

OPINION 6

GENDER RIGHTS AND
REALITY: BRIDGING THE GAP

WORLD 8

BRITISH AUTHORITIES STILL ON
ALERT FOR FURTHER UNREST

MONEY 10

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SISODIA WALKS TO FREEDOM

Government alert on India Bangladesh front

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday night was released from jail after 530 days as the Supreme Court granted him bail earlier in the day in the excise policy scam case saying he is entitled to a "speedy trial" and that returning him to a trial court would be like making him "play snakes and ladders". A bench of Justice BR Gavai and Justice KV Viswanathan also said keeping the AAP leader in jail for an "unlimited time", without a trial, is in violation of his fundamental rights. Listing the conditions for his bail, the top court directed Sisodia to furnish a bail bond of ₹10 lakh with two sureties, surrender his passport and not make any attempt to either influence witnesses or tamper with evidence. Besides, he will have to report to the investigating officer every Monday and Thursday between 10 and 11 am.

"We find that, on account of a long period of incarceration running to around 17 months and the trial having not commenced, the appellant (Sisodia) has been deprived of his right to speedy trial," the bench said. The apex court had reserved its order in the case on August 6. Minutes after the bail order, celebrations broke out at the AAP office as well as



AAP leader Manish Sisodia waves to supporters after being released from Tihar jail following his bail granted by the Supreme Court in the corruption and money laundering cases linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, in New Delhi, on Friday. PTI

residence of Sisodia. Hours later, Special Judge Kaveri Baweja accepted the bail bonds and surety bonds submitted by the advocates representing Sisodia. The AAP hailed the SC

decision as "victory of truth" and added that it hoped that other jailed leaders of the party "will also get justice." The AAP further said the order is a "tight slap" on the dictatorship of the BJP-led

Centre but rued that the relief came after a year's delay.

Sisodia, who was wearing a maroon shirt, greeted the party workers and leaders, who showered rose petals on him as he walked out of the jail around 6.50 pm.

Addressing the supporters and media after his release, Sisodia expressed his deep gratitude towards Dr BR Ambedkar, saying, "Ever since this order came in the morning, every inch of my skin has been feeling indebted to Babasaheb. I don't understand how I will pay off this debt to Babasaheb."

"We have brought this legal battle to its logical end through the Constitution. I thank you all for being with me," Sisodia said and added that he had many of admirers but their numbers have increased in the last 17 months. "Not only me but every Delhi resident, and children of the country were with me emotionally in jail. I thank the SC from the bottom of my heart for using the power of Constitution to give a hard slap to the dictatorship in the country," he said. The AAP leader said it was an emotional moment for everyone and hoped that the power of Constitution and democracy will pave the way for release of Kejriwal.

He raised the slogan, "Bhrasthachaar ka ek hi kaal, Kejriwal, Kejriwal."

Holding aloft flags and cheering loudly, crowds of AAP supporters waited to welcome Sisodia as stepped out of jail. Senior AAP leaders Sanjay Singh, Atishi, and Saurabh Bharadwaj were present outside Tihar to receive Sisodia.

Sisodia is a founding member of the AAP and a close confidant of party chief Kejriwal. The bail to Sisodia is a shot in the arm for the beleaguered party, which is gearing up to contest the Haryana Assembly polls and the Delhi elections in the next few months. His release comes as a big win for the AAP. This is because of the three big AAP leaders who were arrested in the liquor policy case, just Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal remains behind bars. Sisodia's release also comes as the AAP struggles to govern Delhi and counter Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena.

According to experts, Sisodia will have to wait to join the Delhi Cabinet as there are several issues that need to be dealt with since the Chief Minister himself is in jail. "For Sisodia to be inducted in his Council of Ministers, Kejriwal needs to send his recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor from Tihar Jail, which seems difficult currently," experts said.

Continued on Page 2

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi Government on Friday constituted a high-level committee, headed by a top Border Security Force (BSF) official, to monitor the situation along the Indo-Bangladesh border in view of the ongoing state of affairs in the neighbouring country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said.

He said the committee would be in touch with counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus and other minority communities living there.

"In the wake of the ongoing situation in Bangladesh, the Modi Government has constituted a committee to monitor the current situation on the Indo-Bangladesh Border (IBB).

The committee will maintain communication channels with their counterpart authorities in Bangladesh to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals, Hindus, and other minority communities living there. The committee will be headed by the ADG (Additional Director General), Border Security Force, Eastern Command," Shah said in a social media post.

Apart from the BSF ADG, the four other members of the committee are the BSF's



FILE PHOTO

Hundreds clamour to cross the border

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ GEDE/NADIA

Abdul Hakiq Rumel, Farshatulla Khan, Apurba Sarkar, Mrinal Deb Roy, Achintya Biswas may be from different religions but they share the same ill-fate and nationality. These Bangladeshi nationals are stranded in the no-man's land at various entry points of the Indo-Bangla border of Sitalkuchi in Cooch Behar district, Fulbari in Jalpaiguri

district, Hili in Dinajpur and Gede in Nadia district.

"We are returning to the mango orchards or paddy fields in the night and returning to this place during the day time as we fear for our lives... many of our friends and relatives are missing... some have been killed and their houses looted, women raped by the members of BNP and Jamaat," said one of them at Gede border.

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Inspector General of Police (IGP) for the South Bengal frontier, the IGP for the Tripura frontier, member (planning and development) of the Land Ports Authority of

India (LPAI), and secretary of the LPAI. The BSF has increased vigil along the borders adjoining Bangladesh.

Continued on Page 2

Monsoon chokes and inundates Delhi

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Commuters had a tough time reaching their respective destinations due to traffic congestions choking arterial junctions of the national Capital caused by flooding of roads and water-logging following heavy rain on Friday evening.

The adjoining regions of Noida and Ghaziabad were also lashed by the downpour and experienced similar situation. Delhiites fumed and fretted as the rain brought the city to a screeching halt with traffic snarls extending to miles thanks to the heavy water-logging and blocking of roads by fallen trees uprooted by the rain.

Continued on Page 2

Centre expands CAA for more inclusivity



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has expanded the ambit of the rules issued under the citizenship law Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) through which Indian nationality will be given to persecuted minorities coming from Afghanistan,

Bangladesh or Pakistan. The Union Home Ministry announced that "any document" issued by the Central or State Governments or quasi-judicial body in India proving that either of the parents, grandparents or great-grandparents is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries will be acceptable.

The clarification of the Home Ministry came after many applicants seeking Indian nationality under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 were reported to be facing difficulties due to a particular clause of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024.

Continued on Page 2



ISIS terrorist caught by Delhi Police

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Special Cell has averted a possible terrorist attack in the national Capital ahead of the Independence Day on August 15 by arresting a most wanted terrorist — a member of the Pune module of the ISIS, carrying a reward of ₹3 lakh. The accused has been identified as Rizwan Abdul Haji Ali who was on the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) most wanted list and the probe agency had announced a reward for information leading to his arrest following his escape from the custody of the Pune Police since July 2023.

According to a senior police officer, Rizwan was planning an attack ahead of I-Day as he and his associates were doing recce of many VIP areas of Delhi.

Continued on Page 2

A TALE OF TWO FAMILIES

SP MP Jaya Bachchan with Congress MP Sonia Gandhi and others after walking out of the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Friday.

PTI



A mother beats all Olympic records

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Elated for her son's silver medal, Neeraj Chopra's mother Saroj Devi also expressed happiness for Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who broke the Olympic record to beat the Indian defending champion in Paris, saying the latter is also like her "child". Chopra clinched the silver medal at the Paris Games with a season's best throw of 89.45m after Nadeem pulled off an Olympic record-breaking effort of 92.97m on Thursday night.

With the silver win, Chopra became only the third Indian and the first in track-and-



field to win back-to-back individual Olympic medals. "We are very happy with the silver, the one who got gold is also our child and the one who got silver is also our child... All are athletes, all work hard," Saroj told PTI Videos in Khandra, Panipat, where the family is based. "Nadeem is also good, he

plays well, there is no difference between Neeraj and Nadeem. We got gold and silver there is no difference for us," she added in the interview given on Thursday night.

Both Chopra and Nadeem are good friends off the field despite being rivals on it. Chopra's fondness for "desi khana" is well-documented and his family is planning to welcome the two-time Olympic medallist with his favourite dish "Churma" "He did really well. We will welcome him with churma which is his favourite. I am delighted, people are lighting firecrackers, we are making laddoos," Saroj added.

Chopra's performance is creditable also because of the highly-competitive field in which as many as seven athletes went beyond the 86m mark.

"We are very happy. He produced his season's best. All were near 88-89m so competition was very tough. It's not about winning a gold or silver, but about winning a medal, and he did his best," Chopra's aunt Kamlesh said. Chopra is one of India's most decorated athletes, having won the gold at every tournament including the Olympics, World Championships, Diamond League, Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games.

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Sisodia gets bail after 17 months

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Celebrations broke out outside Tihar jail leading to traffic snarls in the area as Former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia walked out of Tihar Jail after 17 months behind bars on Friday with party leaders and supporters gathered outside Tihar Jail to welcome him. Greeting the euphoric supporters outside the jail, he hailed the country's constitution and said that the power of democracy will also ensure that incarcerated Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will walk out jail soon. "I have come out of jail due to your love, God's blessings and power of truth, and biggest of all, the dream of Babasaheb that if any dictatorial government comes to power and puts Opposition leaders behind bars by forming dictatorial laws, then this country's Constitution will protect them. I assure you that with this power of the Constitution, Arvind Kejriwal will come out of jail as well," he said.

