-third.

When the government spends heavily from its budget to make fertilizers available to farmers at a fraction of their cost, it makes no sense to impose a tax on them. This increases the cost, only to be reimbursed as an additional subsidy, to the manufacturers. It is a typical case of taking from one hand and giving back from the other.

Two major components of the fertilizer supply chain are taxed under two different regimes: one under GST and the other under the pre-GST regime. All finished fertilizers such as Urea, di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), ammonium sulphate etc are taxed under GST at 5 per cent. Most RMs such as sulfuric acid, ammonia, phosphoric acid etc (these are used for making DAP and other complex fertilizers) are also covered under GST. While sulfuric acid and ammonia are levied 18 per cent GST, phosphoric acid attracts 12 per cent tax. However, natural gas (NG), used for the manufacture of all domestic urea, is taxed under the pre-GST regime. Electricity, a utility intrinsic to the fertilizer-making process, is also kept outside GST.

GST is a single nationwide tax with a provision for set-off tax paid on inputs. It subsumes within it more than a dozen taxes from the pre-GST era, namely cen-



WHEN THE GOVERNMENT SPENDS HEAVILY FROM ITS BUDGET TO MAKE FERTILISERS AVAILABLE TO FARMERS AT A FRACTION OF THEIR COST, IT MAKES NO SENSE TO IMPOSE A TAX ON THEM. THIS INCREASES THE COST, ONLY TO BE REIMBURSED AS AN ADDITIONAL SUBSIDY, TO THE MANUFACTURERS

tral excise duty (CED), service tax, and sales tax/value-added tax (VAT). The Constitutional Amendment Act of 2016 on GST, while providing for the inclusion of NG (besides other petroleum products such as petrol, diesel, ATF etc) under its ambit, kept it 'zero-rated' meaning it continues to be under the pre-GST regime. The GST Council has put fixing the rate for NG (besides ATF) on its agenda umpteen times only to defer it.

Taxing under pre-GST results in a cascading effect on the cost of NG and electricity. Gas companies like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL) are outside the GST ambit and can't claim credit for the taxes paid on their purchases of inputs, consumables, and equipment, leading to a higher price. Even as NG attracts nil CED on supplies to fertilizer plants, its delivered cost is boosted by VAT, which can be as high as 24.5 per cent in Andhra Pradesh (AP).

Other local taxes, for instance, Gujarat's "purchase tax" on that portion of inputs consumed for making urea that is sold outside the state, also add to the cost. In the case of electricity, power companies don't get any credit for taxes paid on inputs viz., equipment, stores, and so on, used in its generation and distribution, leading to higher costs.

Further, under the Constitution, entry 53 in the State List of the Seventh Schedule empowers states to impose tax (or electricity duty) on the sale and consumption of electricity, except

when it is consumed by the Union Government or the Railways. For electricity duty, too, electricity companies don't get any offset. This further exacerbates the cost of power supplied to fertilizer plants.

Even in areas where the materials are covered under GST hence, no cost cascading effect, the inverted tax structure plays a spoiler. The higher GST levied on ammonia/sulfuric acid/phosphoric acid as against much lower GST on finished fertilizers results in an 'unabsorbed' input tax credit (ITC), as the output tax falls far short of the input tax. The situation gets exacerbated because of the government's control over the MRP of fertilizers at a low level.

Considering that the cost of making fertilizer available to farmers (sans taxes) by itself is substantially higher than the price the Union Government wants them to pay, ideally, it shouldn't levy any tax as the proceeds from such levy will have to be paid back as an additional subsidy. Even if it wants to levy, ideally, all components in the supply chain have to be brought under GST and fertilizers, and all inputs and RMs should be in the lowest tax slab of 5 per cent.

