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MONEY 10 RBI KEEPS INTEREST RATE UNCHANGED

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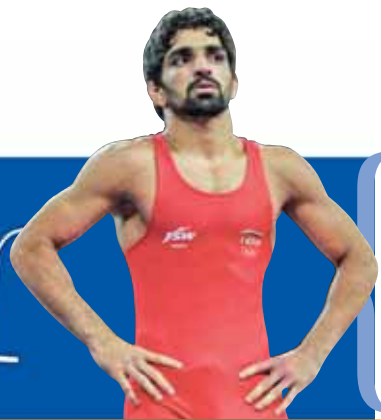
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WRESTLER AMAN ENTERS SEMIFINALS 12 SPORTS

Waqf Bill to face JPC scrutiny after Opp outcry



Union Minister Kiren Rijiju speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Thursday

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Mid dissent by the Congress-led Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) which opposed the proposed law in its present form, terming the Bill 'divisive', 'anti-Muslim', and 'unconstitutional', the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday and referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for further scrutiny.

After introducing the Bill in the Lok Sabha, Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday said the government is ready for further scrutiny of the legislation. Defending the Bill, Rijiju said the Central Government's intention is clear and it has nothing to hide from the legislation saying the Waqf (Amendment) Bill does not intend to interfere with the freedom of any religious body and that no provision of the Constitution has been

violated. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said he will talk with leaders of all parties for constituting the JPC. Earlier, moving the Bill, the Minister clarified that this Bill is not intended to interfere with the functioning of religious bodies and is to provide justice to the disadvantaged and poor sections of the Muslim community. Soon after Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju sought leave to introduce the Bill in the Lok Sabha, many

Opposition MPs, who had given notices to oppose the Bill, alleged that the proposed legislation was an "attack on the Constitution and federalism". Calling it an attack on the Constitution and aimed at targeting Muslims, several INDIA Bloc MPs urged the Government to withdraw the Bill. Parties such as Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Samajwadi Party (SP), and the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) have criticised the proposed amendments including for inclusion of non-Muslims in waqf governance saying they will encroach on the religious rights. The Bill proposes significant changes to the 1995 law, such as the inclusion of Muslim women on Waqf boards and ensuring verification of land before a board announces it as a Waqf property. The Government also introduced The Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill, 2024. Responding to the concerns flagged by Opposition members, Rijiju said Waqf Act 1995 did not serve its purpose, hence the amendment was planned. "I want to tell Congress these amendments are being brought to achieve what you (Congress) couldn't," he said.

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Indian hockey's historic moment at Paris

PTI ■ PARIS

The Indian men's hockey team clinched a second successive bronze medal at the Olympic Games for the first time in 52 years with a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Spain, giving veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh a fitting farewell here on Thursday. It was tense last few minutes for the Indians as they faced two short corners within the last minute but the defence stood tall and soaked in the pressure. India, who claimed the bronze in Tokyo Games after a hiatus of 41 years, lived up to the expectations despite not having a perfect build-up to the Games. The last time India won back-to-back Olympic medals was in 1968 (bronze) and 1972 editions (bronze). The bronze medal was also a desperate wait for the Indian



India's goalkeeper Parattu Reveendran Sreejesh, in yellow jersey, reacts as India's players celebrate after winning the men's bronze medal field hockey match against Spain at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium during the 2024 Olympics, on Thursday

contingent in Paris, which has endured six fourth-place finishes so far, apart from the disappointing disqualification of wrestler Vinesh Phogat. Spain went ahead with

skipper Marc Miralles (18th) converting a penalty stroke while India captain Harmanpreet Singh (30th, 33rd) stole the limelight with a brace. Shrugging off their heart-

wrenching 2-3 defeat against Germany in the semifinal, India came out all guns blazing to dominate the possession in the first quarter. It was an offensive start from India as they penetrated Spain's defence regularly in the first 15 minutes and created the first scoring chance of the match in the sixth minute. Vice-captain Hardik Singh created a fine move from the right and passed the ball into the D to Sukhjeet Singh, whose shot went just wide of the left side Spanish goal as the Europeans survived. The Spanish came with more purpose and intensity in the second quarter and pressed hard on the Indian goal. They took the lead in the 18th minute through a penalty stroke conversion by Miralles after Manpreet Singh conceded an unnecessary foul inside the D.

Continued on Page 2

Vinesh retires after Olympics heartbreak

PTI ■ PARIS



Her long-cherished Olympic dream shattered by a cruel twist of fate, a crestfallen Vinesh Phogat bid adieu to her international wrestling career on Thursday, saying she doesn't have the strength to continue anymore. The 29-year-old, who was disqualified for being 100gm overweight ahead of her 50kg category gold medal bout in

the Olympics on Wednesday, announced her decision on social media, seeking forgiveness from everyone who supported her. Addressing her mother Premalata, Vinesh, a three-time Olympian, wrote, "Ma, wrestling has won, I have lost. Please forgive me, your dreams and my courage, everything is broken." "I don't have any more strength now. Goodbye

wrestling 2001-2024. I shall be indebted to you all. Forgive (me)," added the two-time world championships bronze-medallist. Her stunning decision comes a day after Vinesh appealed against her disqualification from the Olympic finals in the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), demanding that she be awarded a joint silver medal.

Continued on Page 2

Ex-West Bengal CM Buddhadeb passes away

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The last Marxist Chief Minister of Bengal and arguably the 'last surviving icon of pride' for the State's decaying Left force Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee passed away on Thursday morning after a prolonged illness. He was 80 and is survived by his wife Meera Bhattacharjee and son



Suchetan. He was the State's Chief Minister from 2000 to 2011. Bhattacharjee had been in poor health for several years, and was confined to his small two-room apartment on Palm Avenue for the past 8 years mostly reading and writing books. Continued on Page 2



Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus returns to Bangladesh from Paris to take charge of interim Government

Hasina ouster Bangladesh's second independence: Yunus

PTI ■ DHAKA

Muhammad Yunus on Thursday promised to deliver a Government which assures safety to its citizens and urged them to assist him in rebuilding the protest-torn Bangladesh, as the Nobel laureate described the ouster of Sheikh Hasina as the country's "second independence". Yunus, 84, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his pioneering work on microlending, was appointed by President Mohammed Shahabuddin as the head of the interim Government after Prime Minister Hasina resigned and fled to India following widespread protests against her regime over a controversial quota system in jobs. Yunus, who was in Paris for

the Olympic Games, returned to the country via Dubai on Thursday on an Emirates flight. Army chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman, senior officials, student leaders and civil society members welcomed him at the airport. At an emotional press conference at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport after his arrival, Yunus said, "Today is a day of our pride. We have got independence for the second time. We have to protect this independence." He expressed gratitude to the youth who made the protest movement against Hasina successful and said he would like to stress first is to "save the country from violence so that we can move forward on the path that the students have shown us."

Registration of temples, mutts, trusts made mandatory in Bihar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

The Bihar Government has directed all District Magistrates (DM) to ensure that unregistered temples, mutts, and trusts in their respective areas are registered and details of their immovable assets are submitted to the Bihar State Board of Religious Trusts (BSBRT) for uploading on its website. The BSBRT operates under the State's law department. State Law Minister Nitin Nabin said, "All DMs have been directed to ensure that unregistered temples, mutts, and trusts are registered on a priority basis." He also instructed the DMs to ensure that details of immovable assets of all registered temples and mutts are promptly provided to the BSBRT for uploading on its website. "I recently sent a letter to all DMs in this regard. So far, only 18 districts have submitted data to the BSBRT," he added. The Minister said, "According to the Bihar Hindu Religious Trusts Act of 1950, all public temples, mutts, trusts, and dharamshalas must be registered with the BSBRT. The State Government will



take stringent action against those involved in illegal property transactions of registered temples, mutts, or trusts, as well as against unregistered entities that fail to register with the BSBRT." A high-level meeting with officials from the Law and Revenue and Land Reforms departments will be convened to address these issues. Registration is mandatory to protect the property, including land, of both registered and unregistered temples from unauthorised claims, the Minister said. According to the latest data from BSBRT, there are approximately 2,512 unregistered temples and

mutts in the state, owning 4,321.64 acres. The State has about 2,499 registered temples, which collectively own over 18,456 acres. According to data, the highest numbers of unregistered temples and mutts are in Vaishali (438), followed by Kaimur Bhabhua (307), West Champaran (273), Bhagalpur (191), Begusarai (185), Saran (154), and Gaya (152). Kaimur Bhabhua has 307 unregistered temples and mutts owning around 813 acres, while Khagaria has 100 unregistered entities with 722 acres. Banka district has 78 unregistered temples and mutts with approximately 332 acres.

Forging signs of chief secretaries lands IAS officer in hot soup

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After granting prosecution sanction against controversial IAS officer Udit Prakash Rai for alleged forging of the signatures of the Chief Secretaries of Delhi and Andaman & Nicobar Administration on his annual performance appraisal reports (APAR) during different periods of his posting, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has referred the case to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for further action. Rai has also been charged with demolishing a heritage structure for construction of his official residence in Delhi's Jal Vihar while he was serving as the Chief Executive Officer of Delhi Jal Board, at a whopping cost of ₹5 crores. According to officials, Rai, a 2007 IAS officer and a blue-eyed boy of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, had forged the signatures of the reviewing authority, the Chief Secretary of A&N and Delhi between 2017 and 2021. A criminal case of forgery under sections 465/471 IPC has been registered against Rai at IP Estate Police Station on the complaint of Special Secretary (Vigilance), Delhi



Government. According to Department of Vigilance, Rai, in his APARs for the periods from 01.04.2017 to 08.10.2017 and from 09.10.2017 to 31.03.2018, had also forged the signatures of his then reporting authority, SCL Das, the then Principal Secretary (Revenue) in A&N Administration and the signature of the reviewing authority, Anindo Majumdar, the then Chief Secretary of A&N. Further, in the APAR for period from 01.04.2019 to 30.07.2019, Rai forged the signatures of the reporting authority, Vikram Dev Dutt, the then Principal Secretary (Revenue) in A&N Administration, and the signature of the reviewing authority, Chetan Bhushan Sanghi, the then Chief Secretary of A&N. Continued on Page 2

New measures on anvil for hassle-free journey in Delhi

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to enhance road safety and ease traffic congestion in the national Capital, a series of strategic suggestions have been put forward. Key proposals include relocating the bus terminal at Kashmere Gate, identifying traffic congestion points and removing bottlenecks, cracking down on illegal plying of e-rickshaws, and preventing overloading in commercial vehicles. These measures aim to ensure that commuters no longer endure hours-long traffic jams, promising smoother and safer journeys across the city. At a meeting on Thursday,



Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena after reviewing the situation on a fortnightly basis has directed the traffic police to expedite the process of sending traffic challans on WhatsApp. The LG expressed concern over illegal parking on

roadside, flyovers, especially by buses which cause inconvenience to commuters and compromise road safety apart from increasing pollution caused by vehicular emission. The LG has also directed for special drives to be carried out to enforce lane driving by buses especially on Ring Road, Airport Road and the national highway stretch with zero tolerance for deviation. Among the ten directives, Saxena stated are, "Traffic Police shall constitute joint teams with Transport Department to check overloading of commercial vehicle and overcrowding of passenger buses." Continued on Page 2

India to monitor winged guests in real-time

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Migration routes and behaviours of the Bar-headed geese, one of the world's highest-flying birds, having grey bodies, and a few other waterbirds wintering at the famous high-altitude Wular Lake in Jammu and Kashmir are all set to be monitored in real-time through sophisticated solar-powered radio collars to be tagged on their neck. The project, first of its kind in the region will be soon launched by the Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII), an autonomous body under the Union Environment Ministry. Wular Lake, one of India's 75 Ramsar-designated wetlands,

is internationally recognised for its ecological significance. Despite facing numerous environmental challenges, it continues to support a diverse array of flora and fauna, attracting wildlife enthusiasts, tourists, and locals alike. The advanced GPS satellite tracking technology integrated into these solar-powered collars will offer real-time insights into the birds' movements and behaviour, particularly during their initial return migration. The lightweight collars, which weigh between 50 and 70 grams, are designed specifically for large geese and features high solar efficiency, thus doing away with the limitations of the radio-collars based on conventional batteries, said a



scientist from the WII on the condition of anonymity. He said the agency is in the process of procuring the solar-powered radio collars. These gadgets will use the Global Positioning System (GPS) to record location, travel patterns, speed, temperature, and magnetic

field strength. They transmit this data to researchers via GSM cellular networks whenever the birds are within range of network towers. GSM, or Global System for Mobile communications, is the standard international cellular protocol used for this purpose, he informed.

By combining movement and habitat use data with diet studies conducted by other partners, conservationists and habitat managers will be better equipped to develop strategies that accommodate growing populations of these migratory birds. "The decision to select the type of birds to be radio collared will be finalised only after we receive the gadgets," said the scientist. The WII scientists will initiate collaring the geese for over a year-long study to determine the proportion of migratory geese that winter at Wular Lake. The GPS-GSM transmitters will be mounted on the birds' necks, providing valuable data on their travel and resting sites. Continued on Page 2

Coaching centre deaths: Several laws violated, reveals probe

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

A magisterial probe into the deaths of three civil services aspirants in the flooding of a Delhi coaching centre building basement has indicated mala fide violations of several laws by the MCD and the fire department.

The report submitted to the revenue minister on Wednesday said, "The owners and management of RAU's IAS Study Circle are also responsible for the criminal negligence with a dishonest motive of profiteering by indulging in dangerous misuse of the basement without regard to the lives of the students."

Three civil services aspirants died on July 27 after the basement of a building housing the coaching centre was flooded following heavy rain in central Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar area.

The report revealed that the "violation of rules" in the building was noticed before by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the fire department but they took no action.

The probe conducted by the district magistrate (central) revealed that the building where the coaching centre was being operated from had permission for "office/business" use, for which a fire NOC (no-objection certificate) was not needed.

However, it did require the fire department's NOC as it was being used for "educational



purpose" and was more than nine metres high, the report said.

On August 4, 2023, after a fire incident at a coaching institute in Mukherjee Nagar, the MCD had issued a notice citing "misuse" of property. "The failure to seal the basement after the issue of misuse notice and not even mentioning the same in the show cause notice and misleading the deputy commissioner of the factual field position of misuse appears to be deliberate misconduct with mala fide intentions on the part of the concerned engineers of the building department of MCD," the report said.

The fire department also failed to refer to the "misuse" of the building's basement as a library to the MCD during an inspection on July 1 this year, it said. "The fire department should not have granted a fire safety certificate dated 9.7.2024 concealing the misuse of the basement as a library in violation

of the building by-laws provisions of MPD-2021. This is a serious lapse on the part of the fire services inspection team which visited the facility on July 1 and made wrong recommendation for issue of fire safety certificate," the report noted.

It also blamed the MCD officials of encroachment on stormwater drains and lack of desilting. It said the drains in the area had not been desilted for five years despite being prone to waterlogging due to their low-lying location.

A magisterial probe into the incident was ordered by the Delhi government's revenue minister and a preliminary report in the matter was submitted on July 29. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has taken over the probe into the incident on a Delhi High Court order.

The probe recorded statements of 15 people, including students and officials of various departments.

700 facial recognition CCTV cameras procured to bolster I-Day security

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has procured 700 facial recognition CCTV cameras to ensure robust security arrangements for the Independence Day celebrations in the city.

These cameras will be installed in and around the north and central districts -- particularly the Red Fort from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver his Independence Day speech -- to monitor VVIP movements and keep a close eye on any suspicious activities, they said.

While the north district will get 346 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras, the central district will be allotted 354 cameras, officials said.

"These cameras will have pan-tilt-zoom features with high resolutions which will allow police to identify anyone from a distance. These cameras will be installed in and around the fort," a senior police officer said.

The cameras with facial recognition and video analytic systems will ensure foolproof security, the officer said, adding that more than 10,000 security personnel will be deployed at the Mughal-era fort when Modi addresses the nation.

The areas surrounding the Red Fort will be demarcated as a "no kite flying zone" until the programme is over. Personnel will be deployed with necessary equipment on strategic locations to intercept kites, police said. "Of the 700 cameras, 40 will be used for facial recognition, 15 for



detecting intrusions, 10 each for reading registration plates of vehicles and counting people and five for detecting abandoned objects," the officer said.

According to police, anti-drone systems will be installed at the Red Fort as is the convention while several anti-terror measures, including installation of air defence guns, are being initiated.

In addition, snipers, elite SWAT commandos, kite catchers and sharpshooters will be positioned at strategic locations for the security of the prime minister and other VVIP guests, they said.

"The Delhi Police has also intensified patrolling and anti-sabotage checks. Hotels, guest houses, parking lots and restaurants are being checked, and the verification of tenants and servants is being carried out. Meetings are also being held with resident and market welfare associations," Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Manoj Kumar Meena said. The Delhi Police has prohibited flying sub-conventional aerial platforms like paragliders, hang-gliders and hot air balloons in the national capital from August 2-16 for security reasons.

Accept ₹15 cr for Wayanad relief fund: Conman Suresh to Vijayan

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Suresh Chandrasekhar, who is accused in a Rs 200 crore cheating case, has written a letter to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, requesting him to accept his contribution of Rs 15 crore to the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund and pledged support for further contribution to build "300 houses" following a landslide in Wayanad district.

Chandrasekhar, currently lodged in Mandoli jail here, said he is "highly pained" to see what Kerala is going through and wants to extend support at this time of need. "I am hereby requesting to accept my contribution of Rs 15 crore towards the



relief fund, from my foundation today, addressed in favour of Chief Minister's Distress Relief

Fund," he said. The alleged conman stated that apart from the mentioned contribution being done, he also pledged his support for further contribution to build 300 houses for the affected on an immediate basis. Contending that the contribution was from "legitimate business accounts", Chandrasekhar requested the state government to accept the offer and use it for the welfare and rehabilitation of the affected in the landslide tragedy. The Kerala government is yet to respond to Chandrasekhar's letter.

Congress MP demands Centre set up high-altitude sports training centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Former sports minister and Congress MP, Mr. Ajay Maken, demanded that the Centre set up a high altitude sports training centre in Kodagu district of Karnataka. He said this year, the Kodava Hockey Tournament in Karnataka, made its mark in the Guinness Book of World Records, a feat achieved without any support from the Union Government, while the State Government extended its full support.

Dissolve Delhi Govt that has failed on all fronts: Vijender

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Vijender Gupta, said a meeting of the BJP legislature party was held on Thursday in the Delhi Assembly. The meeting strongly condemned the Delhi Government for its failure on all fronts. On this occasion, a resolution was passed, demanding the dissolution of the Kejriwal Government by the Lieutenant Governor.

Vijender Gupta formally took charge as Leader of Opposition today. Newly elected Lok Sabha MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri was also present at the occasion. Gupta stated that this govern-

ment has failed completely on all fronts and has no right to remain in power. In a meeting held under his chairmanship at the Leader of Opposition office in the Delhi Assembly today, Vijender Gupta said that the government should have already held a meeting and devised a strategy with all

departments for monsoon preparedness, but nothing of that sort was done. He accused that all AAP leaders are focused on strategizing to secure bail for Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who has been caught in corruption charges. Even after the flood-like situation arose in Delhi, the government has not taken any meaningful steps, raising questions about its competency.