Hailing Baba Saheb Ambedkar, Sisodia said he was indebted to him. The former Delhi Education Minister stated, "Ever since this order came in the morning, every inch of my skin has been feeling indebted to

Babasaheb. I don't understand how will pay off this debt to Babasaheb. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court gave the former deputy chief minister bail in the alleged excise policy linked money laundering case and said his long incarceration without trial had deprived him of the right to speedy justice.

Sisodia, who was wearing a maroon shirt, greeted the party workers and leaders, who showered rose petals on him as he walked out of the jail. "We have brought this legal battle to its logical end through the Constitution. I thank you all for being with

me," Sisodia said and added that he had many admirers but their numbers have increased in the last 17 months. "Not only me but every person of Delhi, and children of the country were with me emotionally in jail. I thank the Supreme Court from the bottom of my heart for using the power of Constitution to give a tight slap to the dictatorship in the country," he said. The leader stated that this is an emotional moment for him. Slogans of "Bhrasthachar ka ek hi kaal, Kejriwal, Kejriwal" erupted outside the Tihar jail by Sisodia and his supporters.



SC's verdict does not absolve Sisodia of offence, claims BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the Supreme Court decision to grant bail to former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in the alleged liquor policy linked money laundering scam, the Delhi BJP on Friday called the verdict a "procedural order" and said that this does not absolve him of the offence.

BJP New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj told a press conference at the BJP headquarters that Sisodia has been granted bail because of his appeal based on "delay in trial". "Manish Sisodia's bail has been rejected seven times in court (previously). This was his eighth attempt, and today, his lawyers got the bail because they appealed based on delay in trial, not on merit," she said. Swaraj alleged that AAP is involved in corruption and will be held accountable in front of the court of law sooner or later "It does not absolve him (Sisodia) of the offence. He will still be held accountable for fooling the people of Delhi," the BJP leader said, claiming that there is evidence against the AAP leader that establishes his involvement in the "scam" case linked to the now-scrapped liquor policy of 2021-22. Delhi BJP President Virendra



Sachdeva said that while the BJP respects the decision of the court, Manish Sisodia and the entire AAP should understand that they are now on bail, not free from crime. "We can understand the happiness of AAP leaders on Sisodia getting bail, but today their dark face is also clearly visible in the matter of accepting the decisions of the court. The people who are calling the Supreme Court's decision a victory of justice are the same people who were calling the Delhi Municipal Corporation Alderman decision of the Supreme Court last week a murder of democracy," he alleged. Hitting out at the AAP leaders, the Delhi BJP chief asked if bail

granted on the condition of a bond of Rs 30 lakh, passport confiscated, attendance at the police station twice a week and keeping the location on for 24 hours will be called a victory of truth. "The people of Delhi are watching and understanding everything and in January 2025 they will give the ultimate punishment to Aam Aadmi Party for its corruption and aggression," Sachdeva said. Meanwhile, Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav said that law should take its own course and the guilty should be punished. "Delhi Congress had always maintained the stand that those responsible for the liquor scam should be punished and the innocent should get justice," he said.

Celebrations break out in AAP office over bail to Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Euphoric over the bail of the former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia by the Supreme Court on Friday, celebrations broke out at the AAP office by the party leaders as well as by his family members at his residence minutes after he got bail.

Sisodia will walk out of jail 17 months after being arrested in connection to the alleged liquor policy linked money laundering scam. At his residence, Sisodia's wife Seema Sisodia and other family members distributed sweets to visitors with smiling faces. Party leaders and workers started streaming in at the AAP headquarters on DDU Marg with the premises reverberating with drum beats. Several party leaders, including Cabinet Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj, distributed sweets to people who gathered there. Senior AAP leader and Delhi minister Atishi broke down while sharing the news of Sisodia's bail during the inauguration ceremony of a school in Nareerpur. "I want to congratulate every child studying in Delhi schools and their parents because today on this auspicious occasion, Manish

Sisodia, the father of Delhi education revolution, who was trapped in a false case and kept in jail for 17 months," she said while inaugurating the school. The AAP said the Supreme Court verdict granting bail to Sisodia was a "victory of truth" and hoped that other jailed leaders of the party "will also get justice". Addressing the media, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said Manish Sisodia's bail is a tight slap on dictatorship and on the atrocities of the Modi government. "For 17 months, you kept a person in jail against whom there was not a single proof, not a single rupee were recovered, no property papers were found. But the ED and CBI people kept on taking dates after dates in court. For 17 months, your only effort was to keep Manish Sisodia in jail. Today, the decision of the Supreme Court is a victory of the justice system, a victory of democracy and a victory of the sentiments of the people of Delhi and the country," he said. Bharadwaj said that the Supreme Court has set an important example for the judiciary of the entire country today.

Wildlife SOS petitions Railways for steps to reduce elephant deaths on tracks

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI



T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Pained by the fact that there have been as many as 200 elephant deaths on railway tracks across the country between 2010 and 2020, Wildlife SOS on Friday launched a petition to the Indian Railways seeking implementation of measures to protect this iconic species by reducing train speeds and utilising the latest technology to prevent collisions in sensitive areas. India is home to more than half of the globe's Asian elephant population. However, it is disconcerting for the wildlife lovers in the country that there has been an increasing incidence of pachyderm deaths caused by train collisions over the years. The data collated by Wildlife SOS in the run-up to the World Elephant Day on August 12 reveals as many as nearly 200 elephants were killed in train collisions between 2010 and 2020, averaging about 20 elephants each year.

Kolhapur heritage theatre reduced to ashes; Congress demands probe

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after iconic Keshavrao Bhosale Theatre was reduced to ashes at Kolhapur in western Maharashtra, the Maharashtra Congress on Friday rooted for a thorough probe into the circumstances leading to the fire that broke out at 109-year-old heritage building constructed by the Chhatrapati Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj. The fire broke out at the Keshavrao Bhosale Theatre,

after a group of workers had completed the preparations for the 134th birth anniversary of the Marathi theatre's earliest icons, singer-actor Sangit-Surya Keshavrao Bhosale and left the premises at around 8 pm. The fire, which broke out at 9.30 pm on Thursday, enveloped the entire heritage building in the next few hours. The structure built in 1915 was reduced to ashes by Friday morning.

Bengal bids tearful adieu to Buddha

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even in his death former Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee tended to defy the law of diminishing returns with thousands of his Marxist comrades and common men by the street bidding him a tearful adieu on Friday. Bhattacharjee breathed his last on Thursday morning after a prolonged illness. The Marxist patriarch, known for his commitment to communist ideology and pragmatic approach to industrialising the State was 80 and survived his wife Meera Bhattacharjee and son Suchentan. Bhattacharjee's predecessor Jyoti Basu too had pledged his body for medical research.

Junior medical college doctor allegedly raped, murdered

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In yet another frightening testimony to the deteriorating law and order situation of Bengal the body of a semi nude on-duty junior doctor was found inside a seminar hall at the prestigious RG Kar Medical College Hospital in North Kolkata leading to suspicions of rape and murder and triggering an instant uprising among the students and doctors who struck work demanding impartial investigation. The incident likely took place on Thursday night.

Muslim clerics, lawmakers to discuss community quota

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a major initiative, leading Islamic scholars, clerics and law-makers will come together under one umbrella in Mumbai on August 10 to press for the reservation of Muslims in education and jobs and to pitch for political reservation for the minority community. Being hosted by Muslim Welfare Association, the Muslim Leadership Summit 2024 is being attended by 30 to 40 MPs and MLAs belonging to different political parties. The day-long event that will take place on Saturday is of political significance, considering that it is being ahead of the Assembly polls in several of the states, including Maharashtra. "This significant event will serve as a platform for comprehensive discussions on critical issues affecting the Muslim community, including welfare, reservation, safety, and security," said Saleem Sarang, the founder of Muslim Welfare Association, said. Renowned Islamic scholar Khalil-ur-Rahman Sajjad Noman Sahab - who is a pillar of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board and Janab Tauqeer Raza Khan Sahab will be among those who will be speaking at the Summit.

Committed to conducting J&K polls at earliest: EC

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A day after the political parties, cutting across party lines, battled for early Assembly polls as per the Supreme Court deadline of 30 September 2024, the Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar Friday said that the EC was committed to conducting polls at the earliest in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The head of the three-member poll panel also said the commission would not allow internal or external forces to derail the electoral process in the wake of a sudden rise in the incidents of terrorist violence across the Jammu region. Addressing a press conference at the end of a two-day long visit aimed at reviewing the poll preparedness here in Jammu, Rajiv Kumar said, "Time has come to give the people of J&K its government through elections. We are committed to conducting elections at the earliest. We are sure that the people of J&K will give a befitting response to disruptive forces. No internal or external intervention will be allowed to derail the democratic process. We are all

prepared for it," said CEC Kumar, who was accompanied by Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and S.S. Sandhu. Without commenting on the likely dates of holding Assembly polls the Chief Election Commissioner maintained we have completed the state-level review, and the ongoing Amarnath yatra is also culminating on August 19. We will conduct a fresh security assessment and requirement of security forces in New Delhi. Then we will hold a press briefing and announce a poll schedule keeping in mind the deadlines. Before reaching Jammu the EC delegation also held discussions with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Atal Dullu and police chief R R Swain in Srinagar on Friday. Referring to the issue of providing a level playing field to the candidates of all political parties during the Assembly polls, the Election Commission Chief said we have directed the UT administration to provide a level playing field to all the political parties and wherever necessary conduct the fresh security audit to address the issue.