While the tax rate on fertilizers is already 5 per cent, this will require lowering the tax rate on all RMs viz. ammonia/sulfuric acid/phosphoric acid from the current 18/12 per cent to 5 per cent. The tax on micronutrients such as zinc (Zn), boron (B), manganese (Mn), iron (Fe) etc should also be lowered from the

existing 12-18 per cent to 5 per cent in line with the recommendation of the Standing Committee as their importance for plant growth and ensuring balanced nutrient use. NG and power should be brought under GST and taxed at @5 per cent.

Lowering tax on RMs by itself won't address the problem of unabsorbed ITC. This is because the MRP of finished fertilizers is substantially lower than the cost, even with the same GST, tax paid on RMs/inputs would still be higher than output tax liability. This can be resolved only when the government gives subsidies to farmers under direct benefit transfer (DBT) and lets manufacturers charge full price from the farmers.

Lowering tax on ammonia/sulfuric acid/phosphoric acid on supplies to fertilizer manufacturers to accommodate their special needs but leaving GST on supplies to other industries such as detergents, paints, dyes, plastics, etc unchanged can lead to large-scale diversion and misuse as it is impossible to track every grain of supply and ensure that it is used for the intended purpose. We have seen this happening in the case of urea where setting its MRP at a low level prompts diversion.

Diversion/misuse is inevitable in any regime of differential taxation/pricing based on the end use of the product. The only way to prevent it and yet meet the intended objective is DBT. Well, this is shaping up!

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

India's abolition of Angel tax: A major boost for startups and investment

The removal of this tax, combined with procedural simplifications, promises to create a more dynamic and supportive environment for startups

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her seventh Budget, has proposed to abolish the Angel Tax, a significant move aimed at bolstering the Indian startup ecosystem. This tax had long been a contentious issue between startups and the Income Tax Department, acting as a major hindrance to growth and investment.

The abolition of this tax, if coupled with procedural simplifications, could indeed be a game-changer, fostering a more vibrant and dynamic startup ecosystem that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship. The Angel Tax, essentially a tax on capital raised by unlisted companies through the issue of



B K JHA

shares, was introduced under Section 56(2)(viii) of the Income Tax Act, 1961. It taxed investments above the fair market value of a company as 'Income from other sources', primarily affecting angel investors. The excess realization was considered income and taxed accordingly. This provision while well-intentioned to curb money laundering, ended up stifling

genuine investments and became a nightmare for startups. The abolition of this tax removes a significant barrier that has long hindered the growth of startups and discouraged investment. Startups can now raise capital without the looming fear of being taxed on perceived excess valuations, which often did not account for the future growth prospects and potential of these young companies.

This move aligns with the government's broader agenda of promoting innovation, employment, education, skilling, and research. The abolition of the Angel Tax is expected to boost the entire startup ecosystem by making it easier for startups to attract investments.

This, in turn, will stimulate economic growth and job creation. For instance, the comprehensive digitalization of taxpayer services and the simplification of the GST tax structure are indicative of the government's commitment to digitalization, which will benefit tech startups across various fields such as education, healthcare, and taxation. India has been a global leader in creating successful entrepreneurship opportunities in recent years.

The investor community, including high-net-worth individuals (HNIs), foreign funds, venture capitalists, and angel investors, has remained bullish on the growth potential of the Indian startup ecosystem.



However, the Angel Tax had cast a shadow over this optimism, causing significant distress among startups and investors alike. While the government's initiatives such as Startup India, Stand-up India, and Digital India have provided a favourable environment for startups, the Angel Tax was a significant pain point. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had even

shaken the startup ecosystem by directly deducting income tax under Section 68 from the bank accounts of certain startups on unexplained cash credits. The abolition of the Angel Tax, coupled with the recent notification simplifying compliance procedures, reflects the government's responsiveness to the concerns of the startup community.

Startups no longer need to procure a fair market value certificate issued by a merchant banker or seek approval from an inter-ministerial board. Instead, they can request angel tax exemption from the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) with the necessary supporting documents.