All BJP MLAs from Delhi, including Shri Mohan Singh Bisht, Shri Om Prakash Sharma, Shri Jitendra Mahajan, Shri Anil Vajpayee, Shri Ajay Mahawar, and Shri Abhay Verma, were present at the meeting.

Man held for selling Chinese manjha in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old man has been apprehended by the Delhi Police for selling Chinese manjha from North Delhi's Sadar Bazar in a bid to curb the sale of the illegal manjha.

According to the police on Thursday, they received a secret information from a reliable source Bazar that a person is roaming on the Road and selling Chinese Manjha near Safique Memorial School Chamelian Road in Sadar Bazar. "On receiving such information, the team sprang into action and without wasting a moment reached at the place of the information at about 04:30 PM, wherein they noticed a suspicious person, having a plastic bag in his hand, who was later identified as 'Junaid', said DCP North Manoj Kumar Meena. He added that the bag was checked and total 15 bundles of Chinese Manjha were recovered from the bag possessed by him. The recovered bundles of Chinese Manjha were taken in police possession through a seizure memo.

Accordingly, a case under section 223(B) (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of BNS was registered at Sadar Bazar police station and the accused was arrested as per the procedure of law and further investigation has been taken up.

CM Vijayan thanks Modi for Central help in rescue operations at Wayanad

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



A day after one of the CPI-M AMPs from the State ridiculed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for being indifferent to the natural disaster that struck the State, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday thanked Modi profusely for the help and care rendered by the Centre in the rescue operations at Wayanad. Addressing the media at the capital city Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday, Vijayan said the Prime Minister is flying down to Kerala on Saturday to make an on-the-spot assessment of the devastation caused by the landslides and deluge at Wayanad. "Our demand to the Prime Minister is that the landslide and flashflood that caused havoc in Wayanad should be declared as a national disaster and the Centre should undertake the full responsibility of the comprehensive reconstruction of the region 'destroyed in the mishap'," said Vijayan.

The other day, John Brittas, MP, had staged a theatrics in Rajya Sabha ridiculing the Modi Government's attitude to Kerala. Vijayan said that he was expecting a positive answer from the Prime Minister about the Center's decision on the comprehensive reconstruction

package. "Till Thursday, we have confirmed that 225 persons were killed in the disaster and the number is likely to go up as and when the detailed list of those went missing and identity of the persons whose body parts would be identified," said the chief minister. The chief minister also asked people and organizations not to send any materials to Wayanad. "We are struggling to dispose seven tons of old cloth sent by well wishers as people in relief camps were reluctant to accept the same," he said.

A major portion of the media briefing was used by the Chief Minister to lambast the Union Railway Minister for his refusal to accord permission to the Angamali-Sabarimala Railway line. "The Railway Minister is insulting the people of the State by denying permission for laying this railway track. We will take up the issue with the Prime Minister when he visits the State on Saturday," said Vijayan.

Bronze medal winner Kusale accorded hero's welcome at Pune airport

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



Shooter Swapnil Kusale, who made India and Maharashtra proud by winning a Bronze medal for India in 50m Rifle 3 Positions event in the 2024 Olympics, was accorded a hero's welcome when he arrived at the Pune International Airport from Paris via New Delhi, on Thursday.

Thousands of people, who had turned out at the Pune airport to welcome Swapnil, cheered him lustily, amid thunderous shouts of "Bharat mata ki jai". As he walked past the airport lounge, passengers, excited airport and airline staffers went on a spree of "shooting" the Olympian shooter. Once outside the airport, Swapnil was welcomed by Maharashtra's Joint Director of Sports Suhas Patil. His father Suresh Kusale and other family members could not make it to the Pune airport as they were on their way from his home town of Kolhapur to Pune by road at that time.

From the airport, Swapnil headed straight to Shrimant Dagdusheth Halwai Ganapati Temple where he performed aarti to Lord Ganesh. Interacting briefly with the media after taking darshan of

Lord Ganesh, Swapnil said: "Whatever I have achieved is because of Lord Ganpati. That's why I have come here first, before going to my native town of Kolhapur," he said. Twenty-eight-year-old Swapnil is an employee of Central Railway at Pune. Till he took part and won a bronze medal in Paris Olympic, Swapnil was a Commercial cum Ticket Clerk of the Central Railway in Pune. He has now been promoted as an Officer on Special Duty, Sports Cell, Mumbai.

His 57-year-old Suresh Kusale is a teacher in a Zilla Parishad primary school, while his mother, Anita Kusale, is an elected sarpanch of Kambalwadi village. Later on, Swapnil was taken in an open jeep from a nearby junction to the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex at Balewadi in Pune where he was accorded a public felicitation later in the evening.

Jarange-Patil exhorts supporters to defeat leaders opposing quota for Marathas

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

For the second time in less than a fortnight, Shivba Sanghatana leader Manoj Jarange-Patil exhorted his supporters across Maharashtra to take a vow to defeat all those who are opposing reservations for Maratha, in the forthcoming Maharashtra Assembly polls. Addressing a huge rally organised as part of his peace march, Jarange-Patil indirectly hit out at both the ruling BJP-led MahaYuti and Opposition MVA and others leaders, including deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, NCP (SP) chief Devendra Fadnavis, Chhagan Bhujbal and Raj Thackeray, on the vexed issue of Maratha reservations.

"The leaders who have made it big in life and politics are now speaking against the reservation for the poor Marathas. The community people have now seen through this. One Maratha son (referring to himself) has started exposing them and the people are with him," Jarange-Patil said. Taking serious exception to BJP leaders' objections to his criticism of Fadnavis, Jarange-Patil said: "Why Cannot I speak against your leader... Is he your father, when did he become your father? If you think so then the Marathas will not vote for you".

IN BRIEF

BREAKTHROUGH IN SIVOK-RANGPO RAIL LINK PROJECT

Maligaon: In a major milestone, tunnel no. T-06 (3943 meters long) of the Sivok - Rangpo Rail Project (SRRP), located in Kalimpong District of West Bengal, achieved the breakthrough on 6th August, 2024. There are total 14 tunnels in this project. With the breakthrough of this tunnel, mining activities have been successfully accomplished in 12 tunnels of this project. The length of the Main Tunnel T-06 is 3943 meters, along with an Evacuation Tunnel of length 577 meters situated near the NHPC, Teesta Low Dam Power Station III in Kalimpong District, West Bengal. The Main Tunnel traverses through vulnerable and challenging geological and seismic conditions of the Younger Himalayas.



GNU, NSLF LAUNCH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Amritsar: The Guru Nanak Dev University and the S. Nanak Singh Literary Foundation, under the patronage of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Jaspal Singh Sandhu, have announced the launch of an annual scholarship for deserving and high-achieving research students starting from the 2024-25 academic session. This scholarship will be awarded to eligible researchers based on criteria established by Guru Nanak Dev University, with an annual grant amount of Rs. 25,000. The inaugural fellowship was presented to research student Kulvinder Kaur by Prof. Jaspal Singh Sandhu, Kulbir Singh Suri, and Navdeep Singh Suri at a special event marking this significant initiative.



GNU HOLDS WORKSHOP FOR JOURNALISM STUDENTS

Amritsar: Department of Mass Communication, Guru Nanak Dev University organised an interactive workshop in collaboration with Collective Newsroom and British Broadcasting Corporation at Conference Hall, Guru Nanak Bhawan of the University. This workshop was organised under the Banner of BBC India Trainee Scheme. A Team of Senior Journalists and Officials including Iqbal Ahmed, Shruti Arora, Arshdeep Kaur and Ravinder Robin shared their significant insights and experiences related to the field of journalism. Dr. Vasudha Sambhal, head of the department of Mass Communication, honoured the initiation of the event with her welcome remarks and Felicitating guests with Floral Saplings.



Waqf Bill to face JPC scrutiny...

From Page 1
"Because you couldn't do it, we had to bring these amendments... Some people have captured Waqf boards and this Bill has been brought to give justice to ordinary Muslims," he said. He claimed that many leaders in the opposition had privately told him that state Waqf boards had turned into a mafia. "I won't take their names and destroy their political careers," Rijju said. Defending the amendments, Rijju said a joint parliamentary committee had recommended that Waqf Act 1995 should be re-looked. He

said the opposition was opposing for the sake of politics. Rijju said "Opposition is trying to mislead people about intention of Waqf bill. No law can be above Constitution but 1995 Waqf law has such provisions". He said in the earlier law, there was no provision to challenge or review the order or judgement of the tribunal. Now, provision was being made for verdicts to be challenged at higher courts, the minister said. "In our country, no law can be a super law and that can't be above the Constitution.

Ex-West Bengal CM...

From Page 1
Suffering from coronary obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) his health deteriorated in recent times. Much like his predecessor and senior party comrade Jyoti Basu, the mortal remains of Bhattacharjee too would be donated to Kolkata's NRS Medical College for research work as per his last wishes, CPI(M) central committee member Rabin Deb said adding his eyes too were donated on Thursday. His body would be taken to State Assembly on Friday and from there to the

CPI(M) headquarters for his admirers to express their respect and after that his remains will be handed over to the hospital authorities, CPI(M) State secretary Md Salim said. Besides being a politician Bhattacharjee was also a creative personality. Apart from being a poet, writer and a dramatist Bhattacharjee remained committed to his political ideology. True to his political commitment he made headlines when he refused the Padma Bhushan award announced by the NDA government in 2022.

Vinesh retires after Olympics...

From Page 1
An ad-hoc division of CAS, which has been set up here for resolution of any disputes arising during the Olympic Games, will take up her appeal in the next few hours. She spent a good part of the day at a polyclinic inside the Games village owing to severe dehydration caused by her desperate measures to make the cut, which included going hungry, avoiding fluids and staying up all night to sweat it out. Cuban wrestler Yusneylis Guzman Lopez, who lost to Vinesh in the semifinals, replaced her in

the final against American Sarah Ann Hildebrandt. Hildebrandt won the bout to claim gold and Vinesh is now banking on CAS to be a joint silver-medallist with Lopez. However, the sport's international governing body, United World Wrestling (UWW) has made it clear on its part that the current weigh-in rule will not be changed as of now. On IOA's suggestion that a wrestler's results from the day on which the athlete met the weigh-in requirements should not be disqualified, the UWW President was sympathetic.

Forging signs...

From Page 1
Notably during these periods, Rai was posted as DM in Andaman & Nicobar. Upon his transfer to Delhi, Rai was posted as Director (Education). Considered a close confidant of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Rai, in his successive APARs for the period from 31.08.2020 to 31.03.2021, forged the signatures of his reporting authority, H Rajesh Prasad, then Principal Secretary (Education), GNCTD, and the signature of the reviewing authority, Vijay Kumar Dev, then Chief Secretary of Delhi. During the course of investigation, it came to light that Rai, deliberately filled his APARs manually, not online, through the SPARROW Portal, citing technical glitches. However, during enquiry, two officers, namely Anindo Majumdar and Vijay Kumar Dev, denied having reviewed the APARs of Rai and confirmed that the signatures on his APARs were forged.

New measures...

From Page 1
He ordered the traffic police to identify vulnerable points of traffic congestion and deploy dedicated teams to ensure smooth flow of traffic on those roads. Further, he stated, "Traffic Police will expedite the process of issuance of challan on Whatsapp which will provide timely information about the challans to violators and provide them facility to pay challan anywhere and anytime. It will also increase the rate of realisation of challans." "Traffic Police, which was earlier directed to ensure putting in place a system where traffic challans are issued on WhatsApp, was further directed to expedite the process," the Raj Niwas official said. The major cause is that Delhi roads are characterised by mixed traffic, which include, personal vehicles, buses, trucks, three-wheelers, two-wheelers, including animal-driven carts and pedestrians. This creates problems for traffic management and leads to delays in movement of the traffic.

Indian hockey's...

From Page 1
Spain kept up the tempo and secured back-to-back penalty corners in the 20th minute but the Indians defended stoutly. In the 28th minute, Spain secured another penalty corner after Borja Lacalle hit the post but it went in vain. Still trailing, India pressed hard on the Spain defence and secured their first penalty corner in the 29th minute but could not convert. Just 21 seconds from half-time, Manpreet compensated for his fault by earning India another penalty corner and this time Harmanpreet was bang on target.

India to monitor winged guests in...

From Page 1
The collars that have been planned to be procured need to be durable, and waterproof with GPS logging intervals ranging from 1 second to 48 hours and high-frequency sensors (up to 50 Hz) that can measure acceleration, magnetism, temperature, and light intensity. In such devices, data storage is

maintained even in the absence of a network connection, and the devices offer remote control for GPS and GSM schedules, night-time GPS hibernation, and geofence settings through an online control panel, a scientist explained about the features of such techs. "Currently, we do not know what exact routes these birds take... With this study, we will

be able to find their major stopovers as well their behaviours," he said. Bar-headed geese, part of the Anser family, are recognized by their unique and striking plumage. They feature a distinctive combination of white and grey feathers, with prominent black stripes on their heads and necks, and bright orange-yellow bills and

legs. Their wingspan ranges from 140 to 160 cm. Although males and females look quite similar, males are slightly larger than females. The birds arriving at Wular Lake each year among others include mallards, greylag geese, pochards, common teal, shovellers, pintails, and gharwals, typically between October and April.

CM faces public at Jandarshan

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Despite light showers, a large number of people attended Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai's Jandarshan programme on Thursday to have their grievances redressed.

At the event, Sai also launched 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign and distributed national flags to those who attended the programme.

He also symbolically distributed financial aid to 12 beneficiaries, marking the start of Rs 11.41 crore aid distribution to over 6,200 labourers' families under the schemes of the Labour Department.

Chief Minister's Secretary Rahul Bhagat and P. Dayanand along with senior



officials and a large number of residents were present on the occasion.

Beneficiaries of the Mahtari Vandan Yojana, who visited Sai's residence for the Jandarshan programme,

expressed their gratitude.

The Chief Minister also met Chayan Kumari from Mahasamund and Ranjita Khalko from Raipur who won bronze medals in mini golf at the 37th National Games.

They said they will participate in an event in South Korea from August 20 to 25.

Addressing concerns from Gram Panchayat Parsulidih Sarpanch, the Chief Minister directed district administration officials to expedite the construction of a shed for preparing mid-day meals in the school building of the village.

Farmers from Dongaria village in the Balodabazar district reported crop damage due to toxic water from a chemical plant. The Chief Minister instructed officials to provide prompt relief to the affected farmers.

The Chief Minister also presented motorized tricycles to 18-year-old Sana Parveen of Chaurasia Colony in Raipur city, Komal Lahre of

Serikhedi village and Thugiya Sahu of Kachana village in Dhamtari district.

Two women tied Rakhi on the wrist of Sai and sought compassionate appointment.

Rishi Agrawal pleaded that her father was a professor at the Government College in Bilaspur. She requested a Class 3 post in accordance with her educational qualifications.

Similarly, Siddhika Goswami, from Parpodi, Bemetara, sought compassionate appointment following the death of her father who taught at the Godmarra School.

The Chief Minister responded: "I promise that you will receive your Rakshabandhan gift in the form of compassionate appointments soon."

Five Maoists held in Sukma



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Five Maoists were arrested from separate places and explosives were seized from them in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh.

Podiya Muka and three others were apprehended

near Tekri village on Thursday, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan said.

Podiya was the Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Majdoor Sangh president while three others were lower rung cadres.

Six detonators, five

batteries and electric wire were seized from them.

Also, A Maoist identified as Madkam Motu was held on Wednesday near a forest of Achkat village.

Two detonators, two gelatin rods, two pencil shells and electric wire were recovered from him.

Three siblings among five arrested for theft

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Police on Thursday arrested five persons including three siblings for stealing cash, ornaments and electronic goods valued at Rs 16.51 lakhs from seven houses in Raipur city.

Suraj Singh (20), his brother Siddharth (24), sister Aditi alias Simmi, Arvind Verma (31) and Sanjay Jaiswal (40) have been taken into custody, Raipur Additional Superintendent of Police (Urban) Lakhna Pawar Patle said.

They all hailed from Uttar Pradesh. Suraj Singh and brother resided in DD Nagar area in Raipur. The brothers were nabbed following a tip and they named the three



others. Police seized 200 grams of gold ornaments, 2 kg silver

ornaments, a mobile phone and Rs 55,000 cash from them.

Rare bone reconstruction done at AIIMS-R

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

A highly complex operation was performed by the Department of Orthopedics at AIIMS Raipur by surgeons led by Prof. Dr Alok Chandra Agrawal to save the thumb of a 28-year female from Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh.

The patient had a giant cell tumour of the first metacarpal of the left thumb, causing severe pain and restricted movement. It had affected over 80 percent of the metacarpal bone.

The traditional procedure (fusion of the carpometacarpal joint) would have led to poor functional outcomes.

To preserve the hand's function, a team of specialist joint replacement surgeons conducted an en bloc resection of the tumour and replaced the affected bone with a 3D-printed titanium



bone implant. Additionally, the ligaments were reconstructed using suture anchors. The patient is recovering well post-operatively and has regained movement in the thumb.

This rare surgery, involving the reconstruction

of small bones, marks a significant achievement as it was the first time this procedure was performed in India.

The team involved Prof. Dr. Alok Chandra Agrawal, Dr. Harshal Sakale, Dr Ankit Kumar Garg, Dr Jagpreet

Singh from the Department of Orthopedics and Dr Mamta from the Department of Anesthesia.

Lt. Gen. Ashok Jindal (Retd), Executive Director of AIIMS Raipur, commended the departments at AIIMS for their initiative in

This rare surgery, involving the reconstruction of small bones, marks a significant achievement as it was the first time this procedure was performed in India.

performing such rare procedures, contributing significantly to the advancement of healthcare at AIIMS Raipur.

Cong to stage Gau-Satyagrah over stray cattle menace

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Congress in Chhattisgarh is going to stage the Gau-Satyagrah at district and block headquarters across the state charging that the BJP government had failed to control the stray cattle menace.

The deaths of cattle in road accidents caused due to their grazing of standing crop in fields have become a burning problem and the government is not giving ear to it, PCC chief Deepak Bajj said in a statement.

The problem of stray cattle has worsened in the BJP rule but the government is not



paying attention to it, he said. So, the Congress is going to stage protests and stage a satyagrah against it if the demand is not addressed by

August 15, he said. Congress leaders and workers will leave behind stray cattle at district Collectorate and SDM offices, he added.



Chhattisgarh Governor Ramen Deka on Thursday took a meeting of officials including the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police and told them to extend the benefits of government schemes in the Naxalite-affected regions.

Fencing player's kin express gratitude to CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh fencing player Reeba Benni's parents on Thursday expressed gratitude to Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai for their daughter's participation in the Commonwealth Games in New Zealand and winning a silver medal.

The kin met Sai at a weekly Jandarshan programme here, an official statement said.

As a gesture of gratitude, they presented him a coconut as a token of their



appreciation and respect. Benni had made the state

proud by winning a silver medal at

Commonwealth Games last month.

India defeated New Zealand 45-37 in which Benni had contributed 17 points.

Benni's achievement came after a generous intervention by the Chief Minister who ensured her participation despite initial financial setback.