INBRIEF

ICCIDE-2024 HELD AT VIT-AP UNIVERSITY

Amaravati: VIT-AP University hosted the inaugural session of the two-day "6th International Conference on Computational Intelligence and Data Engineering (ICCIDE-2024)" on Friday, August 9, 2024. The conference, organized by the School of Computer Science and Engineering (SCOPE) of VIT-AP university, was inaugurated with distinguished guests and a vibrant audience of faculty members, research scholars, and industry experts. The event was graced by Chief Guest Dr. Sangarapillai Lambothan, Professor and Director at the Institute for Digital Technologies, Loughborough University, UK, and Guest of Honour Dr. Michael Fernando, Professor and Dean of Engineering and Computing at the University of Central Lancashire, UK.

SRM COLLEGE HOSTS WORKSHOP ON AI IN DENTISTRY

Kattankulathur: The Department of Public Health Dentistry at SRM Kattankulathur Dental College and Hospital successfully hosted a two-day national workshop on "Artificial Intelligence in Dentistry" recently. The workshop, funded by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), was held at SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur and attracted a diverse audience of dental professionals, researchers, and students. Dr. L. Swasthicharan, Additional Deputy Director General of Health Services & Director (EMR) at the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, graced the event as the Chief Guest. Dr. M. B. Aswathi Narayanan, Professor and Head at Tamil Nadu Government Dental College & Hospital, served as the Guest of Honour.

PANACEA BIOTEC OFFERED JOBS TO 10 GNDU STUDENTS

Amritsar: Under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Dr. Jaspal Singh Sandhu, Directorate of Placement & Career Enhancement of Guru Nanak Dev University organized Campus Placement drive by Panacea Biotech company for M.Sc. Chemistry, M.Sc. Biotechnology, M.Sc. Microbiology, M.Pharm. and B.Pharm. - Batch 2024 students of the University. The company selected 10 students from these courses - 3 from M.Sc. Microbiology, 2 each from M.Sc. Chemistry, M.Sc. Biotechnology and M.Pharm. and 1 from B.Pharm. These students will join their jobs after passing out their respective courses, said Dr. Amit Chopra, Director.

Bail does not mean Sisodia exonerated in liquor scam: Vijender

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly, Shri Vijender Gupta, commented on the Supreme Court granting bail to Manish Sisodia, stating that Sisodia should not be under any illusion about the bail granted by the Supreme Court. Gupta mentioned that the Supreme Court granted bail to Sisodia solely on the basis that he has been in jail for 16-17 months, and there has been a delay in the trial. Bail was given only on this ground. Gupta expressed surprise at the reactions of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) workers, saying that AAP leaders are promoting the notion that Sisodia has been exonerated or acquitted by the court, which is absolutely not the case. By doing this, AAP leaders are deceiving misleading the people of Delhi.



Gupta further stated that Sisodia is the main accused in a liquor scam involving crores of rupees, and the agencies are investigating this scam at their level. The trial of this case will be completed very soon. While granting bail, the court imposed conditions on Sisodia, including a bail bond of Rs. 10 lakhs and mandatory attendance at the police station every Monday. The Leader of Opposition, Gupta, said that Sisodia is

ISIS terrorist caught...

From Page 1

It is suspected that he was preparing for a possible attack on some Delhi-NCR-based VIPs, an officer said, adding that he was being interrogated. The Delhi Police Special Cell police station has filed an FIR in this regard. Ali, who is a resident of Delhi's Daryaganj, was arrested by a team of Special Cell from near Ganga Baksh Marg near Biodiversity Park following a tip-off received from the Delhi-Faridabad border at around 11 pm. An unlicensed star pistol of .30 bore and three live cartridges were recovered from his possession. Two mobile phones were also recovered from him, and authorities are analysing the data on these recovered devices to uncover further details about his activities and potential associates.

From Page 1

In October 2023, the Special Cell had arrested seven terrorists of the ISIS Pune module including Shahnawaz and Mohammad Arshad Warsi. Rizwan, who was one of those arrested, managed to escape along with two others. The NIA placed a reward on his arrest along with others and had been searching for him since long. Rizwan's involvement with the terrorist organisation ISIS had already led to his being booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the Explosive Act. Rizwan's previous two cases include one registered in Mumbai under various sections of Arms act, Maharashtra Police Act and UAPA while the other one is registered in Delhi under sections of Explosive Act. Both are being investigated currently by the NIA.

Government...

From Page 1

The security agencies have reportedly warned BSF that several prisoners including terrorists have escaped jails in Bangladesh and could attempt to infiltrate into India. The BSF has asked locals residing along the 4,096 km-long India-Bangladesh international border to not undertake unnecessary movements in the frontier areas, especially during the night. While addressing Parliament, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had said the government was monitoring the situation in Bangladesh with regard to the protection of minorities. While extending greetings to Muhammad Yunus, who took oath as the head of an interim government in Bangladesh on Thursday, Prime Minister Modi expressed hope for early return of normalcy and sought safety of Hindus and other minority communities in that country.

Hundreds clamour to cross...

From Page 1

"Trains are not running, bus services have been discontinued... we have taken auto rickshaws or even ambulances... or hidden ourselves in hey-laden bullock carts taking village roads to reach this place and the BSF is not letting us in... where will we go... either shoot us or take us in," cried Shamsur Alam Biswas a panchayat level leader of Awami League of former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "The reach people are able to save their lives but giving protection money to the local youths across districts of Rajshahi, Satkhira, Pabna, Khulna Barishal, Kumilla... only Dhaka and Chittagong are marginally safer... the local youths are charging lakhs of rupees to provide protection to the Hindu families... we have either to spend the nights in the paddy fields or rush

Centre...

From Page 1

"Any document that shows that either of the parents or grandparents or great grandparents of the applicant is or had been a citizen of one of the three countries i.e. of Afghanistan or Bangladesh or Pakistan," the earlier clause of the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024 says. In its latest clarification, the home ministry said: "It may be clarified that the documents under Sr No. 8 of the Schedule -1A may include any document issued by the central government/state government/any judicial or quasi judicial body in India such as land record, judicial order etc., identifying or representing that the applicant or the parents or grandparents or great grandparents had been a national of Afghanistan or Bangladesh or Pakistan."

Sisodia walks to...

From Page 1

The AAP leader was arrested in February 2023 by the CBI followed by the ED a month later after a case was registered based on a complaint by the Delhi L-G in July 2022 alleging

irregularities in the excise policy. Prior to his arrest on February 26 last year, Sisodia was not only the key face of the Delhi Government, but also the party's go-to man in terms of firefighting during critical times and highlighting its stand on political and national issues. Thus his arrest was a bolt from the blue for the party, which somehow managed to brave the situation but could never fully recover from his

absence. It was no wonder that various party leaders, at different points in time, remembered him saying had he been out, things would have been different. Party leaders feel Sisodia's presence will bolster its election campaign, especially in Delhi where it is looking for a third consecutive term and aiming for a performance similar to that of 2015 and 2020 when it won 67 and 62 seats

respectively. "Incarceration of 18 months... Trial not having even commenced and appellant has been deprived of right to speedy trial," Justice Gava said as he asked questions of the lower courts. "Keeping appellant behind bars for unlimited time will deny fundamental right. Appellant has deep roots in society... no apprehension of fleeing. Anyway... conditions can be imposed."

Monsoon chokes and...

From Page 1

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) received a total of seven calls between 2 pm and 6 pm including three of water-logging in areas including Rohini, Mahipalpur and Lajpat Nagar. Four calls regarding tree falling was received from Shahdara, Vikasपुरi, Sonia vihar and Dwarka. Harshit Jain, a resident of Delhi, said that his car turned into a boat as he had to wade through knee deep water while returning from work in the evening. "It is an everyday affair for us now to wade through waterlogged roads and being stuck for hours. The city literally turns into a river even if it is minutes of rains," he said, expressing his disappointment with the authorities.

Niyad Nellanar opening employment avenues for tribal youth in Bastar

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government is increasing the number of security camps in Bastar division in order to provide additional security against Maoist terror.

At the same time, it is taking steps to generate employment under the Niyad Nellanar scheme.

A senior government official said the scheme is being implemented to extend the benefits of Central and state governments' welfare programme accessible in villages within a five-kilometer radius of these security camps.

The scheme has shown promising results, and strengthened the trust and confidence of people in the



government and administration, he said.

"The scheme is creating employment opportunities for youths by enhancing their employability through skill development training in the trade of their choice," the official said. In Dantewada district, 21 women from village

Gamawada are receiving training in handloom production.

Additionally, 12 students are getting training as desktop assistant, in hand embroidery and two-wheeler servicing at the Livelihood College under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

Collective participation sought to protect tribal rights

World Tribal Day observed

STAFF REPORTER ■ DANTEWADA

On the occasion of World Tribal Day, authorities in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Friday called upon the society to unite to create awareness to protect tribal interests and rights.