The CBDT is mandated to respond to such applications within 45 days, providing much-needed clarity and certainty to startups. While the abolition of the Angel Tax is a significant step forward, its impact will depend on the implementation and further simplifications of procedures. The focus should be on creating a startup-friendly regulatory environment that encourages investment and innovation. The government's emphasis on digital public infrastructure and the digitalization of the economy will also play a crucial role in supporting tech startups and fostering a culture of innovation. Overall, the abolition of the Angel Tax is a welcome move that promis-

es to remove a significant barrier to startup growth and investment. However, for this initiative to truly be a game-changer, it must be accompanied by procedural simplifications and a supportive regulatory environment.

The government's continued focus on innovation, digitalization, and economic growth will be crucial in realizing the full potential of this policy change. This could very well mark the beginning of a new era for the Indian startup ecosystem, driving innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic growth in the years to come.

(The author is a senior journalist and the views expressed are personal)

RESILIENT CHANU SETS SIGHTS ON HISTORIC PODIUM FINISH IN PARIS

PTI n PARIS
Away from the spotlight owing to an injury-plagued buildup, Mirabai Chanu will be in focus on Wednesday when she attempts to become India's first weightlifter to win two Olympic medals but a challenging field and lingering fitness concerns stand in the way. The lifter, who opened India's tally on the first day of the competition at the Tokyo Olympics with a sparkling silver, has kept a low profile since suffering hip tendonitis during the Asian Games last October. Chanu has endured a rather underwhelming Olympic cycle thanks to injury and workload management. Her best effort since Tokyo came at the 2022 Commonwealth Games where she lifted 201kg (88kg+113kg). She had won the silver in Tokyo by heaving 202kg (87kg+115kg). Competing in her pet 49kg weight category, Chanu is likely to be in the scramble for a silver or bronze if she matches or betters her personal best in both sections. Reigning Olympic champion China's Hou Zhihui is the favourite to defend her title. While there are still murmurs surrounding her fitness after she returned from a five-month hiatus following the hip injury, both Chanu and chief national coach Vijay Sharma have asserted that the Manipuri has completely recovered. "We know that Mira has to go well beyond the 200kg mark. 202kg will not cut it this time but somewhere around 205-206kg should do it. But we are prepared for the challenge," coach Sharma told PTI.



However, this is easier said than done, as the 29-year-old has struggled to surpass her personal best of 88kg in the snatch, set at the 2020 National Championships, and 119kg in clean and jerk, achieved at the 2021 Asian Championships, for quite a while. While Chanu, who turns 30 on Thursday, will have one eye on her competitors' barbells, the Manipuri's main battle will be with herself at the South Paris Arena. Her performance in the snatch section continues to be her Achilles heel and her mediocre clean and jerk performance recently also doesn't inspire confidence.

While a 90kg snatch lift continues to elude Chanu, four of her competitors have breached the coveted mark. Having said that, Chanu has been known to be a fighter and one of the most tenacious athletes in the country. Be it battling intense menstrual camps to win a medal in Tokyo or attempting a 117kg clean and jerk lift despite injuring herself during the Asian Games, she has shown her resolute side. Despite the absence of North Korea's Asian Games champion and world record holder Ri Song Gum, the 49kg event is a highly competitive contest. Chanu has set an entry weight of 200kg

alongside two others — USA's three-time Pan American champion and a world bronze medalist Jourdan Delacruz and 2021 world champion Surodchana Khambao of Thailand. Zhihui and two-time European champion Romanian Mihaela Cambei have set entry weights of 210kg and 205kg respectively. Chanu has been training in Paris for a month. She also got help from American Dr Aaron Horschig, a former weightlifter-turned-physical therapist and strength and conditioning coach, who has been working with Chanu since 2020.