On July 4, Benni's mother sought financial aid from the Chief Minister. Taking swift action, Sai had approved Rs 4 lakhs for the fencing player to cover her expenses.

(Publication) FORM No.IV
(See Sub rule 2(a) of Rule 5)
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, JABALPUR
At 797-11, Shantikunj, South Civil Lines, Jabalpur (MP)-462001(Area of Jurisdiction- Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh)
Original Application No 255/2023 FF: 02.10.2024
Applicant: Axis Bank, Durg Branch Durg
Versus
Defendants: Shri Bhuneshwar Sahu & Others

1. Shri Bhuneshwar Sahu
S/o Shri Atma Ram Sahu; R/o H No 36 Village Silapatti Tahsil Chhuikhadan Distt Rajnandgaon CG 491441
2. Shri Kanhaiyalal Sahu
S/o Shri Atma Ram Sahu; R/o H No 36 Village Silapatti Tahsil Chhuikhadan Distt Rajnandgaon CG 491441
3. Shri Bhupendra Kumar Sahoo
S/o Shri Atma Ram Sahu; R/o H No 36 Village Silapatti Tahsil Chhuikhadan Distt Rajnandgaon CG 491441
4. Shri Ghanshyam Sahu
S/o Shri Atma Ram Sahu; R/o H No 36 Village Silapatti Tahsil Chhuikhadan Distt Rajnandgaon CG 491441
5. Smt Malti Sahoo
W/o Nand kishor Sahoo; R/o H No 36 Village Silapatti Tahsil Chhuikhadan Distt Rajnandgaon CG 491441

Whereas O.A. No 255 /2023 was listed before the Hon'ble Presiding Officer on 03.04.2023.
In accordance with Sub Section 04 of Section 19 of the Act, you the defendants are directed as under:-
i) To show case within thirty days of the service of the summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted.
ii) To disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under Serial No.3-A of the application.
iii) You are restrained from dealing without disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under Serial No.3-A of the Original Application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties.
iv) You shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under Serial No.3.4 of the Original Application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.
v) You shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank of financial institutions holding security interest over such assets
You are also directed to file the Written Statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear Hon'ble Tribunal before 2.10.2024 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal this 2nd day of June 2024.
By Order Tribunal

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता
लोक निर्माण विभाग धमतरी संभाग धमतरी (छ.ग.)
Email ID-ee.dhamtari@nic.in
क्रमांक 3727/NIT-2/2024-2025/ व.ले.लि. दिनांक 05/08/2024
// निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना // प्रथम आमंत्रण

1. निविदा प्रपत्र क्रय करने हेतु आवेदन -27/08/2024 अपरान्ह 5.30 बजे तक प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि
2. टेकेंदर द्वारा प्रस्तुत निविदायें प्राप्त -03/09/2024 अपरान्ह 5.30 बजे तक करने की अंतिम तिथि
3. निविदा खोलने की तिथि - 04/09/2024 पूर्वाह्न 11.30 बजे

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत (रा.मं.)	अमानत राशि (रु.मं.)
T 0005	GAD आवासीय परिसर (पालीटेक्निक के पास) में अस्वास्थ्यकर कार्यों को दूर में सेंटिक टेक निर्माण कार्य	966 7300.00 300000.00	
T 0006	GAD आवासीय परिसर (पालीटेक्निक के पास) में पानी की समस्या दूर करने हेतु बोर खनन कार्य एवं पानी सलाई पाईप लाइन विस्तार	8.81 6700.00 300000.00	
T 0007	GAD आवासीय परिसर (पालीटेक्निक के पास) पेय जल उपलब्धता कराने हेतु पाइप लाइन कार्य	998 7500.00 300000.00	
T 0008	GAD आवासीय परिसर (पालीटेक्निक के पास) के आवासीय घरों में पिने योग्य जल प्लंब संयंत्र का निर्माण कार्य	9.58 7200.00 300000.00	

1. प्रत्येक निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य रु. 750.00
2. प्रत्येक कार्य का निविदा की श्रेणी द रो अ श्रेणी के लिये है।
3. एनआर्डी क्र. T0005 से T0008 की समयावधि 2 माह वर्षान्तु सहित।
4. टीए EMD के साथ क्लॉस एड हेतु अनिवार्य 2, 3 में प्रस्तुत करना अनिवार्य है।
5. निविदा संबंधी सर्व विभागीय वेबसाइट www.cg.nic.in/pwdraipur पर Live Tender के अंतर्गत निविदा प्रपत्र में उपलब्ध है जिसका अवलोकन कार्यालयीन समया में संगणकीय कार्यालय में देखी जा सकता है।
कार्यालय अभियंता लोक निर्माण विभाग धमतरी संभाग धमतरी (छ.ग.)
G-242501701/3

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NDA backs Waqf Bill

Opp slammed for rumour-mongering

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) allies JD(U), TDP, Shiv Sena and the LJP backed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill that was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday, saying it was aimed at bringing transparency in the functioning of the Waqf Board and was not an attempt to interfere with the running of mosques.

The TDP and the LJP also supported the Bill being sent to a parliamentary committee for further examination. Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju introduced the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and proposed sending it to a joint parliamentary committee after the Opposition parties objected to its provisions. Speaking in Lok Sabha as the Government moved for introducing the Bill, Janata Dal (United) leader and Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan' asserted that the Bill was not anti-Muslim. Defending the Bill, he said, "Several members are making it sound as if the amendment in the Waqf Board law is anti-Muslim. How is it anti-Muslim? Here example of Ayodhya is being given... Can you not differentiate between a temple and an institution? This is not an attempt to interfere with mosques. This law is for the institution, to



make it transparent... How was the Waqf Board formed?" he said, and himself replied that it was through a law. The minister said if any institution established through law becomes autocratic, the Government has the right to bring a law to ensure transparency, he said. Slamming the Opposition parties, he said, "There is no communal divide. They are spreading rumours." Taking a jibe at the Congress over the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, he asked, "Who killed thousands of Sikhs?" "The Bill should come and transparency should be brought," he said. Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP G M Harish Balyogi said his party will not mind if the Bill is sent to a parliamentary panel. "I appreciate the concern with which Government has brought this Bill. The

purpose of the donors need to be protected. When the purpose and power get misused, it is the responsibility of the Government to bring reforms and introduce transparency in the system," he said. The TDP MP said there is a requirement for the Government to regulate and streamline the purpose. "The Bill has been brought and we support it... We believe that the registration is going to help poor Muslims and women of the country, and bring transparency," the TDP MP said, adding his party will not mind if the Bill is sent to a panel of Parliament for further consultation. "If wider consultations are required to remove misconceptions and to educate the purpose of the Bill, we have no problem

sending it to the select committee," he said. Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Eknath Shinde also supported the Bill. "Some people are only politicising this Bill. There is only one intention behind this Bill -- to bring transparency and accountability," he said. He accused the opposition of spreading misinformation on the Bill. "When their Government was in power, they put administrators in temples like Shirdi. They did not remember federalism at that time. They have pushed Muslim women back," he said in Lok Sabha. Lok Janshakti Party-Ram Vilas (LJP-RV) MP Shambhavi Choudhary spoke on similar lines and supported the Bill. "The founder of our party Ram Vilas Paswan ji always supported Muslims. In 2004, he wanted a Muslim to become the prime Minister. We support this Bill, but if some people want wider consultations, we have no objection if it goes to a committee," Choudhary told reporters outside Parliament. "This is not an anti-Muslim Bill. It is bringing equality in the representation of the minorities by including groups like Bohra Muslims, Ahmadiyya and women who will also get representation," the LJP MP said.

Bill aimed at targeting Muslims, draconian law: INDIA Bloc MPs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Thursday strongly protested against the introduction of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha, with several INDIA Bloc MPs calling it an attack on the Constitution and aimed at targeting Muslims. They also urged the Government to withdraw the Bill. Soon after Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju sought leave to introduce the Bill, Congress MP KC Venugopal — who had submitted notice to oppose its introduction — accused the Government of violating freedom of religion and attacking the federal system through it. "This is a draconian law and a fundamental attack on the Constitution," Venugopal said. Opposing the Waqf Bill in Lok Sabha, Venugopal said, "We are Hindus but at the same time, we respect the faith of other religions. This Bill is specialized for the Maharashtra, Haryana elections. You do not understand that last time the people of India clearly taught you a lesson. This is an attack on the federal system." "Through this Bill, they are putting a provision that non-Muslims also be members of the Waqf governing council. It is a direct attack on freedom of religion... Next you will go for Christians, then Jains... People of India will not



buy this kind of divisive politics now," Venugopal asserted. Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav said the Bill was being introduced to appease the BJP's hardcore supporters. "What is the point of including non-Muslims in Waqf boards when this is not done in other religious bodies?" Yadav asked. "The truth is that the BJP has brought this Bill to appease its hardcore supporters," the Kannauj MP said. Samajwadi Party MP Mohibullah Nadvi said the Bill was against freedom of religion. He said appointing non-Muslims in the Central Waqf Council and other such bodies was violative of the rights of Muslims. Opposing its introduction, Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Sudip Bandhopadhyay said the Bill was divisive, anti-constitutional and anti-federalism. "This is against the Constitution, a religious minority and federalism. It shuns justice in every possible way," DMK MP Kanimozhi said. "It is a direct violation of

Article 30, which deals with minorities to administer their institutions. This Bill targets a particular religious group..." she said. Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) - Sharadchandra Pawar MP Supriya Sule said her party opposed the Bill as it was against a particular minority community. "Look at what is happening in Bangladesh, there is so much pain... It is the moral duty of a country to protect minorities," Sule said. "The Government should clarify the intent and the timing of the Bill. We object, withdraw this Bill... Let's discuss it and then bring a Bill that is fair and just," she added. The Indian Union Muslim League's (IUML) ET Mohammed Basheer said the Bill was violative of articles 14, 15, 25 26 and 30 of the Constitution. He alleged it was part of the Government's "dirty agenda" and called the Bill divisive. If this Bill is passed, the Waqf system will collapse, he said. He also claimed that the bill would encourage encroachment on Waqf land. "Your intention is to communalise, put Hindus and Muslims in compartments... We will not let this happen," Basheer said. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen Chairperson Asaduddin Owaisi claimed that the House did not have the competence to make the amendments.



Opp MPs protest, demand MSP for farmers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders on Thursday held a protest on the Parliament premises, demanding that farmers' crops be bought at MSP and justice ensured for them. MPs from parties such as the Trinamool Congress (TMC), Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) - Sharadchandra Pawar, and the Shiv Sena (UBT), among others, protested on the steps leading to the Makar Dwar of Parliament. The MPs wore a garland of vegetables and raised slogans such as "Kisan ko phasal pe MSP do" and "Kisan pe anyay bandh karo." The manner in which the BJP has given minimum support price to TDP (Telugu Desam Party) and JD(U), it should also ensure MSP (minimum support price) for farmers and that is why we are protesting," Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Priyanka Chaturvedi said. The export ban on onion farmers of Maharashtra should be lifted. Innumerable requests have been made to the Centre but to no avail, she said.



India, UK discuss Bangladesh crisis amid Hasina's asylum plans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday discussed the unfolding situation in Bangladesh with his British counterpart David Lammy during a phone conversation. The call was initiated by Lammy. In a social media post later, Jaishankar said he and Lammy also deliberated on the developments in West Asia. "Received a call from UK Secretary @DavidLammy today. Discussed the situation in Bangladesh and West Asia," Jaishankar said. The discussion between Jaishankar and the British Foreign Secretary on the situation in Bangladesh comes against the backdrop of former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's initial plan to seek asylum in London. However, the plan has hit a roadblock following the UK's hesitation to provide her refuge. Meanwhile, as an interim Government takes charge in Dhaka, India on Thursday said the interests of the people of Bangladesh are foremost in its mind. India also hoped for early restoration of law and order in Bangladesh. As far as India is concerned, interests of people of Bangladesh are foremost in our mind, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his weekly media briefing. The situation in Bangladesh is still evolving, he said. Asked when former prime minister Sheikh Hasina will leave India, Jaiswal said: "We do not have any update on her plan." To another question on reports of attacks on minority communities in Bangladesh, the MEA spokesperson said New Delhi is monitoring the situation. He said India is in touch with authorities in Bangladesh to ensure safety and security of Indian missions, the personnel working there and Indians residing in that country. Hasina resigned as the prime minister on Monday following weeks of massive protests that initially began as an agitation against a job quota scheme but weeks later morphed into a mass movement demanding her ouster from power.

Dhankhar leaves House in a huff

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday left the House for a short time after heated exchanges with some Opposition members who wanted to raise the issue of Vinesh Phogat's disqualification and described the scene as "unprecedented and indigestible." Dhankhar expressed his anguish on the conduct of Opposition members and left the House for a while. "For sometime I am not finding myself in a position to sit here..." Dhankhar said, adding he was leaving the House "with a heavy heart." Deputy Chairman Harivansh chaired the Zero Hour proceedings. Trouble started in the morning session when Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sought to raise the Phogat disqualification issue but Dhankhar did not allow it. This followed an angry exchange between the Chair and TMC leader Derek O'Brien. "It is an important issue. It is not an issue of a particular individual," Kharge said soon after the listed papers were tabled in the House. He wanted to know "who is behind" the disqualification. However, Dhankhar did not allow Kharge to raise the issue and went ahead with the scheduled Zero Hour listings. In the meantime, Derek O'Brien stood up to raise his point, but could not be heard because of uproar in the House. To this Dhankhar cautioned the TMC member, saying



"You are shouting at the Chair. Your conduct is ugliest in the House. I condemn your actions. Next time I will show you the door." As uproar continued, Opposition parties staged a walkout. "They (Opposition) think they are all wise. They think they are the only ones whose hearts are bleeding. The entire nation is in pain because of our girl. Entire nation is feeling the pain from the President to the Prime Minister to myself and many more. Everyone is sharing that situation, but to... Politicize it is the greatest disrespect to that girl. That girl has a long way to go," Dhankhar said. Leader of the House and BJP President J P Nadda also condemned the behaviour of Opposition members towards the Chair and also accused the Congress party of politicising the Phogat disqualification issue. "Opposition does not have a solid issue to discuss," he said. Nadda emphasised the whole country is behind Phogat and even the Prime Minister has described the wrestler as 'champion of champions'. After Nadda spoke, Dhankhar

expressed his anguish on the conduct of Opposition members and left the House saying he was not in a position to remain in the House for the time being. Before leaving the Rajya Sabha, Dhankhar said the behaviour of the Opposition members has crossed all limits by creating anarchy in the House and disrespecting the prestige of the Chair. "They are not challenging me. They are challenging the post of the Chairman. And they are challenging the Chair, as they think that the person who is sitting on this Chair is not capable," he said. Dhankhar rued that he did not get the desired support from the House despite making all efforts. "I am not running away from the oath. But what I have seen today, the way a member has behaved, the way the Opposition bench has conducted, I am not finding myself in a position to sit here for sometime," Dhankhar said, adding he was leaving the House "with a heavy heart." After Dhankhar left the House, Deputy Chairman Harivansh chaired the Zero Hour proceedings. Dhankhar later chaired the Question Hour. After returning to the Chair, he said when a scene is created in the House and it becomes the epicentre of disruption for the entire nation, then it is a bounden duty to sometimes take a tough decision. "I left my seat to introspect. Having witnessed (the scene)... Which I found was unprecedented, and indigestible," Dhankhar said.

SC to hear plea to delay NEET-PG exam

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court agreed to hear on Friday a plea seeking postponement of the NEET-PG examination, scheduled for August 11, which claimed that candidates have been allocated cities that are highly inconvenient for them to reach. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra on Thursday took note of the

submissions of lawyer Anas Tanwir on the issue. The bench said the matter will be listed on Friday. The plea said many candidates have been allocated cities which are highly inconvenient for them to reach. It said the test cities were allotted on July 31 and the specific centres will be declared on August 8. While the allocation of the centres was done to curb malpractices, the plea said



due to the paucity of time, it is difficult for the candidates to make arrangements for travel to specific cities. "Issue a writ in the nature of Mandamus... The Respondents (National Testing Agency) to reschedule the NEET-PG 2024 examination," stated the plea filed by Vishal Soren. The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-Postgraduate exam was initially supposed to be held on June 23. It was postponed by the Union Health Ministry as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of alleged irregularities in certain competitive exams.

Govt servants stand to lose job over faked documents, RS told

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Existing instructions permit the termination of a Government servant for furnishing false information or producing a false certificate to secure an appointment, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday. The response assumes significance as the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) recently cancelled the provisional candidature of probationary IAS officer Pujja Khedkar and debarred her from all future examinations for fraudulently availing attempts in the civil services examination beyond eligibility. She has also been accused of misusing disability and Other Backward Class or OBC (non-creamy layer) quotas, among others. In a written reply, Union Minister of State for Personnel



Jitendra Singh said complaints are received from time to time regarding employment in Government Ministries and departments on the basis of fake caste certificates, which are normally forwarded to the concerned Ministries/departments for appropriate action. "The extant instructions provide that if it is found that a Government servant had furnished false information or produced a false certificate in order to secure an appointment, he should not be retained in service," he said. Thus, when an appointing authority comes to know that an employee has submitted a fake caste certificate, it has to initiate action to remove or dismiss such an employee from service according to the provisions of the relevant service rules, Singh said. The Minister said the responsibility for issuing and verifying the caste/community certificates lies with the concerned state governments. The Supreme Court, vide its judgement dated September 2, 1994, in the matter of 'Kumari Madhuri Patil vs Addl Commissioner', has laid down detailed criteria/guidelines to be followed by the state governments for the issuance of social status certificates, their scrutiny and their approval, he said. States and Union Territories have been requested on several occasions to ensure that the caste certificate referred to the district authorities is verified and reported to the appointing authority within one month of receipt of a request from such authority, the minister said.



CDS wants India to ramp up defence production

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauthan on Thursday said here the global disruptions have presented an opportunity for the Indian Defence Eco-system to ramp up their defence manufacturing capabilities so that the country transcends from being an importer to being an exporter of munitions, as well as, ammunition. Making this assertion at the Ammo India 2024 Conference organised by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), he said the global geopolitical environment is in a state of flux. "We are passing through an era of big global disruptions. Amidst the vagaries of the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) of the World, the global arms industry is grappling with a seemingly insurmountable problem of widening demand and supply gap," he stressed. The CDS highlighted the importance of Aatmanirbharta and self-reliance in defence and emphasised how it is central to attaining strategic autonomy for the nation. He mentioned various policy changes, reforms and the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces to promote Make in India and Make for the World drive especially with respect to ammunition manufacturing.