Various cultural programmes were held at the Maa Danteshwari temple.

They stressed the importance of education to bring tribals into the mainstream of development.

Tribal Development Department Deputy Commissioner K.S. Masram and other officials



said education was crucial for the all-round

development of society. They also provided

57 forest rights certificates to beneficiaries,

On this occasion, young people took out a bike rally from Geedam bypass to SBI Chowk.

community forest rights recognition certificates to 190 beneficiaries and forest resources recognition certificates to six beneficiaries.

On this occasion, young people took out a bike rally from Geedam bypass to SBI Chowk.

Three Maoists with Rs 16L bounty surrender in Bijapur



STAFF REPORTER ■ BIJAPUR

Three Maoists, two of them carrying a cumulative reward of Rs 16 lakhs on their heads, surrendered on Friday to security forces in Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh.

Ramesh Farsa, Laxman Potam alias Mura and Manki Madvi alias Sarita turned themselves in, Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Yadav

said.

Farsa, who carried a bounty of Rs 8 lakh, was a member of Platoon Number 1 under the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army of the outlawed Maoist outfit.

Sarita was a party member of Central Regional Command (CRC) Company's Platoon Number 1 under the South Bastar Division. She carried a reward of Rs 8 lakhs on her head.

Bihan Scheme empowering rural women in Chhattisgarh



STAFF REPORTER ■ BILASPUR

As many as 12,000 women in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district have become 'lakhpati didis' thanks to the National Rural Livelihood Mission's Bihan scheme, an official communiqué said.

Under this, women are provided skill-development training and prepared for

employment.

In the annual meeting of Mahila Kisan Utpadak Sangathan, women demonstrated the working of the Nano Drone Project.

They said that the drones enable them to spray nano-urea in five to seven minutes on one acre of land.

They said they have earned Rs 25,500 by spraying from drones on 85 acres.

BJP leaders put tricolour on their social media DP

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Followed by an appeal from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP leaders in Chhattisgarh including Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai changed their social media display profile and put tricolour in it.

Modi earlier urged people to make "Har Ghar Tiranga" a mass movement again this year ahead of August 15.

Modi changed his profile

picture to the tricolour. So did leaders and workers of the BJP.

The Prime Minister also encouraged everyone to share a selfie with the tricolour on harghartiranga.com

He said on X: "As this year's Independence Day approaches, let's again make #HarGharTiranga a memorable mass movement. I am changing my profile picture and I urge you all to join me in celebrating our Tricolour by doing the same."

Sai on Thursday declared that the third version of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' mission will be held from August 9 to 15.

Man held for making fake social media profile of CM



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Police on Friday arrested a 40-year-old man from Rajasthan for making a fake social media profile of Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and misusing it to defame

him.

Sahukar Khan has been taken into custody, Raipur Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Singh said.

Khan was apprehended from a village in Alwar district. The police seized a mobile phone used in the crime.

Axis Bank facilitates seamless GST payments

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Axis Bank, one of the largest private sector banks in India, on Friday announced its successful integration with the Goods and Service Tax portal, thereby allowing its Commercial Card Corporate customers to make GST



payments seamlessly.

Speaking at the launch, Vivek Gupta, President and Head, Wholesale Banking Product, Axis Bank, said:

"Axis Bank has always been at the forefront of leading digital initiatives in transaction banking to support our corporate customers."

"The latest initiative enables a secure, convenient and seamless way to make GST payments, while enjoying the working capital optimisation benefits of our Commercial Card proposition," he said.

"This is yet another customer centric offering that positions us well as our clients' operational bank of choice."

Tech-driven lifestyle fuelling personality disorders in girls

AGENCIES ■

Late childhood and adolescence are the age groups when personality starts developing and gradually solidifying before getting further established in the early 20s.

Dr. Rakesh K Chadda, HoD, Psychiatry, Amrita Hospital, Faridabad said advances in technology are making adolescents and young adults aged between 15-25, vulnerable to developing mental health challenges.

He blamed it on "the rise of information technology, particularly the increased use of social media and digital interactions" for the negative

impact on health, especially mental well-being.

It is because the overuse of technology has diminished physical activity and exercise in daily routines, disrupted regular sleep patterns in both timing and duration, encouraged instant messaging without time for reflection, and reduced face-to-face, in-person interactions, the psychiatrist explained.

"Emotionally unstable personality disorder (EUPD), also known as a Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), has significantly increased among youth over the last one to two decades, with rates more than twice in females compared to males," Dr. Chadda said.

The expert noted that if left untreated, it can severely impact social and occupational functioning, leading to co-occurring mental health issues like depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and an increased risk of suicide.

"Substance abuse has notably increased among individuals aged 15-25, particularly with alcohol and illicit drugs. Depression is more prevalent in females within this age group, while substance abuse is more common among males."

"Additionally, self-harm and anxiety disorders are seen more frequently in girls, implicating a gender disparity in mental health issues," Dr Chadda said.

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BIJAPUR [CT]	AFSANA BEGAM	XXXXXXXXXX4940	172851
BIJAPUR [CT]	YOGESHVAR KUMAR DESHMUKH	XXXXXXXXXX3749	113987
BIJAPUR [CT]	DANTESHWAR SVAMI	XXXXXXXXXX3368	120716
BIJAPUR [CT]	DANTESHWAR SVAMI	XXXXXXXXXX3145	39581
BILASPUR [CT]	KAMLESH KUMAR DUBEY	XXXXXXXXXX7649	70519
DANTEWADA C1443 CT	SHIVRAM KADTI	XXXXXXXXXX2434	48570
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GUDHIYARI RAI [CT]	MUKESH KUMAR BAGHEL	XXXXXXXXXX1377	53425
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RAJESWAR NAGAR, BILA [CT]	PRABHA CHANDRVANSHI	XXXXXXXXXX5379	76728
RAMANUJGANJ BLR [CT]	NIRU GUPTA	XXXXXXXXXX1140	147466
SANGAM CHOWK [CT]	KETAN THAKUR	XXXXXXXXXX6250	113489
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PNB briefs Sao about its role in development



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Punjab National Bank's Zonal Manager for Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand Ashish Chaturvedi on Friday briefed Deputy Chief Minister

Arun Sao on Friday about the bank's role in empowering local entrepreneurs and promoting economic development.

Sao spoke about the bank's special role in Chhattisgarh.

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Opp silence on threat to Hindus in Bangladesh unfortunate: BJP



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP MPs on Friday criticised Opposition parties, saying their silence on the situation of Hindus and other minority communities in Bangladesh is unfortunate.

Several Hindu temples, households and businesses have been vandalised in violence in Bangladesh since Monday when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India. During the Zero Hour of the Lok Sabha, BJP MP Anurag Thakur tried to corner the Leader of Opposition and Congress MP, Rahul Gandhi, by alleging that he has not spoken on ensuring the safety of minorities in

Bangladesh. "When the interim Government of Bangladesh took over, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated them but at the same time he asked them to ensure the safety of minorities," he said. "It is unfortunate that the Leader of Opposition extended congratulations to the interim Government (of Bangladesh) but did not mention the safety and security of Hindus and the minorities. What was the compulsion? You spoke about Gaza but not about minorities in Bangladesh," Thakur said. Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus took oath as the head of the interim Government of

Bangladesh on Thursday, replacing Hasina. BJP MP from Odisha's Dhenkanal Rudra Narayan Pany, while raising the issue of Hindu temples being attacked in Bangladesh, said the Government of India should interfere to ensure their safety. "Hindu temples have been attacked in Bangladesh, and the photos that have come out show that the statue of Lord Jagannath was attacked. This is unfortunate, condemnable and painful..." Pany said. "What is this mentality behind damaging Hindu temples?" he asked. Pany said this has hurt not just the people of Odisha but people all across India. "The Government of India should

talk to Bangladesh to ensure that the guilty are punished," he said.

BJP MP from Assam's Darrang-Udaiguri Dilip Saikia also raised concerns over the situation in Bangladesh and urged the Government to strengthen security along the India-Bangladesh border.

"India wants peace to be restored in Bangladesh. India has a 4,096-kilometer border with Bangladesh," he said and added that security along the Indo-Bangladesh border should be as strong as that along the India-Pakistan border.

He also said the Indian Government should ensure that minorities are protected in Bangladesh. BJP MP from Andaman and Nicobar Islands Bishnu Pada Ray said, "My father came to West Bengal in 1946 from East Pakistan to save his life. Then he went to Andaman... What is happening in Bangladesh today..." "Congress, CPI(M) and TMC should condemn what is happening in Bangladesh. They are sitting quietly," he said and added that they are quiet due to their "votebank".

He also said that the Parliament should pass a resolution on the situation in Bangladesh.



Parliament adjourned sine die

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Both the houses of Parliament on Friday were adjourned sine die, one sitting ahead of the scheduled end of the session. The current session was scheduled to end on August 12. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House sine die (for an indefinite period). The Rajya Sabha was also adjourned sine die. During the session, the Finance Bill was passed. A Bill to amend the Waqf law was also introduced and referred to a joint committee of Parliament amid protests over its provisions. Birla said the productivity of the House was above 130 per cent.