Lauren, Diana bring experience to women's basketball teams

PTI n PARIS
Diana Taurasi wishes people would stop talking about her age. Lauren Jackson just admits it — she's old. The two 40-plus WNBA greats are in the quarterfinals of the Olympics and have a potential matchup in the offing Friday if they can help their countries advance Wednesday. While the 42-year-old Taurasi is playing in her sixth straight Olympics, Jackson is back after a 12-year gap from her last one. "It's crazy. You know, I never, ever anticipated that I'd be back here again," the 43-year-old Aussie said. "I couldn't have imagined it, three years ago. Two years ago, a year ago. Six months ago. Like, I just wasn't going to be doing it. So to be here, it's like it really does feel so different to what it used to feel like." Jackson retired in 2016 after knee injuries derailed her career. She had hoped to compete in the Olympics that year, but an ACL injury ended that dream. She made a return playing domestically in Australia and then helped the Opals to a magical run to a bronze medal at the 2022 World Cup, which the country hosted. She scored 30 points in that bronze medal game. The Australians would love to see

another game like that when they play Serbia in the Olympic quarterfinals Wednesday. Australia and the U.S. Didn't meet two years ago in the Worlds, but they could play Friday. That would be the latest contest between Jackson and Taurasi. The two friends have squared off many times over the years in the Olympics, WNBA and other international contests. "It's a bit of a time warp. You know, I think being in this environment again, it is crazy. And like I said, I've just taken every day as it comes and it's got me back here," Jackson said. "So long as I'm able to contribute, play defense, get some rebounds, you know, not let my team down in those minutes. I'm happy ... And I feel like I'm doing my job." Unlike Jackson, Taurasi has been a bit annoyed with the narrative that she's old for an Olympic basketball player. There were people outside USA Basketball that said she should have been passed over for a younger player, like WNBA rookie Caitlin Clark. "If there's one thing you can't escape in this country, it is ageism. I've gone back and forth with this answer. When you dedicate your whole life, your whole career to something, and you get the question of, 'Why don't you just retire?'" Taurasi said

before the Olympics began. "It's something I've been doing since I was 5. It's something I've dedicated my whole life to. And it's just so easy ... For a question to be brought up in a manner where it's not meant to be disrespectful. But if you're the person being asked, it is a bit disrespectful." No women's basketball player has ever played in six Olympics and none have been as successful as Taurasi. She feels that there's a gender bias with age more commonly brought up against women. "I tell people that all the time, especially in women's sports, in women's professions. Only a woman would have 20 years of experience and it'd be an Achilles' heel, instead of something that is treasured and used as a way forward, for sport and for women." While both Jackson and Taurasi haven't put up huge numbers on the court yet during the Paris Games, their experience has been invaluable to their teammates. "She's like another coach. She's had so many years of experience and the way she sees the game is really special," U.S. Forward Napheesa Collier said. "She's really smart in the way that she can break things down and see what's open and how to dissect the game."



Jena on verge of crashing out early from javelin throw even

PTI n PARIS
India's Kishore Jena on Tuesday finished ninth in the men's javelin throw Group A qualification round with an underwhelming throw of 80.73m, which left him on the verge of making an early exit from the Olympics. Jena will await the result of Group B qualification round where superstar Neeraj Chopra will begin his campaign later in the day. All those who throw 84m or above, or at least 12 best performers from Group A and B combined will advance to the final to be held on Thursday. Jena's opening throw was 80.73m, and he fouled his second attempt before coming

AP n PARIS
Cuban Greco-Roman wrestler Mijain Lopez has earned a shot at a record fifth Olympic gold medal in wrestling. Just two weeks shy of his 42nd birthday, Lopez beat Azerbaijan's Sabah Saleh Shariati 4-1 on Monday and advanced to the final in the 130-kilogram category. Lopez knew there were doubters, but he gladly has proven them wrong. By clinching at least silver, Lopez has tied West Germany's Wilfried Dietrich for the most Olympic wrestling medals with five. "I know some people were skeptical, but I knew I was ready for this," Lopez said in comments translated from Spanish. "Whenever I compete in the Olympics and world championships, I do it trying to bring joy to my country. We want to listen to our anthem tomorrow."