Rajnath showers praises on ace shooter Bhaker

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday showered praise on star pistol shooter Manu Bhaker as he met the double Olympic bronze medalist after her triumphant return from the Paris Games. He said every Indian is elated by her "incredible performances". Rajnath also shared a photograph of their meeting in a social media post. "Delighted to meet India's ace shooter, Manu Bhaker, who scripted history at the Paris Olympics by winning two Bronze medals for the country. Every Indian is elated by her incredible performances. Best wishes for her future endeavours," he wrote on the social media platform. Bhaker arrived home on Wednesday after her historic feat at the ongoing Paris



Games where she became the first Indian in the post-Independence era to win two medals in a single edition of the Olympics. The ace shooter later posted on social media that the defence minister inspired her with his words of motivation. "I am honoured to have the opportunity to meet with the Hon'ble Defence Minister of India, Shri Rajnath Singh at his office in New Delhi. I am grateful he took time out from his busy schedule to offer his support and inspired me with his words of motivation. #JeetKiAur #Cheer4Bharat #Paris2024 @Olympics @rajnathsingh @DefenceMinIndia @WeAreTeamIndia," she posted on the social media platform and also shared a photograph of the meeting. Bhaker will return to Paris on Saturday where she will be one of the flag-bearers of the Indian contingent at the Paris Olympics Closing Ceremony on Sunday. The 22-year-old Bhaker won a bronze each in the women's 10m air pistol and 10m air pistol mixed team event where she had paired with Sarabjot Singh to script Olympic history for the country. Before her, British-Indian athlete Norman Pritchard had won two silver medals in 200m sprint and 200m hurdles at the 1900 Olympics but that achievement had come in the pre-Independence era.

Govt nurturing 1,050 athletes for international participation: Mandaviya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is currently nurturing 1,050 athletes selected under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), bearing all expenses from training to gears and for international participation, Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Mansukh Lal Mandaviya said in Rajya Sabha on Thursday. The Government has three initiatives to identify talents at the grassroots level and nurture them and provide opportunities to them to play at the national and international levels, said Mandaviya while responding to a supplementary. Under Khelo India, the



Government has created a centre in each district. It is also organising competitions for school and college students over 14 years on state and national levels. There is a KIRTI programme (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification), which identifies talents from the schools and colleges. "Currently a talent identification process is going on in the country, in which one lakh talented sportsperson will be identified," said Mandaviya.

After Wayanad tragedy, State MPs, MLAs demand ecologically sensitive rail line

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN
KOCHI

Closely on the heels of the disaster that struck Wayanad that claimed more than 400 lives and made hundreds of families without roof over their heads, Kerala is on its way to perpetuate another major mishap under the pretext of development. Even as the Union Minister of forest Bhupender Yadav declared that the landslide and deluge that devastated Wayanad was a man made disaster because of scant regard for ecology and environment, a team of MPs and MLAs from the State called on Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav and submitted a memorandum seeking the speeding up of the construction of Angamali to Sabari Railway Line which they claim would help pilgrims to the holy shrine of Sabarimala atop the Western Ghats. Devotees of Lord Ayyappa, the presiding deity of Sabarimala are agast over the enthusiasm shown by the elected representatives of the people pushing for a separate railway line to the holy shrine. "None of these representatives belong to the Sanatana Dharma and most



of them consider idol worship as a cardinal sin. There is something more than the ordinary eyes could see behind this demand for the railway line to Sabarimala," said PNS Namboodiri, a former Government official based in Ettumanoor. He told *The Pioneer* that not a single MP or MLA came forward to condemn the Kerala Government action of allowing women in the age group of 10 to 50 worshipping at the shrine. "It is a centuries old custom that women in the 10 to 50 age group are not allowed in this particular shrine as Lord Ayyappa here is in the manifestation of eternal

bachelor," said Namboodiri. Scholars like Namboodiri and T K Subramanina Namboodiri are unanimous in their apprehension that there is a conspiracy against the temple dating back to many centuries. "They want to elevate the pilgrimage center to a shopping complex and business district," said Subramanian Namboodiri. "All super fast trains including Vande Bharat Expresses plying in Kerala travel slowly because of outdated signal and tracks and it would take years for the Railways to bring on par with the rest of the nation. The Kerala Government should give top priority to this process," said a top

official of the Railways based in Kerala. Alok Kumar Verma, former chief engineer of Indian Railways concurred with this observation and said focus should be on improving speed and efficiency. It may be remembered that B V Kumar, former chief of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence had warned the country about the mushrooming of cannabis plantations in the high ranges of Kerala. "The top grade cannabis cultivated in these areas have to be brought to the plains and what is the safest route than the railways," he had said while reacting to the demand of Kerala politicians for this rail route. Namboodiri pointed out that the Sabarimala Temple opens the sanctum sanctorum just for five months every year. "The trains will run almost empty for the next seven months. The argument that there should be train service to transport the hill produce to the plains does not hold water as only marginal crop is cultivated in the region," said PNS Namboodirippadu, a former revenue official who has put in years of service in the region.

Certain agencies exerting pressure for re-imposition of AFSPA: Manipur CM

PTI ■ IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh on Thursday said certain central agencies were exerting pressure for the re-imposition of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in the valley districts of the State. Responding to a query from Naga People's Front (NPF) member Leishiyu Keishing in the Assembly, Singh said, "Due to the evolving situation in the valley districts since May 3 last year, some central agencies were pressing for the re-imposition of AFSPA." He added that even during discussions with him, these agencies argued that normal laws could not address the situation and thus AFSPA should be reinstated in the valley districts. Objecting to the suggestion, Singh said, "We were at a point of demanding the removal of AFSPA from hill districts, but I was questioned about whether the situation in the valley districts could be managed under normal laws." Singh explained that he assured the agencies that the unrest was a result of emotional responses to recent violence and that he would address the situation gradually. The CM admitted



that the evolving situation in the valley districts has made it challenging to provide satisfactory answers to the agencies during their visits. He acknowledged that the agencies were not fully satisfied with his previous responses and appealed to the people through the House, saying, "There is significant pressure for the imposition of AFSPA in the valley." Reflecting on the hardships caused by AFSPA, Singh said, "If the Act could restore law and order, it would have been achieved long ago. A humane approach is needed." He emphasised his own past

opposition to AFSPA, stating, "I have long stood against AFSPA, both as a journalist and as a public figure. It is an inhumane and draconian Act that humiliates people, instills fear, and destroys dignity." Singh noted that after the situation improved in the valley districts, AFSPA was removed from 19 police stations. He reiterated the desire to remove AFSPA from the hill areas as well, calling for central leaders to be convinced of this need. Singh expressed hope that new criminal laws will help manage the evolving situation in Manipur.

Rain claims 100 lives in Himachal since start of monsoon

PTI ■ SHIMLA

Rain has taken 100 lives since the onset of monsoon on June 27 and continues to thwart the traffic in the state with 97 roads closed at the moment, officials said on Thursday. The Met office on Thursday issued an 'orange' warning, foreboding heavy to very rainfall, marked by thunderstorm and lightning, at places in Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, and Sirmour districts for Saturday. 'According to the state emergency operation centre, 30 people died after falling from a height, 23 in accidental drowning, 14 of snake bite, 13 due to electrocution, 11 in cloudburst, three in flash floods and one in landslide and five due to other reasons. 'The maximum deaths, 21, were reported from Mandi, followed by 18 in Kangra while Shimla and Sirmour districts for nine deaths each. 'The Met also warned of a low to moderate flash flood in parts of Sirmour, Chamba, Shimla, and Mandi districts in the next 24 hours. 'By Thursday evening, 40 roads were closed in Mandi, 26 in Kullu, 15 in Shimla, six in Kangra, four each in Sirmour and Lahaul and Spiti, and one each in Hamirpur and Kinnaur districts. 'The traffic was restricted to one side of the road on the Shimla-Kalka National Highway 5 due to debris on the road near Kandaghat in Solan district. Long queues of vehicles were seen on both sides of the road. 'Forty-five transformers and 25 water supply schemes are affected in the state, the state emergency centre said. 'Shillaroo recorded the highest rainfall at 86.4 mm since Wednesday evening, followed by Kufri (78 mm), Baggi (76.6 mm), Sundernagar (64.2 mm), Mandi (60.2 mm), Gohar (57.4 mm), Jogindernagar (53.7 mm), Pandoh (50 mm), Palampur (48.8 mm), Dharmsihala (38.6 mm), Shimla (34 mm) Narkanda (28.5 mm), Bilaspur Jubbarhatti (25 mm each), Kangra (22.6 mm), Dhaulakuan (22 mm), and Manali (16 mm). 'The water supply to Shimla city can be disturbed for the next 2-3 days due to turbidity in the water sources, the Shimla Jal Prabandhak Nigam said. 'The state received 29 per cent deficit rainfall till August 8, beginning from Jun1, the date monsoon hits the country. 'The state received 307.9 mm rainfall against an average of 435.5 mm during this period. 'In August so far, Himachal Pradesh has recorded 80.8 mm rainfall against a normal of 78.5 mm.

Centre to diplomatically deal with attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh: Himanta

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday expressed confidence that the Centre will address the alleged attacks on Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh through diplomatic efforts. He assured that while the Indian government is managing the situation with patience and caution, the focus remains on ensuring safety and maintaining strict vigilance along the Indo-Bangladesh border, which has been fully sealed. "The Indian government will deal with the situation politically and diplomatically with the new dispensation. We have been asked not to comment much on it but to be patient and tolerant," the Chief Minister said on the sidelines of a programme here. "The solution does not lie in allowing those trying to enter India following persecution in the neighbouring country but to ensure their safety and security there. There are various organisations like the UN and others to deal with the situation diplomatically," Sarma said. Sarma further noted his reluctance to comment on the alleged attacks to avoid potential repercussions on minorities in Bangladesh. "I am confident that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is



doing everything possible to ensure the safety and security of Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists in that country," he said. He assured that Assam is maintaining strict border security, allowing entry only to those with valid passports, visas, and bona fide Indian citizenship. Sarma had previously indicated concerns about the situation in Bangladesh from two perspectives - the potential influx of people through the border and the risk of the

neighbouring country becoming a refuge for insurgents from Northeast India. He had asserted that there is no doubt that with the cooperation of the previous government in Bangladesh, 'we have been successful in curbing extremist activities in Northeast India'. He hoped that the new government in Bangladesh will also maintain the same cooperation and not allow their country to become a safe haven for NE insurgents.

Education best tool for social transformation: Arunachal Governor

PTI ■ ITANAGAR

Arunachal Pradesh Governor Lt Gen (Retd) K T Parnaik on Thursday called on all stakeholders to focus on developing students' physical, mental, and moral foundations to shape them into responsible citizens. Speaking at a three-day 'chintan shivir-cum-education conclave' here, Parnaik emphasised that a strong mental and moral foundation would result in educated, disciplined, and inspired individuals, contributing to the state's transformation from 'Shiksit Arunachal' to 'Viksit Arunachal'. Highlighting the critical role of education, the governor said it equips people with knowledge and skills necessary for personal and societal growth. "It awakens joy, curiosity and a deep desire to pursue leadership roles and positively impact those around them," the governor added. Parnaik stressed the importance of the 'Guru-Shishya Parampara,' advocating for impactful and innovative teacher training

programmes. He urged the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which promotes a holistic curriculum that encourages critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Parnaik recommended aligning the curriculum with NEP 2020 principles while incorporating the state's cultural heritage. The governor also addressed initiatives such as the Mission 'National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy' (NIPUN Bharat) and Prime Minister Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI Schools), emphasising the need for adopting best practices and innovative approaches to set new educational standards. Parnaik commended State Education Minister Pasang Dorjee Sonu, his advisor Mutchu Mithi, Education Commissioner Amjad Tak, and Education Secretary Duly Kamduk for organising the conclave and encouraged participants to engage in meaningful discussions to enhance the state's educational framework.

Assam: Over 1,000 rare Sanchi manuscripts to go digital

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The Dibrugarh University along with an NGO Nanda Talukdar Foundation (NTF) has decided to preserve over 1,000 rare manuscripts of Assam by digitising and making them accessible to the public. NTF in a statement on Thursday said that the initiative promises to open the doors to a vast collection of rare and unseen Sanchi Paat (leaves of the Sanchi tree) manuscripts for anyone, anywhere in the world. The Dibrugarh University recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Nanda Talukdar Foundation (NTF) to preserve Assam's rich literary heritage, it added. As part of the MoU, NTF will serve as the knowledge partner in the preservation and digitisation of over 1,000 rare and ancient manuscripts housed at the Assamese Department of the university. These manuscripts, written in old Assamese, Sanskrit, Tai and Bengali, cover various subjects including Vaishnavism, Buddhism and ancient customs of Assam, reflecting the diverse cultural and religious heritage of the region," the release said. Under this partnership, the manuscripts will be digitised



and made available in the public domain, enabling scholars and researchers worldwide to access these invaluable resources, it added. This initiative is the first large-scale effort to make rare Assamese manuscripts publicly accessible and ensure their preservation for future generations. Commenting on the development, Mrinal Talukdar on behalf of NTF said: "The digitisation of these manuscripts is not only a matter of preservation but also opens the door to knowledge. We are honoured to be part of this groundbreaking project. Dibrugarh University Registrar Dr Parmanand Sonowal said the partnership is a significant step towards making the vast and diverse heritage of Assam accessible to the world. "We hope this initiative will inspire further efforts in preserving our cultural legacy," he added.

Hilsa yield poor during June-September session: Fishermen's organisations

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Hilsa fish yield has sharply declined in its hub in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district this season, with trawlers netting 25-30 tonne a day instead of 50 tonne two years ago, an office-bearer of a fishermen's organisation said on Thursday. However, fishermen's organisations do not anticipate an immediate impact on the supply in city markets despite the current situation in Bangladesh, as shipments from the neighbouring nation cross the border only during the September-October festive period. Bijan Maity, general secretary of the Kakkdip Matsya Unnayan Samity, said out of 1,000 trawlers operating in the Kakkdip-Diamond Harbour area, about 70 have been actively fishing for Hilsa since mid-June. The Hilsa season typically runs from June to September, a period when the fish migrate from the sea to rivers to spawn.



"The daily Hilsa haul is not more than 15-20 tonnes this season unlike 50 tonnes two years ago and around 100 tonnes five years ago," he said. Maity said the fish caught this season weigh around 500-600 grams, with larger Hilsas being rare. "This reduced yield is attributed to factors such as air and water pollution and indiscriminate netting of juvenile Hilsa," he added. He emphasised that fish

shorter than 23 cm or weighing less than 500 grams should ideally be released, but some fishermen continue to catch these smaller fish for quick profit. He expressed hope that yields might improve with favourable weather conditions and noted that the rise in diesel prices has increased trawler operating costs from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.5 lakh, making it harder for fishermen to recover their expenses.

"Let's hope that yield will increase in the next few days if the rainy and windy weather conditions continue," he said. He said that a haul of 32,000-35,000 tonne would be termed a good catch, but such a situation was unlikely. In the Digha-Mandarmani belt of Purba Medinipur, another major Hilsa hub, the catch has also been below expectations due to insufficient rainfall, according to a spokesperson from the Digha Fishermen and Fish Traders Association. "Last year, the catch was 15 tonnes in the first two months, but this year it has been way below," Anwar Maqsood, secretary of Fish Importers Association, said. Maqsood said regular imports of Hilsa from Bangladesh have ceased since 2012, except for a special allowance during Durga Puja. Currently, Hilsa imports are limited to Myanmar, with about 25 tonnes arriving by ship in each consignment. The timing of future consignments remains uncertain.

And river runs through desert: Rain revives dry Luni river in Barmer

PTI ■ JODHPUR

The rain, a flowing river and the desert. A rare trifeata celebrated by locals in the arid land of Barmer with song, dance and prayers to welcome the unusual sight of the Luni river flowing through their town. After three days of continuous rain, the river flowed through Samdari town in the western Rajasthan district on Wednesday. It was only for the second time in five years and the locals couldn't have been happier. Luni River, also known as 'Maruganga' or the Ganga of Rajasthan, originates from the Nag Pahadi in Aravali ranges in Ajmer and flows through nine districts of the state before merging into Gujarat's Rann of Kutch. However, the river hardly reaches Barmer even when it rains heavily in the region, an expert said. After encountering the rare sight on Wednesday, elated residents of the Samdari town gathered around the river as women sang folk songs while men danced on the beats of



the drums. The locals, who consider this to be an auspicious occasion for the entire region, worshipped the river and offered 'chunri' (a traditional red scarf). Convener of the Jodhpur chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Culture Heritage (INTACH) Mahendra Singh Tanwar said the Luni river has had a huge natural and cultural significance in this region since long. "But due to various factors including negligence of the river for over a decade, the

river has an existential threat," he said. Tanwar said the river originates in Nag mountains of Ajmer and travels about 495 km before merging into the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. "The river travels 350 km in Rajasthan through Ajmer, Nagaur, Jodhpur, Pali, Jalore and Barmer districts but hardly reaches Barmer and even during heavy rain," he said. Former union minister of state Kailash Chaudhary and others also offered prayers at the river while similar scenes were witnessed at a few other

places as well. The celebration underscores the importance of water in the desert area where people have to live with limited supply of water and face acute water crisis during the summer season. Emphasising on a plan to preserve water in the usually dry river, a local resident, Goparam, said that the river flowed in the area last year as well but it all went to waste. "If a plan is made for saving or storing this water, it could prove to be a boon for farmers. This will also raise the underground water level in the surrounding region, which will help the farming, devastated by the absence of water and industrial effluent", he said. Due to the rainfall in its catchment area, an area that collects water after rainfall, over the past five days, the river is currently flowing to its full capacity. Although the river had water last year as well, the flow and volume were less. Residents said that several other local rivers join this approximately 350 km long river in Rajasthan.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Daunting task ahead

The interim Govt led by Yunus must restore law and order in Bangladesh as there is chaos and fear all around

As Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus takes charge of the interim government of Bangladesh, he may have the challenging task of restoring peace and law and order in the country. Bangladesh, relatively a young nation, is once again in the throes of instability. The latest chapter in its ongoing saga of unrest, unfolded after the ouster of Sheikh Hasina and subsequent takeover by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. As Yunus steps into power, the country is gripped by fear and uncertainty, prompting hundreds of citizens to seek refuge in India. Recent months saw political violence, protests, and crackdowns on dissent; creating a volatile environment that led to the ouster of Sheikh Hasina and chaos on the roads of Dhaka. The announcement of Muhammad Yunus, a globally renowned figure for his work in microfinance and founder of Grameen Bank, taking over the reins of power comes as a dramatic twist. Yunus, who has faced his share of political and legal challenges in recent years, has long been a critic of the Hasina Government's policies.



The political upheaval has triggered a wave of fear among the populace especially the minorities. Reports indicate that hundreds of Bangladeshis are attempting to cross the border into India, driven by concerns for their safety. The future course of Bangladesh's political landscape under Yunus' leadership is fraught with uncertainty. Yunus has been an advocate for political reform and transparency. His leadership could usher in a new era of governance, focusing on anti-corruption measures and democratic practices. However, implementing these changes in a deeply entrenched political system will be a formidable challenge. Besides, Bangladesh's economy has been under strain due to mismanagement and corruption. Yunus' expertise in economic development and microfinance could play a pivotal role in revitalising the economy, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating jobs. While some may view him as a saviour, others may see him as an outsider with no political experience. Building trust and garnering widespread support will be essential for his administration's success. However, the biggest challenge would be restoring peace and maintaining the law and order. Ensuring law and order during this transition period is paramount. Yunus will need the cooperation of the military and law enforcement agencies to maintain stability and prevent further violence. As Bangladesh stands on the brink of a new political era with Muhammad Yunus at the helm, the road ahead is uncertain. The immediate priority will be to address the fears of the populace and restore a sense of security, especially amongst minorities. All said and done, right now the army will call the shots and till elections are announced nothing can be said about the future of interim government itself. The coming days will be crucial in determining whether Yunus' leadership can guide the country towards stability and prosperity or if Bangladesh will descend into further chaotic unrest.