After multiple adjournments in the post-lunch session, when the Upper House reassembled at 1530 hrs, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar expressed his concern over the manner in which Opposition members conducted themselves in and outside the house. He later adjourned the House sine die at 1554 hrs.

Parliament marks 82nd anniversary of Quit India Movement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Parliament on Friday commemorated the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India Movement, with Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha paying homage to the martyrs.

Both Houses stood in silence for a brief moment as a mark of respect for those who sacrificed their lives. Before the start of proceedings, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar recalled the historic day when Mahatma Gandhi launched the movement in 1942.

"Today marks the 82nd anniversary of the historic day when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement in 1942. His clarion call of 'do or die' ignited the nation and ultimately led Bharat gaining independence from colonial rule," Dhankhar said.

The Chairman highlighted the movement's continued relevance, describing it as a "testament to the power and will of the people and their determination to overcome any challenge." As India enters the 75th year of its Constitution's adoption, Dhankhar emphasized that the movement's foundational principles remain crucial in shaping the nation's destiny.

Modi assures BJP MPs on SC/ST reservation policy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A delegation of BJP MPs on Friday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and expressed concern over the Supreme Court's observation on identifying the creamy layer among the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Schedule Tribes (ST).

After the meeting, Modi said in a social media post, "Met a delegation of SC/ST MPs today. Reiterated our commitment and resolve for the welfare and empowerment of the SC/ST communities."

On August 1, Supreme Court Judge Justice B R Gavai had said States must evolve a policy for identifying the creamy layer even among the SCs and STs, and deny them the benefit of reservation. BJP Rajya Sabha member Sikander Kumar, who was part of the delegation, said "All of us were concerned over the Supreme Court's observation. We were getting phone calls from people expressing concern over the matter."

"A delegation of MPs representing SCs and STs met the Prime Minister this morning and expressed their concern in this connection," he said in the Parliament complex.



The Prime Minister held a serious discussion with the MPs and assured that the Government will not let the apex Court's observation be implemented, Kumar said. "We express our gratitude towards the prime minister for this," he said. BJP MP Faggan Singh Kulaste said the delegation in its memorandum to the Prime Minister urged that the apex Court's observation on the issue of creamy layer should not be implemented. "The Prime Minister was also held a similar view. He assured us that he will look into the matter and asked us not to worry, saying it will not be implemented in the SC and ST category," he told.



SC stays HC order on college ban on hijab

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday partly stayed a Mumbai college circular banning 'hijab, burqa, cap and naqaab' on the campus and said girl students must have the freedom to choose what they wear.

Educational institutions, it said, cannot force on them their choice.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar issued notice to the Chembur Trombay Education Society, which runs the 'N G Acharya and D K Marathe College', and sought its response by November 18.

"Girl students must have freedom of choice in what they are wearing and college cannot force them...It's unfortunate that you suddenly wake up to know that there are many religions in the country," the bench told the college administration at the centre of a fresh row over a dress code for Muslim students.

It added why the college did not ban 'tilak' and 'bindi' if it intended the religious faiths of the students to not be revealed.

"Will the students' names not reveal their religious identity?" the bench asked Senior Advocate Madhavi Diwan, appearing for the educational society.

The Court, however, said no burqa can be allowed to be worn by girls inside the classroom and no religious activities can be permitted on the campus.

The bench said its interim order should not be misused by anybody and granted liberty to the educational society and the college to approach the Court in case of any misuse.

The top Court was hearing a plea challenging a Bombay High Court verdict upholding the college's decision to ban hijab, burqa and naqaab inside the campus.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves and advocate Abiha Zaidi, appearing for the petitioners, including Zainab Abdul Qayyum, submitted that students were not able to attend classes because of the ban.

Bill introduced to expand bank nominees, safeguard depositors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Bill seeking to provide for four nominees by a bank account holder was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday to ensure better protection of depositors and enhance customer convenience.

Introduced by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in the Lower House, the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has a provision for simultaneous and successive nominations to bank accounts, lockers etc. As per the provision of the Bill, a bank account holder can nominate up to four persons. The Bill also seeks to transfer of unclaimed dividends, shares, and interest or redemption of bonds to the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF), allowing individuals to claim transfers or refunds from the fund, thus safeguarding investors' interests.

As the banking sector has evolved over the years and with a view to improving bank governance and investor protection, it has become necessary to make certain amendments to five Acts, according to Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill.

The Bill, which was approved by the Union Cabinet last week, proposes to amend the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the State Bank of India Act, 1955, the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970, and the Banking



Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980.

The proposed Bill seeks to improve governance standards, provide consistency in reporting by banks to the Reserve Bank of India, ensure better protection for depositors and investors, improve audit quality in public sector banks, bring customer convenience in respect of nominations and to provide for increase in the tenure of the directors in co-operative banks.

Therefore, it was felt necessary to amend the said enactments and for that purpose to introduce the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024 in Parliament. Another proposed change relates to redefining 'substantial interest' for directorships, which could increase to Rs 2 crore instead of the current limit of Rs 5 lakh, which was fixed almost six decades ago.

Congress member Manish Tewari opposed the introduction of the Bill saying the power to legislate with regard to cooperatives vests with State Governments. RSP member N K Premachandran opposed

amending five legislations through one Bill, while TMC member Saugata Roy termed the Bill "superfluous" saying the amendments proposed in the Bill could have been done through administrative decisions. Responding to Opposition's remarks, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the various amendments done in Banking Regulations Act with respect to cooperative banks are not just one or two but several.

"Simple understanding is we are not touching any aspect of the cooperatives other than that which claims under the name of banking. The sections which have been brought in for amendments, as also the Court verdicts, have repeatedly reinforced the point that Banking Regulation Act and the Cooperative Banks do have this relationship and therefore it has to be taken through this route," she said. Otherwise, there is no attempt to undermine the cooperatives, particularly cooperatives dealing with everything other than banks, she said defending the Bill.

The Bill proposes to increase the tenure of directors (excluding the Chairman and whole-time director) in cooperative banks from 8 years to 10 years, so as to align with the Constitution (Ninety-Seventh Amendment) Act, 2011. Once passed, the Bill would allow a director of a Central Cooperative Bank to serve on the board of a State Cooperative Bank.

Cong accuses RS chairman of partisanship, Opp walks out

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday accused Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar acting in a "partisan" manner against the entire Opposition. Soon after Opposition walked out of the Rajya Sabha protesting against what they termed as "unacceptable" tone and disrespect shown by Dhankhar, the Congress held a press conference to claim that the Chairman was not giving the Opposition the importance it deserves in the Upper House.

"Opposition parties feel that the Chairman's approach is partisan. The Rajya Sabha is a House that sets parameters for other legislatures. In that House, the Chairman should not be seen partisan. The Congress alone does not feel that way, all Opposition parties feel his behaviour is partial towards one side," Congress Leader Ajay Maken said at a press conference.

The Opposition is not getting the importance it deserves in the Upper House, he said. "If the Opposition's voice does not resonate in Rajya Sabha, where else will it resonate," he asked.

Congress' Deputy Leader in the Rajya Sabha Pramod Tiwari claimed that Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge is not allowed to speak, he is frequently interrupted and his microphones are often shut. "It is not about one party. Two-three days ago Ghanshyam Tiwari used such words for the Leader of Opposition which were not



right and were insulting and unacceptable. We had given notice for privilege motion. We wanted to know the ruling on it, the ruling has not come, it has to be in writing," he said.

Earlier, the Opposition walked out of the House, with Congress parliamentary party Sonia Gandhi and other senior leaders in tow. The walkout came after Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Bachchan and Vice President Dhankhar were engaged in a heated exchange in the Upper House.

"Main kalakar hoon, body language samajhti hoon, expression samajhti hoon... Par sir, mujhe maaf kariyega magar apka tone jo hai is not acceptable. We are colleagues sir, you may be sitting on the chair," she said.

Dhankhar hit back, saying, "Jaya ji, you've earned a great reputation. You know, an actor is subject to director. You've not seen what I see from here. I don't want schooling. I am a person who has gone out of the way, and you say my tone...enough of it."

After the walkout, Bachchan told reporters that she objected to the tone used by the Chair. "We are not school children. I was upset with the tone and especially when the

LoP stood up to speak, his mic was switched off. How can you do this? If he is not going to be heard in the House, then what are we doing? On top of that, every time (they are) using words which are unparliamentary," she said.

Congress General Secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh told reporters that Ghanshyam Tiwari had insulted the Leader of Opposition in the House in front of everybody.

"Today it was said that Ghanshyam Tiwari came and in a closed door meeting praised Kharge ji. So what he said privately, we demanded that he should say it in the House. He insulted Kharge ji, he should say that what I said was wrong and I respect him and by mistake I said what I said," Ramesh said.

"He (Chairman) keeps interrupting me, I have no objection to that but LoP is not allowed to speak. LoP has been insulted. The dignity of a constitutional post has been lowered. We are against this. Jaya Bachchan had gotten up for this issue only that the Leader of Opposition is being repeatedly insulted and not being allowed to speak," he said.

"Issue was that Tiwari made serious allegations against Kharge which we wanted wanted should be erased from records," he said. Addressing the Rajya Sabha, Bachchan, a Samajwadi Party MP, expressed her disapproval of Dhankhar's tone in the House which led to an exchange of words between the two.