Lopez, 41, wins semis to earn shot at record 5th gold in wrestling

After Tuesday, he's done. "I'll be retiring, it's over," he said. "We need to make some space for those who are coming (into the sport). Wrestling for me has been the love of my life, for all of my life." Lopez will face Chile's Yasmani Acosta Fernandez in the final on Tuesday at Champ-de-Mars Arena. Acosta defeated China's Meng Lingzhe in the semifinals. The score was 1-1, but Acosta Fernandez got the win on criteria because he scored last. Acosta Fernandez was born in Cuba but moved after he couldn't get opportunities in the big events because Lopez was in the way. Lopez was excited about the matchup.



"We share a brotherhood, we have the same blood," Lopez said. Last Olympics, Lopez became the first male wrestler to win four gold medals when he dominated in Tokyo, blowing through the field unscored upon in four matches. On the opening day of competition in Paris, he continued his dominance. In his first match, he defeated South Korea's Lee Seung-chan 7-0. In the second round, he surprisingly was scored upon, but still defeated Iran's Amin Mirzazadeh, the top seed and 2023 world champion, 3-1 to advance. In the semifinal, Lopez led 3-0 at the break. Shariati scored a point for passivity, then nearly scored again before Lopez scored on a reversal to go up 4-1. After time ran out, Lopez held up his right hand with all five fingers outstretched. "I'm so happy," he said. "It has been a very special day, not only for Latin America, but the whole world."

Mahuchikh and other medal winning Ukrainians put attention on war

AP n PARIS
Yaroslava Mahuchikh, the Ukrainian world-record high jumper, may have just won Olympic gold, but she and other winning athletes from Ukraine are not resting in Paris - they're trying to shine the spotlight on the war tearing apart their country. "The Olympic Games are about peace," she said. "But Russia didn't stop, and during these Games, there were massive attacks on Ukrainian cities." These missile strikes forced Mahuchikh to spend the last two and a half years mostly abroad as she focused on her main goal - the Olympic gold, which she won Sunday. She trained far from her family, including in Portugal, Estonia, Belgium and Germany. She occasionally comes to her

hometown of Dnipro in eastern Ukraine, but every time she left the country, she didn't know when she would return. "To achieve such high results on the international stage, you need to train abroad," Mahuchikh said. "And it is very sad, and I really want us to be able to train fully at home for the next Olympic cycle." Despite the hardships, she succeeded, saying that the war gave her motivation and a greater purpose to represent her country. But the success was bittersweet. When she broke a 37-year-old world record last month, jumping 2.10 meters (6.88 feet), her joy was brief. "We were happy on the first evening, but the next day ... Unfortunately, we have a very aggressive enemy," she said. "Russia struck Ohmatdyt. And



Friday, and Belarusian rower Yauheni Zolotarev won a silver Saturday. Mahuchikh and other Ukrainian athletes have spoken out against the presence of Russian competitors at the Paris Games. The three Ukrainian athletes who have won medals came to the Ukrainian house dubbed Volia Space on Monday. They said that they were short on sleep because while the attention lasts, they are trying to give as many interviews as possible, raising awareness about the war. "It is very important to win and keep winning," Mahuchikh said. "It is difficult for Ukrainian athletes to focus solely on sports, our thoughts are at home with our families." The 22-year-old athlete said there are still many things that could be conquered.

Biles closes out with her 11th career medal — a silver in floor exercise

AP n PARIS
Simone Biles wrapped up her final day of the Paris Olympics with more hardware for the greatest gymnast of her generation. The woman who didn't think she'd even be here a couple years ago will leave Paris - and perhaps her final Olympics - with three golds and a silver, earned Monday when she placed second in the floor exercise. It marked the first time in her career that Biles did not win the floor exercise at a major competition. She finished second to Rebeca Andrade of Brazil. Third went to American gymnast Jordan Chiles, who was bumped to bronze when the U.S. Coaches asked for a review of her degree of difficulty on the routine. The review changed her score just enough to push her onto the podium, where the three Black women posed together