Government's policies. The political upheaval has triggered a wave of fear among the populace especially the minorities. Reports indicate that hundreds of Bangladeshis are attempting to cross the border into India, driven by concerns for their safety. The future course of Bangladesh's political landscape under Yunus' leadership is fraught with uncertainty. Yunus has been an advocate for political reform and transparency. His leadership could usher in a new era of governance, focusing on anti-corruption measures and democratic practices. However, implementing these changes in a deeply entrenched political system will be a formidable challenge. Besides, Bangladesh's economy has been under strain due to mismanagement and corruption. Yunus' expertise in economic development and microfinance could play a pivotal role in revitalising the economy, promoting entrepreneurship, and creating jobs. While some may view him as a saviour, others may see him as an outsider with no political experience. Building trust and garnering widespread support will be essential for his administration's success. However, the biggest challenge would be restoring peace and maintaining the law and order. Ensuring law and order during this transition period is paramount. Yunus will need the cooperation of the military and law enforcement agencies to maintain stability and prevent further violence. As Bangladesh stands on the brink of a new political era with Muhammad Yunus at the helm, the road ahead is uncertain. The immediate priority will be to address the fears of the populace and restore a sense of security, especially amongst minorities. All said and done, right now the army will call the shots and till elections are announced nothing can be said about the future of interim government itself. The coming days will be crucial in determining whether Yunus' leadership can guide the country towards stability and prosperity or if Bangladesh will descend into further chaotic unrest.

PICTALK



A priest performs 'aarti' at Bade Hanumanji temple which was flooded after heavy rains in Prayagraj

PTI

Rediscovering the true value of life

Amidst climate change and environmental crises, it's time to re-evaluate our priorities and appreciate the irreplaceable gifts that nature freely provides

The best things in life, they say, come free. It is a dubious statement that we may not readily agree to in a world where anything material has a price tag attached to it. The problem is not in the maxim that I opened this piece with; the problem is with our definition of "the best things". We have devised a curious way to assess our lives by putting a numerical value on everything we can possess and call our own. Even as we scamper all over the place trying to fetch luxuries and comfort items, we tend to forget several things which we do not personally possess but are indispensable to our existence. They are more valuable to us than all the material assets of the world put together. Air, sunlight, water, and soil for instance. Many things are too obvious for us to appreciate as I discovered recently when astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore got stranded in space. Reports say that her extended stay would affect her body adversely and as per NASA,



it could alter the structure of the eyes and brain, and their function "because low-gravity conditions shift the body's fluids toward the head". Gravity: The natural phenomenon that Newton discovered by chance in late 1666 when he saw an apple fall to the ground isn't something that we pay attention to in our daily lives. We take universal gravitation for granted, just as we take many other conventional things and natural forces as part of our privilege on this planet. The heat wave sweeping across the globe, the unprecedented floods and unseasonal snow are all testimonies of this casual atti-

tude we have adopted towards the most valuable things in life that the universe has granted us. Climate change has been converted to a mere topic of discussion and not as a veritable threat for all species. Who will tell us that we have been presently allowed to live the best versions of ourselves aided by natural resources and no matter how hard we try, we cannot replicate these conditions in another part of the universe anytime soon? We may be vain to declare that space travel will soon become a regular thing thanks to man's daring explorations. We can claim that we are

doing everything we can to shift our domicile to another planet. But let us make no mistake - we cannot find another optimal domain to establish ourselves should the present one perish because of our over-indulgences. Our conceit might make us proclaim that the skies are for us to invade, but to find another place like this where everything is measured just right for our survival will only remain a pipedream. It's time we stopped taking the vital elements of existence as a given. It's time for us to stop expanding our wingspans without regard for nature. That an apple should fall is part of a grand cosmic design, but the fact that hills are sliding, forests are burning and villages are getting swept away is part of man's narrow and reckless nature. The value of the many simple blessings we have been bestowed with will be known only when these free privileges are taken away from us.

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



ASHA IYER KUMAR

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

Cultural identity shapes behaviour

This cultural phenomenon, observed in many parts of the world, highlights the profound impact of inherited values on personal and collective actions



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

In India, several clans have their pedigree narratives. It is a great instrument for creating venerable ideals of behaviour and conduct and, above all, pride in their antecedents. Like many other places in the world, their pedigree is often traced to some other planet or has an anecdote or theory associated with their distinctive pedigree. Some consider themselves descendants of the Sun (Suryavanshi), others consider themselves descendants of the Moon (Chandravanshi), and so the call goes on.

The veracity of these claims is another story altogether, but invariably there is an ideal connected to them, and that is important. For example, the Suryavanshis are supposed to be very committed to their 'word of mouth', and they are supposed to never backtrack from what they have said or promised.

These ideals are important in identity formation and establishing a bottom line of behaviour. They also create a narrative of keeping the clan on track, such as it may be. There are fallouts for rituals, marriages, festivities, and more. Loyalty is not territorial because the clan has, often, migrated from its place of origin but the bonding is clear. Their rituals of festivities and celebrations keep the clan together, even though technology may have played its role in the widespread celebration and observance of clan identities. The protocols are very often strictly adhered to. Often these serve as an unwritten code of behavior.

There is another anecdote linked with planets, especially the Sun. Japan is considered to be the land of the rising sun, and there are anecdotes about special places in many parts of the world related to the sun. Toledo is a good illustration of a place where the sun's rays are said to have met the Earth for the first time. There are other rituals associated with the sun in many parts of the world as well. In



India, planet worship is considered particularly venerable by many components of the population, and the steps in sun worship are a widely shared phenomenon. This practice is often accompanied by pouring water facing the sun. Celebrating obeisance to the sun is popular and has many stories spun around it.

It may be useful to remind oneself that, in the belief of many, worship of even other planets is a virtuous thing to do. The point, however, is to recognise that behaviour is determined by one's belief, and this belief may not always be an act of choice but an act of an inherited value system and cognitive association with values that are considered virtuous. This component of tradition, which is common in many parts of the world, is now often referred to, not so complementarily, as the Third World Phenomena. The older the community, the greater their belief and the more grounded their behaviour.

In such communities' gender relationships have a strong overlay of traditional beliefs.



LIKE MANY OTHER PLACES IN THE WORLD, THEIR PEDIGREE IS OFTEN TRACED TO SOME OTHER PLANET OR HAS AN ANECDOTE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR DISTINCTIVE PEDIGREE. SOME CONSIDER THEMSELVES DESCENDANTS OF THE SUN, OTHERS CONSIDER THEMSELVES DESCENDANTS OF THE MOON

Indeed, icons that grow up at times geography-wise and even climate-wise are significant factors in belief systems.

The broad takeaway from this narrative should be a realisation, that what goes into the composition of the human mind and belief system is often not only acquired from formal learning in the classroom but also by inherited and handed down beliefs.

This is an important aspect of learning which deserves far more attention even in formal learning systems. There is an obvious need to understand, all that goes into the making of one's identity and personality make-up.

One of the important dimensions should also be to assess and evaluate the complete personality of a person when recruiting him. The identity that that person carries may have many layers that are important for his work performance. Unfortunately, not enough literature is available to convert all this into assessment instruments. This understanding would help to

explain why there are so many times a situation of grief when a person is recruited on just what could be called his 'professional knowledge'.

It will be worth remembering that professional knowledge is indeed important in the work dimension but that is not a full personality at work. To create a work identity, it is important to selectively integrate the cultural identities of individuals with a focus on the organisational identity of the enterprise concerned.

This is an important dimension of work management that both employers and employees need to pay much more attention to, more than what they have enabled so far. This will help to manage, better, group identities at work and create a culture of resonance for greater productivity and fulfilment all around. The idea of focusing on the 'complete personality', to the extent possible, is worth considering.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BANGLADESH CRISIS

Madam — Amid the backdrop of controversial job reservations and widespread violent protests, Bangladesh has seen its former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed flee the country and seek temporary exile in India, a sanctuary supposedly facilitated by the United Kingdom. The nation now stands on the brink of establishing a new interim regime, led by Muhammad Yunus and supported by student unions and the military. It is deeply disappointing that the international community, with whom Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had maintained good relations—particularly China, the US, and the United Kingdom—turned a blind eye to her government during this crisis. The violent student protests, demonstrations, and clashes, followed by anti-government forces, went largely ignored by these global allies. China, despite being a close economic partner of Bangladesh, remained a passive observer throughout the turmoil.

India's support for Bangladesh during this tumultuous period is commendable and highlights Prime Minister Modi's political commitment to its neighbor, strengthening bilateral relations rooted in cultural and historical ties. However, it is regrettable that Hindu citizens and temples have borne the brunt of the lawlessness and vandalism, acts seemingly orchestrated to provoke Indian sentiments.

While the caretaker government led by the army appears to be a viable solution at the moment, it remains uncertain whether it can overcome the significant economic losses and extensive damage to national properties caused by the protests. There is hope that peace will prevail in Dhaka and that New Delhi's active involvement will help pave the way for the formation of an interim government, free from being hijacked by the military or anti-India radical elements.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagarkote

We are proud of you!



Had the gravitational force acted on Vinesh Phogat been little bit kinder she would have not only lost the silver medal which was in her grab but would have also bagged a gold considering her performance in the tournament so far. Vinesh lost the gold by weighing 100 Grams more than the permit-

ted weight of 50 kgs in the category and also suffered a disqualification from the tournament. It is one of the most unfortunate thing that could have happened to her as a sportsperson, shattering her dreams. Regardless of this she is the golden girl and would be remembered for her superb performance.

While Phogat has been successful in bagging Gold and silver medals in Commonwealth and Asian games, courtesy misfortune Olympics has been eluding her as she suffered an injury in Rio olympics in 2016 while in 2020 Tokyo olympics and in the Paris olympics yesterday she suffered a cruel disqualification! Phogat, you might have lost Gold medal in Olympics, for sure you have won a place in the hearts of all the sports lovers in the world! We are proud of you!!

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

THE PLIGHT OF SEWER WORKERS

Madam— Kudos to Mr N Sadhasiva Reddy for his letter titled "Death of sanitation workers" (August 7). Our eardrums are constantly bombarded with the triumphant declarations of "conquering" the other side of the Moon, yet all that is provided for a sewer worker risking his life for society's "dirty work" is an ordinary rope. Billions of state funds are invested in mass yoga performances on the streets to showcase the country's "might" to the world, yet the same ordinary rope is the only safety measure for the poorest souls in this "mighty" India. Gigantic statues and bullet train projects are undertaken to "mesmerize" the world, but the faceless manual scavengers who work tirelessly to keep our environment clean receive no more than that ordinary rope.

Those who ignore the plight and suffering of these unsung heroes, without whose essential service our "civilized modern" society would come to a standstill, are nothing short of barbarians.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

PREAMBLE MISSING IN NCERT BOOKS

Madam — The absence of the "Indian Constitution" preamble in some NCERT textbooks for certain classes should not lead to blame. Instead, consider this as an opportunity to highlight its sacred importance and encourage students to learn it with increased focus.

This can greatly contribute to shaping a clean thought process centered on equality and the socialist republic structure. It would be beneficial if NCERT issued a circular or sent an online message to all schools following the NCERT syllabus, advising them to download the preamble from Google or refer to other NCERT textbooks. Emphasising its sacred points with enhanced focus during teaching can greatly benefit the students. It is very important that today's children know about our freedom struggle and how our Constitution was written.

PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

HASINA'S OUSTER:
A BLOW TO INDIA

Ouster of Sheikh Hasina shakes India's strategic balance in the neighbourhood



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A full-fledged crisis has been lobbed in India's court, with the ouster of PM Sheikh Hasina earlier this week. India's already troubled neighbourhood has now three countries under the firm grip of the armed forces. Pakistan, Myanmar and now Bangladesh, are now the army-ruled troika, on a slippery slope of getting too close to China. Out of the two, it was Bangladesh which has been the crown jewel of India's neighbourhood first policy, having had a visibly pro-India government for the past decade and half. Pakistan has been China's proxy state acting against Indian interests, while Myanmar due to the army rule, has also slipped closer to China. Meanwhile, a pro-China (read anti-India) leader in the Maldives, a not-too-Delhi-friendly regime in Nepal, presents Indian diplomacy as one of its biggest challenges in recent history.

Former PM Sheikh Hasina, despite her dictatorial governance style, enjoyed bipartisan support in India. She used her relations with Narendra Modi and the opposition leaders in India, to come out heavily on extremist forces operating on Bangladeshi soil against India's interests. It is no coincidence that former PM Hasina has travelled to New Delhi thrice in a year. PM Modi, lauded her efforts in upgrading the bilateral relations when she came for a state visit, a first under the new government in the centre. Indo-Bangladesh bilateral grew from strength to strength during Sheikh Hasina's decade and a half-regime, with important long-term infrastructure projects being operationalised by India and increasing new transit and trade corridors between the two



neighbours. India shares, nearly 4000 km of land border with Bangladesh, bringing its 5 states in unique proximity to the neighbour. This land border, the fifth largest land border in the world, acts as a porous conduit for the movement of goods and people during times of bonhomie, as governments maintain strict vigil keeping in mind each other's interests. This was visible during Sheikh Hasina's tenure when cross-border smuggling and terrorism had nearly vanished. This has built a very comfortable position for Indian diplomats, as they have trusted a friendly regime to keep Indian interests in mind. However, with Sheikh Hasina, gone and chances of her never being back in the political arena of Bangladesh looking extremely certain, things are about to change. India has not built bipartisan support for itself in the local Bangladeshi politics.

It has chosen to be cosy with Sheikh Hasina's government and dealt with overtures from the principal opposition party in Bangladesh with nonchalance. The fear was, that showing any affinity to Bangladesh's opposition party may not be taken kindly by Sheikh Hasina. Therefore a public diplomacy narrative emerged, that Sheikh Hasina was 'too close to be comfortable', with India and acting against her nation's interests. A caged opposition in Bangladesh managed to get external support from China, and Pakistan's intelligence agency, both of whom have a huge interest in keeping India under constant stress in the geopolitical affairs of the region. The on-ground situation in Bangladesh currently is against India. The current interim regime has allies who may be infiltrated with extremist elements, with whom India has had bitter experiences in the past. The nature of the protests and subsequent ouster of Sheikh Hasina ensured that any of her policies, including being pro-India would not be taken too kindly by the Bangladeshi citizens. An anti-Sheikh Hasina mood could easily be swayed to anti anti-India mood, which would be detrimental to the long-drawn deep bilateral relationship. It would be a challenge for India to work new bunch of leaders in Bangladesh and remain a crucial strategic allies for the eastern neighbour.

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

Bangladesh at
political crossroads

The interim government faces a formidable task in restoring law and order, organising free and fair elections, combating corruption and gaining public trust



K S TOMAR

According to British paraspyologist Celia Elizabeth Green, "In an autocracy, one person has his way; in an aristocracy, a few people have their way; in a democracy, no one has his way." This sentiment resonates deeply with the ousted former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, who refused to acknowledge the clear signs of her impending downfall. Conspiracy theory is gaining momentum which led to ouster of EX PM, Sheikh Hasina which allegedly included the intelligence agencies of America (CIA), Pakistan (ISI) and China which yearned for an alternate government led by EX PM, Khalida Zia who might be on her way of ascendancy to power in future. Another version points out the preference of China and Pakistan to have Anti-Indian government in Dhaka which might alter the regional balance in South Asia.

CONSPIRACY THEORY. There have been numerous speculations and allegations regarding the United States' involvement in attempts to oust Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Some argue that the U.S. might be seeking a more favourable government in Dhaka due to concerns over human rights, democratic practices, and regional security dynamics. Critics suggest that American interests, particularly in countering China's growing influence in South Asia, might drive such alleged conspiracies.

However, concrete evidence of U.S. involvement in any conspiracy against Sheikh Hasina is lacking. Officially, the U.S. government has maintained a stance of promoting democratic values and fair elections in Bangladesh. Publicly, U.S. officials have expressed concerns about political repression and the fairness of the electoral process under Hasina's administration but stopped short of endorsing any regime change.

Sheikh Hasina's administration has leveraged these allegations to bolster nationalist sentiment and consolidate power, portraying itself as a bulwark against foreign interference. This narrative resonates with many Bangladeshis, fostering a perception of external threats to national sovereignty. Ultimately, while suspicions persist, the claims of direct American involvement in a conspiracy to oust Sheikh Hasina remain speculative and unproven. The situation underscores the complex interplay of domestic politics and international relations in Bangladesh.

Hasina's dramatic fall from grace has not surprised many, except perhaps herself. She ignored the rising tide of public discontent and the conspiracies hatched by vested interests aiming to assert dominance in South Asia and undermine India.

Winning 288 out of 300 seats in the January 2024 elections, alongside the arrests of opposition leaders and suppression of dissent, highlighted a significant loss of credibility for Hasina, culminating in widespread revolt and her eventual ouster.

Hasina, a pro-democracy leader who witnessed the sacrifices made by her late father and family, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Bangladesh, has now left the nation poised for a potential regime dominated by hardliners, anti-India, and pro-China forces, possibly sandwiching this troubled nation between two powers in the future. The interim government faces several challenges:

Restoring Political Stability: establishing neutral ground and engaging in dialogue with all political factions to ensure a peaceful and democratic transition.



Organizing Free and Fair Elections: Ensuring upcoming elections are free, fair, and credible to restore public trust in the democratic process.

Combating Corruption: Initiating anti-corruption drives to target high-profile politicians and business leaders while ensuring fairness.

Maintaining Law and Order: Managing protests and civil unrest carefully, and ensuring security forces act with restraint to avoid human rights abuses.

Ensuring Human Rights: Balancing order with respecting human rights and avoiding authoritarianism. Gaining Public Trust; Building public confidence through transparency, effective communication, and inclusive policies.

International Relations: Engaging with international organizations, donor countries, and regional allies to ensure continued support and investment. The political upheaval in Bangladesh over the past 13 months has been deeply polarizing and emotionally charged citizens.

Experts attribute the whirlwind of violent emotions to an unresolved conflict over the nation's identity—a conflict that must be successfully addressed for the country's survival. There is no denying that Hasina was a secular and reformist figure in Bangladesh.

Her government had been instrumental in ensuring safety and fostering economic growth, making Bangladesh one of the fastest-growing developing nations. Yet, her leadership was marred by accusations of election rigging, suppression of opposition, and human rights violations, which stoked public discontent.

The crisis reached its peak with unprecedented violence and street protests, allegedly orchestrated by Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, and active involvement from Khalida Zia's BNP and Chinese intelligence networks.

Amidst this turmoil, Nobel Peace Laureate Muhammad Yunus was chosen to lead an interim government after consultations with military leaders and key stakeholders. Experts and ex-diplomats agree that the current turmoil is a by-product of the public uprising against Hasina, who fled the country with India's assistance.

She is now seeking asylum in Europe, with the UK being a potential destination, though nothing is certain.