Jaishankar updates LS on 69 Indians in Russian army

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said in the Lok Sabha the Government is awaiting the release of 69 Indians recruited into the Russian army and that in many cases there are indications that the Indian Nationals were misled into joining that country's army.

On action taken with respect to misleading of people and getting them recruited into the Russian army, the Minister told the house that the CBI has registered a criminal case against 19 individuals and entities while evidence has surfaced against 10 human traffickers whose identities the Government knows. Two of the accused were arrested on April 24 and two more on May 7.

"We should not jump the gun and say Russians are not serious on this matter. I think it is important to hold the Russian Government to their word and most important for us, we are not here to score points or enter into debates. We are here to get back those 69 people because Indian citizens should not be serving in the army of foreign countries," he said during the Question Hour. He was responding to queries from AIMIM member Asaduddin Owaisi on action being taken against individuals who are misleading youth to join the Russian army and whether India will stop buying discounted oil from Russia if it does not act on releasing Indians recruited into that country's army.

So far, the Minister said there are a total of 91 cases of Indian Nationals being recruited into the Russian army. Out of them, eight have passed away, 14 were discharged or in some manner have come back with the Government's assistance and "there are 69 Indian citizens awaiting release from the Russian army," he added. Out of the eight who died, the mortal remains of four have been sent back to India and in two cases one from Haryana and Punjab DNA samples have been sent to the Russian side.

Lucknow lab finds herbal way to manage gout

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant advancement in the management of gout, a prevalent form of arthritis affecting many, particularly those above 35, scientists from the Lucknow-based CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) have developed a herbal formulation to target the condition caused by elevated uric acid levels that leads to severe pain, swelling, and inflammation in joints, most commonly the big toe. Unlike many existing herbal products which lack rigorous scientific backing, 'NBRI-Gout Out', has undergone extensive testing.

Its efficacy has been evaluated through a range of in-vitro and in-vivo assays, demonstrating its effectiveness in reducing uric acid levels by 80 per cent and inflammatory mediators by about 70 per cent.

The herbal remedy is developed by Dr Ankita Misra under the mentorship of Dr. Sharad Srivastava (Chief Scientist and Head) at Pharmacognosy Division of CSIR-NBRI. It has been found synergistically efficacious in



gout/gouty arthritis, at par with standard drug colchicine. This highlights its potential as a reliable alternative or adjunct to conventional treatments.

"The bio-efficacy of combination was tested through a battery of in-vitro and in-vivo assays under the laboratory conditions and further, the safety and toxicity of NBRI-Gout out was also established in animal models. Studies showed a significant reduction in uric acid (80%) and about 70 per cent reduction in inflammatory

mediators, the primary causes underlying the pathogenesis of gout," said Dr Misra. Additionally, it showed a significant reduction in pain, and stiffness in joints and improved locomotion. It is completely water soluble with no solvent residue. The raw materials used are widely available in the herbal drug market and do not threaten biodiversity. The product has been developed in AYUSH mode and is cost-effective, and two companies have shown interest in

commercialization.

The herbal remedy can also be used as an adjuvant therapy along with existing line of treatment in gouty arthritis, gouty flare, prophylaxis cases and idiopathic cases having gout symptoms, she added.

"There are few herbal products available in the market specifically targeting gouty arthritis to address the problem. However, many of the existing products with claims like alleviating pain and inflammation of joints, lack scientific validation and are marketed, based on traditional claims only.

"Besides, the number of ingredients in existing products is also quite high. The problem could be addressed through the development of a natural plant-based supplement which can be used as an adjuvant therapy to the existing line of treatment for the management of conditions," said an official from the Union Science and Technology.

The CSIR-NBRI initiative was funded under the "Scheme for Young Scientists and Technologist", SEED Division of the Ministry.

Lightest bulletproof jacket unveiled



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed the Bullet Proof Jacket (BPJ) consisting of lightest Front Hard Armour Panel (FHAP), Minister of state for defence Sanjay Seth in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

Giving details, he said this jacket has been developed in two configuration viz. In-Conjunction-With (ICW) and Standalone with different areal density of FHAP.

Vinesh's Olympics exit echoes of Shiny 1986 heartbreak

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The whole of India is yet to recover from the shock disqualification of Vinesh Phogat from the 50 kg wrestling event in the Olympics being held at Paris. Notwithstanding the histrionics displayed by our politicians and "intellectuals" which was similar to adding insult to injury, there are many facts that remain undiscussed. In international events like Olympics, laws are not for breaking.

The judges are intransigent when it comes to rules and regulations. Questions like whether the Prime Minister would congratulate Vinesh Phogat are, to make it blunt, simply childish and premature. In the melee that followed a la Vinesh Phogat affair, our sporting organisations and followers of the game forgot an event that happened during the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul. (Thankfully, there were no private satellite TV news channels dishing out cacophony round the clock). Shiny Wilson, an ace athlete from Kerala who reigned supreme in the 800 meter race was participating in the event



and was on her way to set a new Asian record. She was well ahead of all other contestants when she inadvertently cut into the inner lane, which was an error and mistake. Though there were no runners anywhere near Shiny, the organizers disqualified her. The entire nation was shocked and the entire news rooms across the country were stunned. But there were no political discourse and channel discussions as sports had not degenerated into the level which we saw when Vinesh Phogat was disqualified. No prime minister or sports minister rang her up to

console her. Shiny had courage in her and she was not the kind who ran away from battlefield. In the Asian Track and Field Events of 1989 she won her favorite item with a gold medal. The story is not yet over. Within months of her having a baby, Shiny ran the 800 meters in a career best time of 1 minute 59.85 seconds in the New Delhi edition of South Asian Federation Games in 1995 and raced with the gold medal to cuddle her baby. The saying during those days was that Shiny ran better and faster after the child birth. Vinesh Phogat, are you reading this?

'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative now mass movement: Maha CM

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday said the Centre's 'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative has become a mass movement and invokes a spirit of nationalism and patriotism among the younger generation. Launching the campaign at the August Kranti Maidan in south Mumbai on the occasion of the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India movement, Shinde said the national flag will be hoisted at 2.5 crore houses, offices and commercial establishments in the state. "The Har Ghar Tiranga initiative which started three years ago has turned into a mass movement. It evokes a sense of nationalism and patriotism among the younger generation," he said. The campaign which began on Friday will continue till August 15, he added. People are encouraged to display the national flag at their homes and other establishments during the run up to the Independence Day on August 15 as part of the



'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign. "The Quit India call given from the August Kranti Maidan was the final struggle for independence and the new generation should be made aware of the sacrifices of the freedom fighters," Shinde said. Programmes like 'Tiranga March' and felicitation of freedom fighters will be held across the state, he said. On the occasion, Shinde administered a pledge to citizens that they will hoist the national flag in their homes, and also flagged off a cyclathon and a padyatra (foot march) of students and youth. Shinde paid floral tributes to martyrs at the August Kranti Maidan to mark the 82nd anniversary of the Quit India movement.

Andhra CM promises to uplift tribals through all-round development

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday greeted the tribal community on the occasion of World Tribal Day here and promised to empower them through development on fronts such as education and health. The Chief Minister said his government will explore all possibilities to raise the income of tribal people. "On this World Tribal Day, I not only extend my greetings to all of you but with a definite plan, I will take the responsibility to develop tribal people," said Naidu, addressing a large gathering at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram. Noting that the per capita income of tribal people in the state was only Rs 1.25 lakh per annum, the CM said the government would focus on this aspect to enhance it. Assuring to promote tribal products, which include organic agricultural produce, Naidu said the state government will use the Centre's Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform for this purpose. He



observed that ONDC can enable tribals from villages to directly sell their products to consumers in cities such as Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Referring to GI-tagged Araku coffee, cultivated in the southern state, the CM said steps would be taken to promote it. Pointing to the absence of proper infrastructure in tribal villages, Naidu said Rs 2,373 crore will be spent to supply tap water to over 16,000 tribal homes while roads will be laid in 2,191 hamlets without road connectivity. He also promised to build the necessary infrastructure for the community to get access to medical facilities.

Students strip-searched in school: HC issues notice to MP Govt

PTI ■ INDORE

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Friday issued a notice to the state government in connection with an incident in a school in Indore where some students were allegedly strip-searched by a teacher to find out who among them brought a mobile phone to class. Justices Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Duppla Venkata Ramana of the Indore bench of MP HC issued notice to the state government on a PIL filed by social activist Chinmoy Mishra. The notice sought a report within a week from the state government on the steps taken in connection with the alleged incident. During the hearing, Mishra's lawyer Abhinav Dhanodkar claimed Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act provisions have not been complied with in the case as yet, though parents filed a police complaint on August 2.