four days after Biles, Andrade and Sunisa Lee, who is Hmong-American, stood in the same spot following the all-around. Their collective success is symbolic of a sport that is becoming more diverse and more inclusive at the highest level. Prior to the floor exercise, Biles and Lee failed to medal on the balance beam. Both gymnasts made mistakes and wondered if Paris organizers' decision not to play music during the events created a distracting eerie silence. Biles is now an 11-time Olympic medalist and hasn't ruled out trying to compete in Los Angeles in 2028. A look at some of the highlights of Day 10 of the Paris Olympics: U.S. Has mixed results in beach volleyball Two U.S. Teams fell on the sand at Eiffel Tower Stadium, with Taryn Kloth and Kristen Nuss losing to Canada in the women's quarterfinals a



few hours after Chase Budinger and Miles Evans lost to Norway in the men's. Only Miles Evans and Andy Benesh advanced on the day, joining Kelly Cheng and Sara Hughes in the elite eight. Kloth and Nuss are ranked No. 2 in the world, and Nuss said she was "definitely a little heartbroken." Brandie Wilkerson and Melissa Humana-Paredes beat Nuss and Kloth 21-19, 21-18, leaving the country that has won four of the last five women's gold medals with just one team in the bracket. Budinger, a former NBA player, and Evans lost in straight sets to Norway, the defending Olympic champions. Already at Paris, five-time Olympian and Rio de Janeiro gold medalist Laura Ludwig of Germany has been eliminated, and the 42-year-old Herrera has said he will retire. Swimming in the Seine The

Seine River was determined safe enough to swim in and Olympic triathletes plunged into the murky water for the mixed relay event after organizers said bacteria levels in the long-polluted Paris waterway were at acceptable levels. The plan to hold the triathlons and the marathon swimming events in the Seine was an ambitious one as swimming in the river has, with some exceptions, been off-limits since 1923 because it has been too toxic.

Water quality tests were reviewed Sunday night and the results indicated the water quality at the triathlon site had improved over the preceding hours and was within the limits mandated by World Triathlon by Monday morning. In a very close sprint finish, the team from Germany won the gold medal in the team relay. The United States took silver and Britain clinched bronze. The decision to allow the event to go forward with swimmers in the Seine came after Belgium's Olympic committee announced Sunday that it would withdraw its team from the mixed relay triathlon after one of its competitors who swam in the river last week fell ill. Another three triathletes - of the more than 100 who competed in the men's and women's races last Wednesday - became sick in the following days, though it's unclear whether the water was to blame.

Spain reaches second straight Olympic soccer final Juanlu Sanchez came off the bench to lift Spain into a record-equaling fifth Olympic men's soccer final. Sanchez scored in the 85th minute at Stade de Marseille to seal a 2-1 win over Morocco and set up a final against either France or Egypt. Morocco led 1-0 at halftime after the tournament's leading scorer Soufiane Rahimi converted a penalty in the 37th. Spain evened the score in the 65th after Fermin Lopez showed quick feet in the box and fired a left-footed shot low in the bottom corner. It was the Barcelona midfielder's fourth goal of the tournament and over-exuberant celebrations earned him a yellow card after kicking the corner flag and breaking it in two. It was Lopez's assist that set up Sanchez to sweep his winning goal low into the far corner. Spain, which won gold at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, lost in the final at the Tokyo Games three years ago to Brazil. British cyclists set world record in women's team sprint The British trio of Katy Marchant, Sophie Capewell and Emma Finucane shattered the world record in the women's team sprint while beating New Zealand in a head-to-head showdown for the gold medal to open the track cycling program. In the three-lap race, the British trio trailed Rebecca Petech, Shaane Fulton and Ellesse Andrews after the first 250 meters. But they quickly pulled ahead after the second lap, then blitzed the last to finish in 45.196 seconds, earning their nation's first medal inside the Vélodrome National de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines. Despite its proud sprinting tradition, the British had repeatedly missed the podium since the event's debut in 2008.