Comparative Analysis of Hasina and Rajapaksa's Ousters: There are several similarities between Sheikh Hasina's downfall in Bangladesh in 2024 and the ouster of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2022. Both events stem from political, economic, and social factors.

Economic Mismanagement and Authoritarian Governance: Sheikh Hasina faced criticism for stifling dissent and undermining democratic processes. Similarly, Gotabaya Rajapaksa's administration was criticized for authoritarianism and nepotism. Both countries struggled with economic difficulties, rising living costs, and unemployment, leading to public frustration and mass protests.

Debt and Foreign Exchange Issues: Bangladesh experienced increasing national debt and challenges in managing foreign exchange reserves, while Sri Lanka faced a severe economic crisis characterized by foreign exchange shortages and high inflation, leading to widespread hardship.

Public Unrest and International Factors: Both countries saw mass protests against economic hardships and political repression. The international relations of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were strained due to economic mismanagement and human rights abuses, affecting foreign aid and investment.

Challenges for India: The ouster of Sheikh Hasina presents several

challenges for India: **Political Instability in Bangladesh:** The removal of a stable, pro-India government may lead to political instability, creating a power vacuum that could be filled by elements less friendly toward India.

This could foster anti-India sentiments and alter bilateral relations. **Border Security and Migration:** Political changes might affect cooperation on border management, potentially increasing challenges related to illegal migration, human trafficking, and terrorism.

Economic Relations and Trade: Changes in the political landscape could impact ongoing and future trade agreements, affecting bilateral trade beneficial to both countries.

Geopolitical Dynamics: A new leadership might tilt towards China, enhancing its influence in Bangladesh and affecting India's strategic interests in the region. Counterterrorism Efforts; A change in leadership might alter the level of collaboration on counterterrorism, impacting efforts to combat terrorism and insurgency.

Water-Sharing Disputes: The Teesta River water-sharing agreement, already a contentious issue, might face new challenges with a change in leadership.

India's Strategic Response: Experts suggest India should engage diplomatically with the new leadership, enhance border security, reassess trade agreements, and strengthen regional alliances to counter external influences like China's growing presence in Bangladesh. Navigating these challenges requires a careful balance between immediate stabilization measures and laying the foundation for long-term democratic governance. The success of the interim government in managing these issues is crucial for providing stability to Bangladesh.

(The writer is a strategic affairs columnist and political analyst based in Shimla; views are personal)



THERE IS NO DENYING THAT HASINA WAS A SECULAR AND REFORMIST FIGURE IN BANGLADESH. HER GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ENSURING SAFETY AND FOSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH, MAKING BANGLADESH ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING DEVELOPING NATION

Khalistan movement is bereft of any vision, survives merely on hatred

Khalistan movement harps upon divisive tactics and has struggled to present a viable vision for a sovereign state nearly fifty years since its inception

Gurupatwant Singh Pannun, of Sikhs for Justice, recently released a video over his X-handle that Chandra Arya, a Hindu Member of Parliament in Canada's House of Commons should go back to India. Arya had earlier criticized the Khalistani extremists for vandalism at BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Edmonton in Alberta state. The temple was recently found sprayed with anti-India graffiti of recognizably Khalistani variety.

Why do Khalistani always need to assert their existence through hatred of the Hindus? If they are indeed fighting for a sovereign Khalistan, even though no sensible or patriotic Indian would approve of it, they must establish the tenabil-



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

ity of the idea. Strangely, a movement approaching 50 years has not been able to throw up a credible map of Khalistan. On June 9, 2022, Pannun released a map of the idea. At an event held at Lahore Press Club which showed Shimla, Himachal Pradesh as the capital of Khalistan. Could things get more ridiculous? The Sikhs comprise less than two per cent of Himachal Pradesh's

population. Their percentage same in Shimla city, which is not contiguous to Punjab where most Sikhs live. The map in addition to Punjab encompassed almost the whole of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, five districts of Rajasthan, several districts of Uttarakhnad and several districts from Uttar Pradesh.

The net effect of such a map would be to reduce the Sikhs into a minority in Khalistan. In the early 19th century, Maharaja Ranjit Singh could rule over trans-Sutlej Punjab, by the dint of sword, despite the Sikhs comprising no more than 10 per cent of the population (based on Census figures, 1881). This was because the form of government was autocratic in an era of autocr-

racy. Still, the Maharaja had to pursue an inclusive and tolerant policy given the fractured religious demography of Punjab.

In the 21st century, when democracy has triumphed in the sub-continent, do Khalistanis propose to turn the clock back on political evolution? The fact that "Khalistan" should be carved out from the Indian side of Punjab alone makes the motive of its sponsors suspect.

Few Sikhs indeed remain on the Pakistan side of Punjab, from where the bulk of them were ethnically cleansed after the partition. However, the very same fact should prohibit the Sikhs from pursuing any secessionist agenda from the Indian side. The Sikhs concentrated in the fertile terrains of



central Punjab, which fell to the Pakistan side, and took refuge on the Indian side after the partition.

There was a forcible exchange of population between the two halves of Punjab on religious lines. This bolstered their population from 13 per cent in colonial Punjab (Census, 1941) to 33 per cent in East Punjab (Census, 1961). After the reorganization of Punjab (1966), whereby Hindu-dominated Haryana

and Himachal Pradesh were separated, their population share increased to 60.2 per cent in rump Punjab (Census, 1971).

There is no grouse against Sikhs becoming a majority in Indian Punjab, as never before in the history of Punjab. However, there would certainly be a grouse if this majority, of less than two-thirds, wants to secede from the territory of the state.

Questions will be asked why they have not demanded a single square inch of territory from the Pakistan side and all liability is on India which had graciously accommodated the Sikhs after the partition. The Khalistanis could grumble that not conceding a sovereign nation to the Sikhs during the partition itself was an injustice.

This is a bogus argument. None of the districts in colonial Punjab had a Sikh majority, which made the demand for "Khalistan" completely untenable.

As early as December 2, 1942, Master Tara Singh had asked for the bifurcation of colonial Punjab — one dominated by the Muslims and another by Hindu-Sikhs. History aside, "Khalistan" would put the future of Sikhs in jeopardy. Around 30 per cent of wheat procured by authorities and 21 per cent of rice procured during FY. 2021-22 came from Punjab alone. The loss of this assured procurement by the Food Corporation of India will put Punjab under mountains of rice and wheat. The "Khalistan", a landlocked nation sandwiched between

India and Pakistan, will be dependent on trade with both. Even today it can redirect its procurement mechanism profitably towards other states rather than favouring Punjab. However, Punjab, whose 75 population is dependent on agriculture for livelihood would be sorely hit. The loss of a huge pan-Indian market for Punjab will be disastrous in every sector e.g. transportation, hosiery, machine tools etc. The Sikh population in other states of India would be adversely affected. No wonder, the Khalistanis prefer to stroke passions, by ducking these critical questions.

(The writer is an author and an independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

Plot to kill 'as many as possible' at Taylor Swift shows in Vienna foiled

AP ■ VIENNA

Austrian security officials said Thursday that the main suspect of the two arrested in a foiled plot to attack now-cancelled Taylor Swift shows in Vienna fully confessed to his plans to "kill as many people as possible outside the concert venue".

Officials told reporters at a press conference in the Austrian capital that they found ties to the Islamic State group, and when the 19-year-old began working on his attack plans in July, he quit his regular job and "conspicuously changed his appearance and adapted to IS propaganda".

The head of the Directorate of State Security and Intelligence, Omar Hajjawi-Pirchner, said the 19-year-old wanted to use knives or self-made explosives outside the Ernst Happel Stadium to kill as many people as possible.

He was "clearly radicalised in the direction of the Islamic State and thinks it is right to kill infidels," Hajjawi-Pirchner said.

Just a few weeks ago, the 19-year-old had also uploaded an oath of allegiance to the current leader of the Islamic State group militia to an internet account. During a raid of

his home in Ternitz, south of Vienna, investigators found chemical substances and technical devices that indicated "concrete preparatory acts," said Franz Ruf, Director General for Public Security at the Ministry of the Interior.

Authorities also found Islamic State group and al-Qaida material at the home of the second suspect, a 17-year-old Austrian. He was employed a few days ago by a company providing services at the venue for the concerts, and was arrested by special police forces near the stadium.

The suspects' names were not released in line with Austrian privacy rules.

No other suspects are being sought, Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said. However, a 15-year-old, who had been in contact with both suspects, was also interrogated by police.

"The situation was serious, the situation is serious. But we can also say: A tragedy was prevented," he said.

The cancellations of three sold-out concerts this week devastated Swifties across the globe, many of whom had dropped thousands of euros (dollars) on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city for the sold-out Eras Tour shows on



Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Ernst Happel Stadium, which sat empty Thursday morning aside from media filming outside. Security officials and the organisers of the concerts, Barracuda Music, were in close contact about whether to cancel the three concerts, but in the end it was the organizer who made the call.

confirmation of a planned attack at the stadium.

Europe is enamoured by the American superstar, with the German town of Gelsenkirchen renaming itself "Swiftkirchen" before its mid-July concerts.

Austria's Vice-Chancellor Werner Kogler wrote on social platform X: "For many, a dream has been shattered today. On three evenings in Vienna, tens of thousands of #Swifties should have celebrated life together."

"I am very sorry that you were denied this. Swifties stick together, hate and terror can't destroy that," Kogler added.

Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer posted on X that "the cancellation of the Taylor Swift concerts by the organisers is a bitter disappointment for all fans in Austria."

"The situation surrounding the apparently planned terror attack in Vienna was very serious," he wrote. But he added that, thanks to intense cooperation between police and Austrian and foreign intelligence, "the threat could be recognised early on, tackled and a tragedy prevented."

Barracuda Music said that "all tickets will be automatically refunded

within the next 10 business days." The same wording was posted under the Vienna dates on Swift's official website.

The Vienna stadium had been sold out for the planned concerts, APA reported, with an estimated 170,000 fans expected for the concerts in Austria. Some who posted on X lamented months of now-wasted efforts to make friendship bracelets and pick out fashionable outfits for the performance.

Swift is expected to perform at London's Wembley stadium in five concerts between Aug 15 and 20 to close the European leg of her record-setting Eras Tour.

In 2017, an attack at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, killed 22 people. Suicide bomber Salman Abedi set up a knapsack bomb in Manchester Arena at the end of Grande's concert as thousands of young fans were leaving. More than 100 people were injured. Abedi died in the explosion. An official inquiry reported in 2023 that Britain's domestic intelligence agency, MI5, didn't act swiftly enough on key information and missed a significant opportunity to prevent the bombing, the deadliest extremist attack in the United Kingdom in recent years.

Anti-racism protesters march counters violence in UK

PTI ■ LONDON

A massive turnout of anti-racism counter-protesters swarmed the streets of London and other UK cities in an effort to outnumber the far-right violent mobs causing mayhem over the past week, described by Scotland Yard as a "show of unity from communities".

Fears of violence at several planned extremist rallies targeting immigration lawyers and agencies across London and other cities on Wednesday evening abated as thousands of specialist police officers patrolled the streets and counter-protesters waving placards reading "Smash Fascism & Racism" and "Stop the far right" turned out in hoards for peace marches.

The UK government, however, cautioned that there is intelligence that more far-right action could take place in the next few days even as there was relief that violent disorder was averted overnight. "Last night more than 1,000 officers were deployed across the capital ready to respond to any scenes of disorder. Their efforts and the strength of unity demonstrated by London's communities resulted in a largely peaceful evening," said Metropolitan Police chief Mark Rowley, who



revealed that dawn raids were carried out early on Thursday morning to arrest suspected violent offenders from the past few days. "What I want to make really clear is those we've arrested aren't protesters, patriots or decent citizens. They're thugs and criminals. Around 70 per cent have previous convictions for weapon possession, violence, drugs and other serious offences. Some have football banning orders. These are violent people taking to the streets under the guise of protest to engage in disorder," he said.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan thanked people who peacefully stood "united against racism and Islamophobia", as well as the "heroic police force" for working round the clock to

keep Londoners safe. "To those far-right thugs still intent on sowing hatred and division, you will never be welcome here," he said in a post on X. More than 400 people have been arrested since the first clashes last Tuesday, when false claims spread online that the suspect in the fatal stabbings in Southport, north-west England, was a refugee who had come to the UK in a small boat last year.

"I am cautious about what happened last night. It's good that we didn't see the level of disorder and criminality on our streets that we have in previous days, but obviously this is just the start," UK Policing Minister Diana Johnson told "Sky News". "There is now further intelligence of events during the

Trump allies amplify a false claim about Harris' racial identity

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Ohio Sen JD Vance, Donald Trump's running mate, defended on Wednesday a false claim the former president made about Vice President Kamala Harris' racial identity, suggesting wrongly that Harris had downplayed her Black heritage in trying to suggest she's inauthentic.

"What I took it as was an attack on Kamala Harris being a chameleon," he told reporters when asked in Michigan about the former president's suggestion that Harris, the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, had only recently identified as Black.

"I think he was observing the basic foundational reality that Kamala Harris pretends to be something different depending on what audience she's speaking to," Vance said. "She fakes who she is depending on the

audience she's in front of, and that's who she is and that's who she's always been."

Vance's was the most recent of the Republican criticisms of how Harris portrays herself, in the wake of Trump's comments last week to the National Association of Black Journalists conference in Chicago. Florida Rep. Byron Donalds, a high-profile Trump surrogate who is a Black man, echoed the claim on Sunday as a guest on ABC's "This Week."

The proliferation of Trump's falsehood by other Republicans is part of their effort to stay in his favor, said former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele.

"It's I'll do anything and I don't want to be on the wrong side of you," said Steele, a former Maryland lieutenant governor who was the first Black man to lead the RNC. "It's I don't want

to take the heat that comes with calling out your racism, that comes with calling out your ugliness, so I will pretend that's not what it is."

The Harris campaign has declined to comment specifically on Trump's false claim. The vice president, speaking to a Black sorority last week, accused Trump of "the same old show: the divisiveness and the disrespect."

Harris has frequently talked about being Black in addition to being Indian American during her political career. She was the first African American to serve as California attorney general and became the first Indian American to serve as a U.S. senator and the second Black woman, after Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois.

As an undergraduate, Harris attended Howard University, one of the nation's most promi-

nent historically Black colleges and universities, where she also pledged the historically Black sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha.

As San Francisco's first Black district attorney, she was recognized as a "Woman of Power" by the National Urban League and received the Thurgood Marshall Award from the National Black Prosecutors Association in 2005.

She was recognized in India Abroad during her 2010 campaign for California attorney general as being potentially "the first African American as well as the first Indian-American" to hold the office.

Harris identified as both Black and Indian in an Associated Press story published that same year about the number of candidates of Indian descent running for prominent offices that year.

Policemen in Bangladesh slowly returning to work

PTI ■ DHAKA

Policemen in Bangladesh were slowly returning to work from Thursday in response to the call by the newly-appointed chief, the official media reported, amidst the political turmoil and street violence in the country.

Following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on Monday due to student-led protests, several police stations were attacked and set on fire, leading to many officers evacuating their stations due to the threat of more attacks. More than 400 people, including police personnel, were killed in the violence centring the students' movement.

On Wednesday, the newly-appointed Inspector General of Police, Md Mainul Islam, ordered

officers to join their respective units within the next 24 hours. People from all walks of life, including different political parties leaders and students, are extending all-out necessary support to the returnee police personnel so they can come to their workplaces safely, according to a press release issued by police headquarters on Thursday.

The policemen are returning to their working places from Thursday responding to the call of the newly-appointed IGP, the BSS news agency reported citing the release.

Meanwhile, quoting witnesses, The Daily Star newspaper reported that some police personnel in plainclothes were arriving at Rajarbagh Police Lines, signed in the attendance registers.

However, they are not going to their respective workplaces, such as police stations, due to security concerns.

Addressing a press briefing at the Police Headquarters on Thursday, IGP Islam said some unprofessional officers did not follow the accepted principles of applying force and violated human rights.

"It is because of them [unprofessional officers] that this ongoing violence and casualties have occurred," he was quoted as saying by The Daily Star newspaper.

Many police officials have been injured, killed, and tortured because of some unprofessional and overly ambitious officials, he said.

Islam assured that every murder would be properly investigated.

Israeli strike on Gaza home kills 7

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A new report from Human Rights Watch says Israeli soldiers killed at least seven people and severely wounded two, including a 5-year-old, when they attacked a home in Gaza City where a Palestinian family was sheltering from the Israel-Hamas war in December.

Gaza faces a severe humanitarian crisis with Israeli restrictions on aid and ongoing fighting limiting access to crucial medical, food and other supplies.

The Health Ministry says the death toll in the territory is nearing 40,000.

Regional tensions have soared since Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh was killed July 31 in Iran by a presumed Israeli strike. Retaliation has been expected. French President Emmanuel Macron beseeched Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in a phone call to do everything in his power to avoid a new military escalation that he said would do lasting damage to regional stability.

World leaders have been pushing for a cease-fire in Gaza, and United States President Joe Biden spoke with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Tuesday about their hopes for a deal calming tensions in the Middle East.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his Cabinet over the weekend that Israel is already in a "multi-front war" with Iran and its proxies.

Ukrainian forces make significant incursion in Kursk region

AP ■ KYIV

A top official in the Kursk region of Russia that borders Ukraine said Thursday that fighting is continuing in an area where Ukrainian forces made a significant incursion this week.

Ukrainian officials haven't commented on the scope of the operation around the town of Sudzha. But Kursk's acting deputy governor, Andrei Belostotsky, said that Russian forces are fighting to prevent Ukrainians from advancing further into the region.

"The enemy has not advanced a single meter, on the contrary, it is retreating. The enemy's equipment and combat forces are being actively destroyed. We hope that in the near future...the enemy will be stopped," Belostotsky said, according to state news agency RIA-Novosti.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday described the incursion as a "large-scale provocation."

Putin met with his top defence and security officials to discuss what he called the "indiscriminate shelling of civilian buildings, residential houses, ambulances with different types of weapons". He instructed the Cabinet to coordinate assistance to the Kursk region. The fighting is about 500 km (320 miles) from Moscow. Army chief of staff Valery Gerasimov told Putin at the meeting via video link that about 100 Ukrainian soldiers had been killed in the battle and more than 200 others were

wounded, Russian news agencies reported.

The Ukrainian shelling, meanwhile, killed at least two people — a paramedic and an ambulance driver — and wounded 24 others, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said in a statement Wednesday.

It wasn't possible to independently verify the Russian claims. Disinformation and propaganda have played a central role in the war, now in its third year.

John Kirby, the White House's national security spokesman, declined to comment on the operation and said the Biden administration has reached out to the Ukrainians to better understand what happened. If confirmed, the cross-border foray would be among Ukraine's largest since Russia launched its full-scale invasion on Feb 24, 2022, and unprecedented for its deployment of Ukrainian military units.

Resolve Kashmir issue by peaceful means: UN

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

A final settlement of the Kashmir issue should be reached by peaceful means under the UN Charter and full respect for human rights, a spokesperson for UN chief Antonio Guterres has said, recalling the 1972 Simla agreement between India and Pakistan which rejects any third-party mediation.

"Our position on Kashmir remains unchanged," Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, said at the daily press briefing here Wednesday. India has repeatedly told Pakistan that the Union Territories of Jammu and

Kashmir and Ladakh "was, is and shall forever" remain an integral part of the country.