Gujarat Congress launches 'Nyay Yatra' for victims of major tragedies in State



PTI ■ MORBI (GUJARAT)

The Gujarat Congress on Friday launched a 14-day 'Nyay Yatra', a foot march, here to seek justice for the victims of four major tragedies that took place in the BJP-ruled state over the last five years. The Bharatiya Janata Party was shielding the real culprits of these incidents including the recent Rajkot game zone fire, it alleged. Congress Legislative Party leader in the assembly Amit Chavda, Seva Dal president Lalji Desai and MLA Jignesh Mevani launched the campaign. The march will cover nearly 350 kilometers before reaching Gandhinagar on August 23, said party spokesperson Manish Doshi. Family members of the deceased from these tragedies -- 2019 Takshashila fire incident in Surat, Morbi bridge collapse of 2022, and this year's Vadodara boat capsizing incident and TRP game zone fire in Rajkot -- will join the Yatra, he said. Mevani said that nearly 200 people died in these incidents

due to the rampant corruption under the BJP government. "We are taking out this Nyay Yatra because people do not trust ongoing investigations. Victims of Morbi bridge collapse demand that the probe be conducted by the CBI, or some non-corrupt officers. We will get justice the day all the real culprits, be it IAS, IPS officers, businessmen or BJP leaders, are behind bars," said the MLA who is the working president of Gujarat Congress. "We demand that all the cases be tried in fast-track courts. The kin of the victims must get a minimum compensation of Rs 1.5 crore because the compensation of Rs 4 lakh is too meagre. The Morbi Nagarpalika office-bearers should be booked for murder," Mevani added. On July 6, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had visited Ahmedabad and met the family members of some of the victims, promising to raise their grievances in Parliament.

Mizoram, Assam hold border talks after 20 months

PTI ■ AIZAWL

Mizoram and Assam discussed the border issues on Friday, twenty months after the two northeastern neighbours held a meeting to find an amicable solution to the inter-state boundary dispute, an official said. The meeting between delegations of both states is being held in Aizawl. The two states held the last round of talks in November 2022 in Guwahati. During Friday's meeting, the Assam delegation is led by Border Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora while the Mizoram side is headed by Home Minister

K Sapdanga, the official said. This is the fourth ministerial-level talks between the two neighbouring states since August 2021 and the first meeting after the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) came to power in December last year. Three Mizoram districts - Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit - share a 164.6 km border with Assam's Cachar, Karmganj and Hailakandi districts. The dispute mainly stemmed from two colonial demarcations - 1875 and 1933. Mizoram claims that 509 square miles area of the inner line reserved forest, notified in 1875 under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation



(BEFR) 1873, falls within its territory. Assam, on the other hand, regarded the map prepared by the Survey of India in 1933 as its constitutional boundary. Vast areas within the inner line reserved forest now fall

under Assam. Similarly, a certain extent of the area, as per the 1933 demarcation line, is now on the Mizoram side. There is no ground demarcation of boundaries between the two states.

Gujarat Govt school teacher remains on payroll despite settling in US in 2016; probe ordered

PTI ■ PALANPUR

The Gujarat government has ordered a probe against a government schoolteacher who allegedly settled in the US and remaining absent from duty for nearly eight years, an official said on Friday. The in-charge principal of a primary school in Panchha village in Banaskantha district claimed the teacher, Bhavna Patel, has been on the school's payroll despite reporting to duty only for a month every year and going on

unauthorised leave as she lives in the US. On learning about the principal's allegations, Gujarat Education Minister Kuber Dindor ordered a probe. Talking to reporters, Dindor said, "I have ordered an inquiry and sought a report from district officials. We do not allow such practice. If found guilty of unauthorised absence, we will punish the teacher and recover the salary she was paid." Minister of State for Education Praful Pansheriya asserted that the teacher had

not been paid since January. "She is one of 11 teachers in Danta taluka of Banaskantha. As per a primary report submitted by officials, she has been taking leaves at regular intervals. However, the report clearly stated that she has not been paid a single rupee since January. We will take action if she is found guilty of availing any other benefits despite living abroad," Pansheriya said. The issue came to the fore after Parul Mehta, the in-charge principal of the school, informed local media that despite settling in the US in

2016, Patel continues to be on the payroll. "Bhavnaven Patel settled in the US in 2016. But, to ensure her service continues, she comes to school once a year and serves for a month. This has been going on for several years. Children are suffering because of her long absence. She should either resign or join duty," Mehta told reporters. She also shared a letter dated July 18, wherein she urged District Education Officer Vinubhai Patel to take action against the teacher, who will retire in 2027.

Assam ex-BJP MLA Sarma joins Congress

PTI ■ NALBARI

Former BJP MLA Ashok Sarma on Friday joined Congress along with hundreds of his supporters. At a joining programme here, the senior BJP leader took the membership of Congress in the presence of its deputy leader in Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi, state president Bhupen Kumar Borah, Leader of the Opposition Debabrata Saikia along with AICC leaders Prithviraj Sathe and Vikas Upadhyay. "On this day, the Quit India movement started to get Independence from the British. I chose this day to join the Congress in recognition of the sacrifice made by the party and its leaders," Sarma said, addressing the huge crowd. He said it was a tough decision to join the Congress as his family, including all three brothers and two sisters, was associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). "My political existence was at stake in the BJP. The party's arrogance to destroy Congress was also not well accepted by common party workers. After Himanta Biswa Sarma joined the BJP, the downfall started. Because of such an attitude, Congress will form a government again next time," he claimed. During the Congress regime in Assam, the society was never divided and it was also



not so during former CM Sarbananda Sonowal's tenure, he added. "However, we are seeing only Hindu-Muslim politics in the last three years. I do not agree with the politics of division in society," Sarma said. Along with him, scores of Nalbari district BJP leaders and workers also joined the Congress. Borah said, "We are really happy to welcome Sarma into the Congress. We are happy that this joining programme is taking place at the Nalbari Congress office and we are not able to accommodate the supporters. It shows our growing popularity." Gogoi said Sarma's joining Congress will create a "tremor" in BJP in lower Assam districts and more leaders will come to the opposition party in coming months.

Centre withdraws ₹66 cr sanctioned for Mizoram border road project

PTI ■ AIZAWL

The Centre has withdrawn Rs 66 crore initially sanctioned for the construction of a border road between Sangau and Saisihchhuah, intended to connect south Mizoram's Lawngtlai district with Myanmar's Chin state, Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar said on Friday. In a written reply to a question from Mizoram's Rajya Sabha member K. Vanlalvena in Parliament, Majumdar said the Rs 66.08-crore border road project was sanctioned in February 2021 and was to be executed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), a release by the state's Information and Public Relations Department said. "The sanctioned amount for the project was withdrawn by the Centre as the state government failed to provide the required land free of cost by June this year," Majumdar,

the Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), was quoted as saying in the statement. The Minister also mentioned that the Sangau-Saisihchhuah road project has now been incorporated into the Thingsai to Pangkhua-Sangau road project under General Staff (GS) funding of the BRO scheme. In another response, Majumdar, who also holds the Education portfolio, informed Parliament that the Centre has sanctioned Rs 669.75 crore for the construction of a permanent campus for the National Institute of Technology (NIT) at Lengpui, near Aizawl. He added that the government is taking steps to obtain the necessary forest clearance for the project. Majumdar noted that the first academic session of NIT in Mizoram began in 2010, and the institution currently has 668 students.

Post-Wayanad, Goa reactivates disaster management committee

PTI ■ PANAJI

In light of the recent landslides in Kerala that claimed more than 200 lives, the Goa government has reactivated its high-level committee on disaster management, making ground-level revenue officials responsible for reporting illegal hill cutting. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Friday chaired a high-level meeting of the state disaster management committee, for which state Revenue Minister Atanasio Monserrate and other high-ranking officials at Porvorim were present. Talking to reporters after the meeting, Sawant said the state government has woken up after the Wayanad landslide, reviving its machinery to prevent such incidents in Goa. Goa shares Sahyadri Hill ranges with Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra. Sawant said the committee will now be called the state disaster management



authority, with dedicated officers working around the year. He recalled landslides in Sattari taluka inside the forests of Satrem, Karanzol and Mauxi villages in 2022 and said the committee formed to probe the incident had concluded that it happened due to heavy rains and deforestation. The chief minister said minor landslides have been reported in Bardez, Mormugao, Sattari, Bicholim, Pernem and Salcette talukas in the last few years. The committee will identify landslide-prone areas, he said. The main focus would be on the areas on the foothills, and

the committee has the power to immediately stop hill-cutting if they find that it could be dangerous to people living in the vicinity. Sawant said another committee comprising mamlatdars (local revenue officers), zonal agriculture officers and range forest officers will monitor the situation in their respective areas. Guidelines would be issued to the revenue, forest, town and country planning, public works department, panchayat and urban development departments, which will not allow construction in no development zones and eco-sensitive areas, he said.

Tripura VHP unit urges Centre to ensure safety of Hindus in trouble-torn Bangladesh

PTI ■ AGARTALA

The Tripura unit of Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) has urged the Centre to ensure the safety of Hindu families living in Bangladesh in the wake of the unrest in the neighbouring country. "Since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina's government in Bangladesh, the minority Hindu community is being targeted, with miscreants looting and setting fire to their homes and businesses," Sankar Roy, VHP Tripura Prantika Mantri, told a press conference here on Friday. Roy alleged that the majority community has been threatening Hindus, asking them to leave the country while also attempting to violate the dignity of Hindu women. "We are in contact with the VHP's central leadership. They have informed us that the unrest in Bangladesh is an international issue. They are pressuring the Indian government to ensure the



safety of Hindu lives and properties in Bangladesh," he said. He called on the Centre to take up the issue with the new regime in Dhaka and ensure that Hindus are not attacked or forced to leave their country. Earlier, Tripura Motha supremo Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma expressed concern over the vandalism of the 135-year-old Maharaja Bir Chandra Library in Comilla, Bangladesh, by hooligans who burned books and historical records.