The ties between the two countries nosedived after India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating the State into two Union Territories on August 5, 2019. Haq said this while responding to a question by a Palestinian journalist on the UN Secretary-General's position on Kashmir and the situation there five years after the abrogation of Article 370. Haq said that the final settlement of the issue concerning Jammu and Kashmir "is to be reached by peaceful means

in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and full respect for human rights." He added that the position of the United Nations is governed by the charter of the United Nations and applicable Security Council resolutions. "The Secretary-General also recalls the 1972 agreement on bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, also known as the Simla Agreement," he said. The Simla Agreement was signed by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and then Pakistan President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972 and is a bilateral agreement between the countries and rejects any third-party mediation on the Kashmir issue.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
File No. CE/R&B/ACCTS-04/22/239
Date: 02/08/2024

Name of Work - Car Parking inside Administrative Building Premises.
Estimated Cost: Rs.2,10,65,960.18. Last date & time of submission of bid: 27.08.2024 upto 18.00 Hrs.
Refer our Website for details <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Roads & Building Division
Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PR/27/2024-2025 dt:02.08.2024

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot (Admission Branch)
Baba Farid University of Health Sciences
Sadiq Road, Faridkot - 151203
Ph: 01639-256232, 256236

Admission Notice to MBBS/BDS Courses under NEET UG-2024
Online Registration/Application are invited through University website from eligible candidates on the basis of NEET-UG-2024 and as per Punjab Govt. Notification/Prospectus for admission to UG Medical/Dental Courses in Govt./Private colleges of Punjab w.e.f 09.08.2024 to 15.08.2024. Last date for deposit of Registration Fee through Online Payment Gateway is 16.08.2024. Combined Online counseling for admission to undergraduate (Medical/Dental) courses in all the Medical/Dental Colleges including Private Universities and Minority Institutions in the State of Punjab will be conducted by BFUHS Faridkot. Any Notification/updates issued by MCC/Govt. of India/Govt. of Punjab regarding UG admissions session 2024 shall be applicable. For Prospectus/Detailed Schedule/Fee/Details and updates visit at www.bfuhhs.ac.in

REGISTRAR
nil/12/208/2023/36481 Dated CHD :- 8/8/2024

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website- www.pspcl.in
Mobile No. 96461-22067

E-Tender Enq. No. 550/P-1/EMPWP-12752 dated 07.08.24
Dy. Chief Engineer/Headquarter (Construction Cell-1) GGSSTP, Roonpagan invites E-Tender ID No. 2024_POWER_125092_1 for the work of operation of D. M. Water Treatment plants and Chemical Dosing system of Stage-II and III of GGSSTP, Roonpagan, as per scope of work. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 07.08.24/11.00 AM onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
RTP-83/24

76155/12/3266/2023/36508 Dated CHD :- 8/8/2024

JASCH GAUGING TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED
CIN: L33111DL2021PLC381513
Regd. Office: 502, Block-C, NDM-2, N.S.P., Pitampura, New DELHI 110034
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FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (POST LISTING) & e-VOTING
The process of sending emails containing link for Annual Report 2024 and notice of First Annual General Meeting (AGM) (Post Listing) of the Company, scheduled to be held on Friday, 06-09-2024 at 10.00 hours through Video Conference/ Other Audio Visual Means ("VC/OAVM") has been completed on 07-08-2024. Members who have not provided their email id or did not receive our email, may download the same from the website of the Company www.jasch.net.in under the link Investors>Annual Reports or that of BSE Ltd. Information as to user id & password and instructions for participating in the AGM through VC/OAVM and remote electronic voting (e-voting), are contained in the aforesaid notice and are equally applicable to persons who have become members of the Company after sending of notice. Only those persons, whose names are recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depository as on cut-off date 30-08-2024, are entitled to remote e-voting, which will commence at 09:00 hours on 03-09-2024 and will not be allowed beyond 17:00 hours on 05-09-2024. A member may participate in the AGM even after exercising his right to vote through remote e-voting but shall not be allowed to vote again in the meeting. Results will be declared within the time permitted by law and will be posted at the above website of the Company under the link "Notices". Grievances, if any, relating to non-receipt of the notice of AGM or relating to e-voting may be sent by email to ramap@alankit.com.

For Jasch Gauging Technologies Ltd
Sd/- Neeraj Kumar
Company Secretary
Sonipat,
07-08-2024

RBI keeps interest rate unchanged Sensex, Nifty tumble nearly 1%

For ninth time in a row

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting, saying it cannot afford to look through persisting high food inflation and has to remain vigilant to prevent spillover.

Retaining its unambiguous focus on inflation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which consists of three RBI and three external members, kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent.

Four out of the six members of MPC voted in favour of the rate decision. The panel, whose four-year term ends in October, also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target.

Inflation climbed to 5.08 per cent in June, primarily driven by the food component.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said food inflation



remains "stubbornly" high. "Without price stability, high growth cannot be sustained," he said, adding that "monetary policy must continue to be disinflationary".

He said the MPC could have looked through high food inflation if it was transitory. "But in an environment of persisting high food inflation, as we are experiencing now, the MPC cannot afford to do so. It has to remain vigilant to prevent spillovers or second round effects from persistent food inflation and preserve the gains made so far in monetary policy credibility." The MPC last revised interest rate in February 2023, when it was hiked to 6.5 per cent. The status quo by RBI comes

amid varied central bank action in advanced economies. While the Bank of England reduced interest rates last week, Bank of Japan hiked rates to their highest levels since 2008. Also, fears of a US recession have risen on the back of weak employment numbers, piling up pressure on the Federal Reserve to start cutting rates to support the economy.

RBI retained India's GDP growth forecast at 7.2 per cent and headline CPI inflation at 4.5 per cent for the current fiscal 2024-25. Upasna Bhardwaj, Chief Economist, Kotak Mahindra Bank said, with growth remaining robust, the MPC still has room to hold on to policy stance to get

confirmation on the disinflationary trend. "We continue to expect scope for change in stance in the October policy with rate cuts beginning from December. The prospects of simultaneous change in stance and rate cuts could increase depending on how domestic inflation and global environment transitions," she said.

Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist, DBS Bank said, policy guidance reinforced that domestic considerations will be prioritised, despite a sharp buildup in rate cut pricing for the US Fed. "The RBI MPC retained its cautious tone on inflation, in the face of an anticipated pass-through from perishables price pressures and tariff adjustments. With domestic demand conditions calling for a focus on inflation, we expect the policy rate to stay on hold for the rest of the year," Rao added.

The Governor flagged alternative investment avenues becoming more attractive to retail customers leading to bank deposits trailing loan growth. "Although he did not specify the alternate avenues, he may have been referring to investors flocking to the stock markets.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly 1 per cent down on Thursday after the Reserve Bank of India decided to keep the policy rate unchanged for the ninth time in a row, saying food inflation remains stubborn. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined by 581.79 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 78,886.22 in a volatile trade. During the day, it tumbled 669.07 points or 0.84 per cent to 78,798.94. After a day's breather, the NSE Nifty retreated to close lower by 180.50 points or 0.74 per cent to 24,117. During the day, it tumbled 217.8 points or 0.89 per cent to 24,079.70. The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting, saying it cannot afford to look through persisting high food inflation and has to remain vigilant to prevent spillover. Retaining its unambiguous focus on inflation, the Monetary



Policy Committee (MPC), which consists of three RBI and three external members, kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent. The panel, whose four-year term ends in October, also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target. Inflation climbed to 5.08 per cent in June, primarily driven by the food component.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said food inflation remains "stubbornly" high. "RBI MPC is in wait and watch mode and has kept the interest rates unchanged, waiting for clues from the largest Central Bank of the world, the US Federal Reserve, before acting. Stock markets will continue to consolidate in the meanwhile," said Umeshkumar Mehta, CIO, SAMCO Mutual Fund. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Asian Paints, Infosys, JSW Steel,

UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, Larsen & Toubro, HCL Technologies and Tata Steel were the biggest laggards.

Tata Motors, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ITC, IndusInd Bank and Axis Bank were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher while Seoul and Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading in the negative territory. The US markets ended lower on Wednesday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,314.76 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.66 per cent to USD 77.83 a barrel. On Wednesday, the BSE benchmark rallied 874.94 points or 1.11 per cent to settle at 79,468.01. During the day, it jumped 1,046.13 points or 1.33 per cent to 79,639.20. The NSE Nifty jumped 304.95 points or 1.27 per cent to 24,297.50. Intraday, it surged 345.15 points or 1.43 per cent to 24,337.70.

Sebi amends alternative investment funds norms

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has amended alternative investment funds (AIF) norms specifying maximum permissible limit for extension of tenure by 'Large Value Funds'.

In a notification, Sebi said a large value fund for accredited investors may be permitted to extend its tenure up to five years. This is subject to the approval of two-thirds of the unit holders by value of their investment in the large value fund for accredited investors. The extension in tenure of any existing scheme of a large value fund for accredited investors will be subject to such conditions as specified by the regulator. The move is aimed at providing clarity to investors in Large Value Funds for Accredited Investors (LVFIs) about their investment horizon.

Large Value Fund (LVF) for accredited investors means an AIF or scheme of an AIF in which each investor



(other than the manager, sponsor, employees or directors of the AIF or employees or directors of the manager) is an accredited investor and invests at least Rs 70 crore. Additionally, the regulator has allowed Category I and II AIFs to borrow for a period of up to 30 days for the purpose of meeting temporary shortfall in drawdown from investors while making investments in a bid to facilitate ease of doing business and provide operational flexibility. Category I and II AIFs shall "not borrow funds directly or indirectly or engage in

any leverage for the purpose of making investments or otherwise, except for borrowing funds to meet temporary funding requirements and day-to-day operational requirements for not more than 30 days, on not more than 4 occasions in a year and not more than 10 per cent of the investable funds and subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Board from time to time".

To give this effect, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has amended AIF rules on August 5.

Rupee falls 1 paisa to close at 83.96 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 1 paisa at 83.96 (provisional) against US dollar on Thursday, after the Reserve Bank expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting.

Forex traders said weak domestic markets, surge in crude oil prices and foreign fund outflows weighed on the rupee. However, a decline in the US Dollar index prevented the local unit from declining sharply. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.94 and touched an intraday low of 83.97 and a high of 83.93 against the dollar during the session.

It finally settled at 83.96 (provisional) against the American currency, down 1 paisa from its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 3 paise at 83.95 against US dollar. The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the



US dollar on Monday.

"We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on selling pressure from foreign investors and weak domestic markets. Ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East may also pressurise the rupee," said Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

However, weak US dollar may support the rupee at lower levels. Any intervention by RBI may also support the rupee. "Traders may take cues from weekly unemployment claims data from the US. USDINR spot price is expected to trade in a range

of Rs 83.75 to Rs 84.20," Choudhary said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.12 per cent to 103.07 points. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.78 per cent lower at USD 77.72 per barrel in futures trade. On the macroeconomic front, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent. Announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy review RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

said Indian rupee remained largely range-bound so far this financial year. The panel also decided to retain a policy stance at "withdrawal of accommodation" to aid MPC's focus on bringing inflation towards its 4 per cent target.

The status quo by RBI comes amid varied central bank action in advanced economies. While the Bank of England reduced interest rates last week, the Bank of Japan hiked rates to their highest levels since 2008. Also, fears of a US recession have risen on the back of weak employment numbers, piling up pressure on the Federal Reserve to start cutting rates to support the economy.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 581.79 points, or 0.73 per cent, to close at 78,886.22 points, while the Nifty declined 180.50 points, or 0.74 per cent, to 24,117.00 points. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Wednesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,314.76 crore, according to exchange data.

India's forex reserves at record high of USD 675 billion, says Das

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's forex reserves touched a record high of USD 675 billion on August 2, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Thursday. The previous all-time high for the kitty was USD 670.857 billion on July 19 this year, and the last reported reserve was USD 667.386 billion as on July 26. Das said overall, the country's external sector "remains resilient" as indicated by an improvement in key indicators.

"We remain confident of meeting our external financing requirements comfortably," he said in his statement after the review of the monetary policy. Das said foreign portfolio investors turned net buyers in the domestic market from June 2024 with net inflows of USD 9.7 billion during June- to August 6, after witnessing outflows of USD 4.2 billion in April and May.

India could gain in readymade garment exports amid B'desh crisis, says report

PTI ■ KOLKATA

India can be a beneficiary in the international readymade garment markets as Bangladesh, the world's second-largest exporter in the sector, grapples with economic challenges, amid ongoing political unrest there, according to a report released on Thursday. India could gain monthly export orders worth USD 200-250 million in the short term, a CareEdge study said. While Bangladesh has historically captured a significant portion of China's declining share in global readymade garment (RMG) exports, India has been unable to fully capitalise on the opportunity, it said.

However, the current situation in Bangladesh presents a golden chance for the Indian RMG sector to expand its footprint both in short and medium terms, the report said. "If the unrest in Bangladesh persists for an extended period, it could result in a significant shift in export orders towards India. Industry estimates suggest India could gain monthly export orders worth USD 200-250 million in the short term and around USD 300-350 million in the medium term," the rating agency said in its observation.

17 new printers launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Japanese printer manufacturer, Brother, today launched a new range of 17 laser printers designed to improve the productivity of SOHO, SMB & Corporate segments.

From compact to versatile printing devices catering to the needs of businesses, this powerful new range offers a solution to various work settings and demands with an array of efficiency-boosting features. The newly launched Mono & Color Printers allow seamless integration with various devices and networks with support for Wireless and USB connectivity, along with the Brother Mobile Connect App. With the ability to send documents straight to a mobile, tablet, or desktop, the devices make document management more efficient for users.

"With these new single functions and multifunction printers, Brother International is offering cost effective printing solutions that boost business productivity without any compromise. These new printers cater to the ever changing need of having the best of printing technology at an affordable price. The Monochrome and Colour LED series also improves workflow by offering features like security function, wireless connectivity and mobile printing. We have ensured that customers get the



optimal usage out of our printers," says Alok Nigam, Managing Director at Brother International India. This new range will be available in the market through Brother India's genuine retailers and channel partners across the country & even on e-commerce platforms to the customers, said Mr Nigam. With faster print speeds of up to 34 pages per minute, automatic 2-sided print, and a generous paper-tray capacity for up to 250 sheets, users can print, scan & copy large quantities, efficiently and without interruption. From the initial setup to efficient print management, Brother has designed these printers with the end user in mind, simplifying the printing experience without compromising the performance & print quality. The Toner Box Series is a cost-effective printing solution for SMBs looking for high-volume, good-quality printing. Its comes with 2600 pages yield in-box toner. Its cost-saving toner box technology reduces printing costs to 33 paise per page, making it the perfect printing partner. The series has 4 Multifunction Printers and 2 Single function printers.

Stability in mortgage rate to help maintain strong housing demand: Realtors on RBI policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The housing market will continue to see strong demand in the coming months as mortgage rates are likely to remain stable following the RBI move to keep the repo rate unchanged, according to real estate developers.

They are hopeful for a rate cut in the next monetary policy committee meeting. Commenting on the RBI policy, realtors body CREDAI President Boman Irani said, "RBI's decision to keep the repo rates unchanged at 6.5 per cent would maintain the borrowing costs for homebuyers and their ongoing home loan EMIs. However, we do expect and hope for a rate cut in the upcoming MPC meets, given the relatively favourable macro-economic dynamics." "Coupled with the festive season in the coming months, we expect the housing sales momentum to continue going into the final quarters of the 2024 calendar year," he added. NAREDCO President G Hari Babu the central bank's decision creates a stable environment for the real estate sector.

"With steady borrowing costs, home loans become more affordable, which is likely to boost demand in the housing market, especially during the upcoming festive season. This stability allows developers to plan projects confidently, knowing that

financing conditions will remain favourable," he added. The Reserve Bank of India expectedly kept the benchmark interest rate and stance unchanged for the ninth straight policy meeting, saying it cannot afford to look through persisting high food inflation and has to remain vigilant to prevent spillover. Leading housing brokerage firm Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said this sets a positive tone for the housing industry. "Maintaining interest rates offers consistency in borrowing costs, which will prompt more aspiring homebuyers to consider taking the plunge — and thus drive demand in the housing market. With interest rates staying steady, EMIs will remain manageable for current and potential homeowners, potentially leading to increased home sales — particularly in the price-sensitive affordable segment," he added.

Housing.Com Group Chief Executive Officer Dhruv Agarwala noted that stable home loan interest rates continue to support robust demand in India's housing sector. Real estate data analytic firm PropEquity CEO Samir Jasuja said, "Any rate hike would have halted the real estate sales momentum which in the past few years have been on an upward trajectory. Going forward, a reduction in the benchmark interest rate will

go a long way in providing a further boost to the real estate sector, a major segment of the economy." Shrinivas Rao, CEO of Vestian, said that the steady monetary policy for the past one-and-a-half years has ensured stability in the real estate sector, boosting demand for all asset classes.

Among developers, Gurugram-based Krisumi Corporation Managing Director Mohit Jain said, "While a rate cut would have been an ideal scenario to propel economic growth across industries, including real estate, maintaining the status quo will help prevent borrowing cost from rising, enable affordability, propel the residential demand and boost the overall economy." Bengaluru-based Sterling Developers CMD Ramani Sastri said the decision fosters consumer confidence and offers a sense of continuity and predictability to the real estate sector, which is already witnessing a strong demand from end-users. "The decision will keep the ongoing sales momentum on track and boost the optimistic attitude currently prevailing in the market," he added. Nayan Raheja of Delhi-NCR-based Raheja Developers said, "As luxury housing gains momentum, maintaining the status quo will further boost the demand for more properties and strengthen market confidence."

IT hiring likely to grow by 8.5% by next year as demand grows: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

With IT companies gradually coming out of the slump and actively ramping up their hiring efforts, a report on Thursday said that recruitment is set to surge with an estimated 8.5 per cent increase in job roles within the industry by next year. The demand for skilled IT talent is growing after a slow period late last year and early this year. Hiring is set to surge, with an estimated 8.5 per cent increase in job roles within the industry by next year, according to a report by Indeed, a global job matching and hiring platform and a subsidiary of Recruit Holdings. This data from Indeed has been compiled from Indeed Hiring Tracker and Indeed's platform data. Indeed Hiring Tracker is a quarterly report that explores the employment landscape and job market. The report further revealed that almost 70 per cent of all tech jobs currently on the Indeed platform are for software roles.

The dominance of software roles on Indeed is driven by the rapid adoption of technologies by companies like AI, machine learning, and blockchain which has further amplified the need for specialised software development, the report stated. The thriving tech startup ecosystem also plays a

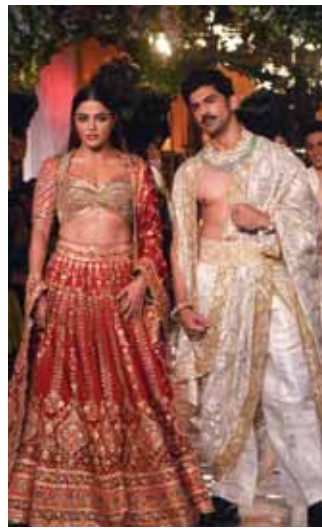
significant role, as new ventures prioritise hiring developers to build and scale their products, it said. According to Indeed data, companies are actively hiring for roles such as Application Developer, Software Engineer, Full-Stack Developer, Senior Software Engineer, and PHP Developer. There's also a growing demand for NET Developers, Software Architects, DevOps Engineers, Data Engineers, and Front-End Developers, it stated. Also, the continuous need for updates, security patches, and new features in existing software is driving a steady demand for skilled professionals who can keep pace with evolving user needs and technological advancements, it said.

"The IT sector has consistently stood as a major employment powerhouse. However, recent quarters saw a slowdown in hiring, with companies exercising caution as they navigated through global uncertainties and economic shifts. Now, the tide is turning. Companies are actively ramping up their hiring efforts. We can also expect Global Capability Centers (GCCs) to significantly contribute to this uptick in hiring, particularly in software and technological roles, Indeed India Head of Sales Sashi Kumar added.



GLITTER AND GRACE INDIA COUTURE WEEK 2024

With 14 breathtaking shows, Hyundai India Couture Week 2024 spotlighted the artistry of India's finest couturiers. From opulent bridal wear by Abu Sandeep to avant-garde creations by Rahul Mishra. This edition underscored the visionary leadership of FDCI and the boundless creativity of the designers, leaving fashion enthusiasts eager for more, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**



The 17th edition of Hyundai India Couture Week 2024 unfolded with 14 breathtaking shows, spotlighting top couturiers who seamlessly fused tradition with modernity. This glamorous event underscored the creativity and craftsmanship of the Indian fashion industry, offering a mesmerizing glimpse into the future of haute couture. The Hyundai India Couture Week opened with a breathtaking display by *Abu Sandeep* with *Wamiqa Gabbi* as the 'ASAL' bride and *Taha Shah Badussha* as the 'MARD' groom, setting a high bar for the week's fusion of tradition and modernity. Following this, *Isha Jajodia's* 'Rose room' featured *Ridhima Kapoor* in an elegant golden ensemble, while *Jacqueline Fernandez* dazzled as the showstopper in a dramatic black gown. In *Siddhartha*



Tytlar's 'Caligula's Feast', *Malaika Arora* wowed in a gray and black lehenga adorned with intricate silver and gold embroidery, complemented by *Rahul Khanna* in a richly embellished sherwani and bold

black boots. *Kunal Rawal's* 'Sehra' collection, showcased by *Aditya Roy Kapur*, redefined wedding couture with a modern twist on traditional elegance. In contrast, *Suneet Varma's* 'Nazm'

reimagined Indian decorative arts with luxurious fabrics like metallic tissue and pastel organza, creating a fresh aesthetic. *Dolly J's* 'La Vie En Rose' was highlighted by *Sonakshi Sinha* in a glamorous

pink gown adorned with gold and glitter, whereas *JJ Valaya's* 'MURAQQA' elegantly blended historical richness with contemporary flair. Among the standout moments, *Amit Aggarwal's* 'ANTE VORTA', inspired by the Greek goddess of the future, and *Rahul Mishra's* 'Nargis' Collection, celebrated nature's beauty, with *Lisa Ray* as the showstopper in an exotic ensemble. Additionally, *Jayanti Reddy's* 'Evocative Nawabi Canvas,' featuring *Aditi Rao Hydari*, highlighted Nawabi grandeur, while *Gaurav Gupta's* 'Arunodaya,' with *Khushi Kapoor* and *Vedang Raina*, captured the transformative beauty of dawn. *Rimzim Dadu's* 'Stucco,' showcased by *Sobhita Dhulipala*, impressed with its innovative textures and *Tarun Tahliani's* 'Otherworldly'

pushed couture boundaries with futuristic designs. The week concluded spectacularly with *Falguni Shane Peacock's* 'Rang Mahal,' featuring *Vicky Kaushal* and *Rashmika Mandanna*, marking a memorable end to the fashion extravaganza. As the curtains fall on this year's India Couture Week, the event leaves behind a legacy of innovation and elegance. The week was a tribute to the visionary leadership of FDCI Chairman *Mr. Sunil Sethi* and the dedication of all involved in showcasing the brilliance of Indian fashion. With creativity and tradition celebrated in equal measure, the fashion world eagerly awaits the next chapter, inspired by the extraordinary displays of artistry and craftsmanship from this year's spectacular event. Photos: Pankaj Kumar

A New Chapter in Indian Luxury Fashion

The luxury fashion world has been set ablaze by the recent launch of the *Tiger Toy* collection, a groundbreaking collaboration between *Tiger Marrón* and *KoyToy* by *Kunaal Kyhaan*. This union of two powerhouse Indian brands has redefined the accessories market with its bold fusion of cultural heritage and contemporary design



TEAM VIVA

Industry insiders have been captivated by the collection's audacious blend of influences. The incorporation of Mughal architectural motifs alongside modern pop culture elements represents a daring departure from conventional luxury aesthetics. This innovative approach has fashion critics hailing *Tiger Toy* as a new benchmark for cultural fusion in high-end accessories. The *Arch bag* series has emerged as the standout of the collection. Inspired by the elegant pointed arches of Mughal architecture, these pieces have instantly become classics. The *Maharani* purse

and *Paan Saddle bag*, in particular, have been praised as game-changers, offering a fresh interpretation of traditional Indian elements for the global luxury market. Sustainability is at the forefront of this collection, with *Tiger Marrón* and *KoyToy* showcasing a commitment to eco-conscious fashion. The use of organic vegan leather alongside high-grade natural leathers demonstrates a nuanced understanding of modern

consumer's diverse preferences and environmental concerns. This approach has been lauded as a significant step forward for luxury brands in addressing sustainability without compromising on quality or aesthetics. *Kunaal Kyhaan Soolekar's* involvement has added an extra layer of excitement to the collaboration. His background in architecture and interior design has resulted in innovative structures and shapes rarely seen in handbags and accessories. Fashion enthusiasts have been thrilled to see *Soolekar's* renowned bold yet harmonious style has translated into wearable art. The fashion world has responded with overwhelming enthusiasm to the *Tiger Toy* launch. The collection has successfully bridged the gap between cultural nostalgia and modern functionality, inspiring a new wave of designers to explore their heritage through a contemporary lens. It's clear that the *Tiger Toy* collection represents more than just a line of accessories. It stands as a bold statement about the evolving identity of Indian luxury fashion on the global stage. This collaboration between *Tiger Marrón* and *KoyToy* has challenged perceptions, pushed boundaries and reshaped the landscape of luxury accessories. As the collection makes its mark, it heralds a new era in fashion - one that celebrates cultural richness, embraces innovation and makes luxury more accessible than ever before. The *Tiger Toy* collection has not just met expectations, it has exceeded them, setting a new standard for what Indian luxury fashion can achieve on the world stage.




A FUSION OF STYLE, WELLNESS AND TIMELESS ELEGANCE

The FDCI Manifest Wedding Weekend is where luxury, creativity and personal expression converge to redefine the art of celebrating love, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

The Fashion Design Council of India's (FDCI) Manifest Wedding Weekend, stands as a premier event that manifests the height of bridal fashion and lifestyle. The second edition of this event promises an exceptional experience, showcasing a star-studded line-up of India's top designers, jewellers and wellness experts, all coming together to celebrate love and style. The fashion segment of the event was nothing short of spectacular. Attendees were treated to an array of designs from renowned couturiers such as *Asal & Mard* by *Abu Sandeep*, *Gaurav Gupta Couture*, *Amit Aggarwal*, *Dolly J* and *Tarun Tahliani*. Each designer brought their unique flair to the forefront, from the regal elegance of *Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla's* creations to the innovative and avant-garde ensembles by *Gaurav Gupta*. This variety ensured there was something to captivate every taste and preference, making it an essential visit for anyone wishing to make a statement on their wedding day. Jewellery was another



highlight of the weekend, with exquisite pieces from prestigious brands like *Prakshi Fine Jewellery*, *Raj Mahtani Couture Jewellers* and *Archana Aggarwal Timeless Jewellery*. The craftsmanship on display was exceptional, merging traditional techniques with contemporary designs. The inclusion of regional jewellers such as *Kishandas & Co.* and *Shree Jee Jewellers Jaipur* added depth and diversity to the collection, celebrating the rich heritage of Indian jewellery while incorporating modern twists. What truly set this year's event apart were the masterclasses, which provided invaluable insights and practical tips for attendees. *Sumaya Dalmia*, a renowned wellness expert, conducted a compelling session on sustainable living, rather than quick fixes, was enlightening. Her engaging and humorous approach made the session accessible and relevant, offering practical advice on maintaining wellness as part of wedding preparations and

beyond. On the photography front, *Badal Jain* offered a masterclass on capturing the emotional essence of weddings. His perspective on wedding photography as a form of storytelling, rather than mere documentation, encouraged couples to focus on authentic moments and genuine experiences. His approach focuses on documenting real, unposed moments, reflecting the true essence of the celebration. *Jain's* philosophy ensures a sincere and lasting representation of the couple's special day. The FDCI Manifest Wedding Weekend was a celebration of beauty, creativity and personal connection. It seamlessly combined fashion, jewellery and wellness to create a holistic experience for attendees. Beyond the stunning displays and insightful masterclasses, the event underscored the importance of personalisation and meaning in weddings. It celebrated not just the grandeur of the occasion but also the stories and emotions that make each celebration unique.

WRESTLER AMAN ENTERS SEMIFINALS



PTI ■ PARIS
 Young Indian grappler Aman Sehrawat rekindled India's hopes of a medal in wrestling, demolishing former world champion Zelimkhan Abakarov of Albania by technical superiority to seal a place in the 57kg free-style semifinal at the Paris Olympics here on Thursday. Aman was in imperious form as he toyed with Abakarov in the second

round. The 21-year-old Indian locked his legs at the start of the second round and turned him over multiple times to earn eight straight points to secure a 12-0 victory. The bout started with Aman earing a passivity point after his Russian-turned-Albanian opponent did not initiate any attacking move. Moments later, the Indian effected a left-leg hold to earn two more points to showcase his dominance

by going 3-0 up at the end of round 1. Aman was on song in round 2 and Abakarov, world champion in 2022, bore the brunt. The Indian's superb agility against the 31-year-old Albanian was on display as he attacked the left leg to bring him down. He then effected a 'fitley' (leg lace), turning the Albanian around several times to end the contest with more than two minutes to go.

Abakarov contested the last two points awarded to Aman but the referee ruled in favour of the Indian and awarded him a point. Aman will meet Japanese top seed Rei Higuchi in the last-four round later in the day. Earlier, Aman ensured himself an easy passage into the quarterfinal with a dominating performance against North Macedonian rival Vladimir Egorov. The 21-year-old Indian, an Asian Championship gold medallist and the only male wrestler from the country to qualify for the Olympics, was amazingly agile as he kept his defence intact while regularly overpowering his 29-year-old former European champion with leg holds to win the bout on technical superiority (10-0). Egorov seemed to be in a bit of bother after the first round, requiring medical attention on his knee following Aman's all-out attack. But the Macedonian could not stage a comeback with Aman effecting a takedown to earn two more points and go 10-0 up with more than two minutes remaining on the clock. **ANSHU MALIK LOSES:** Woman

grappler Anshu Malik displayed great determination but could not breach the defence of USA's vastly experienced Helen Louise Maroulis, losing 2-7 in the 57kg pre-quarterfinals. It was a rematch of the 2021 World Championship final in Oslo where

Anshu had to settle for silver against the American. Anshu's hopes of qualifying for the bronze-medal bout now hinge on 'repechage' provided Helen, the 2016 Rio Olympics gold medallist and Tokyo Games bronze medallist, reaches the final.

Anshu was up against one of the most reputed wrestlers in the world, but she fought with a lot of gumption to concede just two points in the first round. Helen attacked Anshu's left leg and then pushed the Indian to the mat to take a 2-0 lead.

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NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF CHAPTER III OF SECURITISATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002, READ WITH RULE 3(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 AMENDED AS ON DATE

We, the PNB Housing Finance Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as "PNBHFL") had issued Demand Notice U/s 13(2) of Chapter III of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (hereinafter referred to as the "Act") by our Raipur Branch Office Situated at Office No. 111-112, First Floor, Plot No. 1, Block No. 9, DB Corporate Park, Rajbandha Maidan, Raipur, Chhattisgarh - 492001. The said Demand Notice was issued through our Authorized Officer, to you all below mentioned Borrowers/Co-Borrower/ Guarantors since your account has been classified as Non-Performing Assets as per the Reserve Bank of India/National Housing Bank guidelines due to nonpayment of installments/ interest. The contents of the same are the defaults committed by you in the payment of installments of principals, interest, etc. The outstanding amount is mentioned below. Further, with reasons, we believe that you are evading the service of Demand Notice and hence this Publication of Demand Notice which is also required U/s 13(2) of the said Act. You are hereby called upon to pay PNBHFL within a period of 60 Days of the date of publication of this demand notice the aforesaid amount along with up-to-date interest and charges, failing which PNBHFL will take necessary action under all or any of the provisions of Section 13(4) of the said Act, against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of the secured assets of the borrowers and guarantors.

Your kind attention is invited to provisions of sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 where under you can tender/pay the entire amount of outstanding dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the PNB HFL only till the date of publication of the notice for sale of the secured assets by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty. Please also note that if the entire amount of outstanding dues together with the costs, charges and expenses incurred by the PNB HFL is not tendered before publication of notice for sale of the secured assets by public auction, by inviting quotations, tender from public or by private treaty, you may not be entitled to redeem the secured asset(s) thereafter. **FURTHER you are prohibited U/s 13(13) of the said Act from transferring either by way of sale, lease or in any other way the aforesaid secured assets.**

S. No.	Loan Account No.	Name/Address of Borrower & Co-Borrower	Name/Address of Guarantor	Property Mortgaged	Date of Demand Notice	Amount O/s as on Date of Demand Notice
1.	HOU/RAU/1116/331294 B.O. Raipur	Mr./Mrs Laxmi Nuka (Applicant) Residential Add: H.No. 205, Behind Bajaj Showroom, Bhartiya Nagar, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh - 495001, Bilaspur Permanent Add: H.No. 205, Behind Bajaj Showroom, Bhartiya Nagar, Bilaspur Chhattisgarh - 495001, Office Add: Shree Manikanta Andhra, South Indian Restaurant, Goli Bazar, Bilaspur Chhattisgarh - 495001, Mortgage Property Add: Flat No. 206, 2nd Floor, Part Of Kh. No. 845/1, KHA/9, Ph.No. 19/29, Mouza - Mopka, Shri Siddhi Vinayak Heights, Vikas Khand - Bilha, Tahsil And Distt. Bilaspur, Mopka, R.N.M. Chhattisgarh - 493118, Mr./Mrs. Syamala Rao Nuka (Co-Applicant) Residential Add: H.No 205, Behind Bajaj Showroom, Bhartiya Nagar, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh - 495001, Permanent Add: H.No 205, Behind Bajaj Showroom, Bhartiya Nagar, Bilaspur Chhattisgarh - 495001	N.A.	Flat No. 206, 2nd Floor, Part Of Kh.No. 845/1, KHA/9, Ph.no. 19/29, Mouza - Mopka, Shri Siddhi Vinayak Heights, Vikas Khand - Bilha, Tahsil And Distt. Bilaspur, Mopka, R.N.M. Bilaspur Chhattisgarh-493118	16-07-2024	Rs. 18,39,012.29/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakhs Thirty Nine Thousand Twelve and Twenty Nine Paise Only)

PLACE:- RAIPUR, DATE:- 08.08.2024 **AUTHORIZED OFFICER, PNB HOUSING FINANCE LTD.**

Panghal likely to get three-year ban for indiscipline: Source



PTI ■ PARIS
 Wrestler Antim Panghal, who caused embarrassment to the Indian Olympic contingent by trying to facilitate her sister's entry into the athletes village through her accreditation card, is likely to be banned for three years by the IOA, a source told PTI on Thursday. Panghal had crashed out of the Olympics after losing her opening bout in the women's 53kg category on Wednesday. "IOA (Indian Olympic Association) officials discussed the issue that caused embarrassment to all. It is considering a three-year ban on everyone involved, including the coaches," a source in the Indian contingent told PTI. "First, we need to ensure that she reaches home. The decision will be announced only after she reaches India,"

the source added. Panghal is set to take a flight to Delhi this evening. The IOA decided to send her and her support staff back after the disciplinary breach was brought to its notice by the French authorities. The body, however, asserted that the ban has not yet been imposed. "A ban has not been imposed as yet," said an IOA official. Speaking with PTI before her flight back to India, the 19-year-old said, "I did not intend to do anything wrong. I was not well and there was confusion. All of this happened due to confusion." Later, in a video, she admitted that she had to go to the police station but only for the verification of her accreditation card. "It was not a good day for me. I lost. A lot is being spread about me, that's not true. I had high fever, and had taken permission from my coach to go to the hotel with my sister. "I needed some of my belongings which were in the Games Village. My sister took my card and asked the officials there if she could take my belongings. They took her to the Police Station for accreditation verification." She also denied that her coaches were drunk and got into an altercation with a taxi driver over fare.

Oleksandr punches his way to Paris Gold

AP ■ PARIS
 Oleksandr Khyzhniak was one minute away from winning an Olympic gold medal three years ago when he was rocked by one miraculous punch. Khyzhniak went down, the fight was stopped and the most fearsome boxer in Tokyo had to settle for silver. The middleweight from Ukraine decided he would wait three years to make it right. Khyzhniak got his epic redemption Wednesday night at the Paris Games with a gold medal finally around his neck - but only after he paid for it in time, sweat and pain. Khyzhniak beat Nurbek Oralbay of Kazakhstan 3:2 in a thrilling final at Roland Garros, securing the championship that evaded him in heartbreaking fashion in Tokyo. The fighters unloaded on each other for three action-packed rounds, but Khyzhniak clinched the win by dominating a final three minutes filled with a jaw-dropping number of uppercuts, combinations and power punches for an Olympic fight. When Khyzhniak's hand was raised, the 29-year-old dropped to his knees in cathartic relief. Even though he is an obvious blue-chip professional prospect,

Khyzhniak put any other chapters of his life on hold because he was determined to do what he couldn't in Tokyo. Khyzhniak spent the last three years thinking about his loss to Hebert Sousa of Brazil, a game competitor who clearly wasn't the best middleweight in a stacked division in Tokyo. Khyzhniak was up 20-18 on all five cards after two rounds in their gold medal bout, meaning he only had to avoid a stoppage or a point deduction to win. But Khyzhniak simply couldn't stop himself from coming forward relentlessly. He knows no way to fight other than to throw as many punches as his arms can muster for nine minutes of bruising, bleeding pressure. So Khyzhniak kept coming forward, and the artful Sousa floored him with what might have been just a flash knockdown in the pros but was enough to persuade the Olympic referee to stop the bout. After the loss, Khyzhniak devoted himself to an Olympic comeback, winning every amateur bout he took since Tokyo. When the Olympics eliminated the 75-kilogram division in which Khyzhniak fought in Tokyo, he even moved up to 80 kilograms - now called middleweight.

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