Goods train derailed in mountainous South Goa

PTI ■ PANAJI

A goods train derailed in a mountainous region of South Goa bordering Karnataka on Friday morning, affecting the movement of trains on the South Western Railway (SWR) route, officials said. The train with 17 loaded wagons derailed in the ghat section between Sonalium and Dudhsagar stations under the Hubballi division at 9.35 am, SWR's chief public relation officer Manjunath Kanamadai said. As a result of the derailment, three trains were diverted and two others were cancelled, he said in a release. Accident relief trains with 140-ton cranes and other required materials have been dispatched to the site and restoration work was underway, he said. Due to the derailment, train number 17420/17022 Vasco Da Gama-Tirupati/Hyderabad weekly express, has been diverted.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Reaching out

PM Modi congratulates Muhammad Yunus, expresses concerns over the plight of minorities in Bangladesh

Gender rights and reality: Bridging the gap



GURDEEP KAUR

Gender equality in India remains a distant dream, as deep-rooted gender norms continue to impede the nation's progress towards women emancipation

Gender equality is not just a fundamental human right but a crucial component of a peaceful, cohesive, and sustainable world. It demands equal opportunities, treatment, and access to resources for all individuals, regardless of gender. Historically, women have faced discrimination on multiple fronts, from limited educational opportunities to restricted participation in decision-making processes. However, after years of struggle, women today have made significant strides, becoming prominent members of the workforce and key decision-makers in various fields. This progress aligns with the goals set by 193 countries that signed the Beijing Platform for Action, the most comprehensive global plan to eliminate systemic barriers and achieve women's human rights across social, economic, political, and environmental domains.

Since the adoption of the Beijing Platform, much has been achieved. Women now serve as heads of state, entrepreneurs, educators, scientists, judges, and administrators, excelling in many unconventional careers. This paints a promising picture of the progress toward gender equality. However, a closer examination of statistics from government reports, non-governmental organizations, and local surveys reveals a grim reality: significant challenges remain. This is particularly true in India, a country where women have historically been revered as goddesses and have played crucial roles as scholars, rulers, and warriors. Despite this rich history, modern India continues to struggle with deeply entrenched gender inequalities. India, in the 21st century, is a country with progressive laws and robust institutions rooted in its Constitution. The Indian Constitution, one of the world's finest legal documents, guarantees equal rights for men and women. Rights such as personal liberty, freedom of speech and expression, free movement and association, and the freedom to choose one's residence and occupation all imply that Indian women, like



men, have the right to make decisions about their personal and professional lives. However, these constitutional rights do not always translate into practice, especially in rural areas, where customary and religious laws often override legal protections. In rural India, where a significant percentage of the population resides, gender equality remains elusive. Here, rigid customary practices contribute to a skewed sex ratio, early marriages, and limited educational opportunities for women. Women are often married off at a young age, without receiving proper education or being informed about their rights. Even when they are aware of their rights, they frequently lack access to opportunities for personal and professional growth. Legislation like the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PNDT) Act has helped improve the sex ratio in India, but the harsh reality remains that many women face discrimination in basic survival needs. In many families, women and girls eat last and least, while boys and men are given nutritionally rich diets. Women who cook for their families often do not cook for themselves, and from a young age, they are conditioned to prioritize the needs and preferences of men. The average age at which an Indian woman



ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF PERSONAL FREEDOM IS THE ABILITY TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER ONE'S BODY AND SEXUALITY. SADLY, THE RIGHT TO MAKE CHOICES ABOUT INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS, WHETHER OR WHEN TO HAVE A CHILD, AND THE USE OF CONTRACEPTION IS STILL DENIED TO MANY WOMEN IN INDIA

has her first child is 22 years, but in rural areas, this age is often much lower, with many girls married off before they turn 18. These young women are not physically or mentally prepared to handle the responsibilities of marriage and family life, making them vulnerable to physical, sexual, and verbal abuse for perceived failures in their duties. In urban households, gender stereotypes are beginning to shift, with men taking on more household chores. However, they are not held to the same standards of diligence and regularity as women. Most women, regardless of age, class, caste, or community, remain vulnerable to domestic violence for reasons as trivial as poorly prepared meals or wearing a dress of their choice—issues that men rarely face. One of the most fundamental aspects of personal freedom is the ability to exercise control over one's body and sexuality. Sadly, the right to make choices about intimate relationships, whether or when to have a child, and the use of contraception is still denied to many women in India. According to a survey, a significant percentage of women aged 18-49 have experienced forced sex or sexual abuse at least once in their lives. This gendered expression of power has severe consequences for the mental

and emotional well-being of women, who are often reluctant to share their ordeals. Despite advancements in healthcare, many Indian women do not enjoy the right to health. In conservative settings, cultural norms discourage men from addressing the health needs of their female family members, and women themselves often do not recognize or report health issues. The presence of male doctors in rural areas further restricts women from undergoing necessary examinations and checkups. The literacy gap between men and women in India remains significant, particularly in rural areas where deeply entrenched gender norms discourage girls from pursuing education. Girls are often pushed into work at a much earlier age than boys, with little or no control over their earnings. Even in urban settings, working women are often not financially independent, either bearing the burden of family expenses or having no say in how their money is spent. Achieving gender equality in India requires a fundamental shift in attitudes among both men and women. Only through such changes can the goal of true gender equality be realized. (The writer is assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, DU; views are personal)



which makes up about 8-10% of the population are worst hit. Recent reports have indicated a surge in attacks on Hindu temples, businesses, and homes, triggering fear and insecurity within the community. Prime Minister Modi's outreach to Yunus can be seen as a calculated move to engage with a respected figure in Bangladesh who has international credibility and influence. By engaging with Yunus, Modi may be signalling India's support for democratic values and human rights in Bangladesh, while also voicing concerns about the security and well-being of the Hindu community. India is at the moment in a quandary. It has all along supported Sheikh Hasina and continues to do so but

things have changed drastically. Sheikh Hasina is now unpopular while her opponents are all powerful. She may be called to join the investigation against her which may put India in dilemma. The silver lining is that Yunus is now in command, and he is widely regarded as an honorable man with an impeccable track record, even though he is an outsider in the corridors of power. He is India's best bet as China and Pakistan who have allegedly supported the movement to oust Hasina would like to subvert Indo Bangladesh relationship. He could be persuaded to be neutral. The political instability and potential for communal violence could lead to a refugee crisis, with many Hindus and other minorities seeking asylum in India. This could complicate India's domestic political landscape, especially in the bordering states of West Bengal and Assam. Meanwhile, the trade with Bangladesh has already nose-dived and the refugee crisis is growing. Bangladesh is a key partner in maintaining security in the Bay of Bengal region. This is a time for serious diplomacy. Prime Minister Modi would do well to engage with Muhammad Yunus at the earliest opportunity. While Twitter diplomacy is a good starting point, it needs to be followed up with direct engagement. A lot is at stake for India in Bangladesh's future direction.

PICTALK



Military aircrafts during the multinational air exercise 'Tarang Shakti 2024', in Sullur

PTI

The role of technology in driving financial literacy



YUVRAJ A THAKKAR

With the power to democratise financial literacy, it can bring people from every stratum of society onto a level playing field

Financial literacy is no longer just a useful skill. It is now essential knowledge required to traverse the modern economic landscape. Studies have shown financially literate individuals can use their money wisely to plan for a secure future. Today, technology is an important enabler of access to resources required to cultivate financial literacy, democratise the sector, and empower people to improve their lives. However, despite the increasing penetration of the Internet and technology, a 2021 survey found only 27% of Indians are financially literate. Furthermore, only 16.7% of students have a general understanding of finances. With India projected to become one of, if not the leading, global economies by 2030, our society must be educated on the best practices for handling funds and making smart financial decisions. Online platforms such as YouTube, Skillshare, Udemy, and others are invaluable tools in the pursuit of



knowledge. YouTube has tutorials and explanations for practically every subject under the sun. Not only does it boast a vast catalogue, but everything on the site is free to access. This is a critical requirement in India where the common man is looking to save as much money as possible. Channels such as Khan Academy are great starting points for everyone's financial literacy journey. It's not just about breaking down complex information. While the concepts should be easy to understand, the modules must also be presented engagingly to retain the person's interest. No one enjoys being lectured with a barrage of informa-

tion in a boring manner. Social media and digital channels have also made it easier for educators and financial experts to share information. Instagram, TikTok, and X are now filled with financial gurus offering their opinions on the latest economic trends, up-and-coming investment opportunities, and the state of the global economy. Keep in mind that advice from such channels shouldn't be taken at face value. But they do offer a macro perspective of the economy and break down complex information into easily digestible pieces. Advancing technology also allows financial institutions such as banks and NBFCs to offer financial literacy directly to their customers. Bank apps can utilise push notifications, pop-ups, bank representatives, and even AI avatars to offer pertinent and timely advice. NBFCs can leverage subscription services to reach out to their customers via messengers to advise them on how to manage funds effectively. Artificial intelligence is going to significant-

ly improve access to and delivery of financial literacy. With just a smartphone, one can access tools such as ChatGPT to help answer common questions regarding finances. While it should not be used to gain investment advice, the current models of AI tools can offer practical knowledge regarding financial literacy and point the curious reader towards additional sources to gain more knowledge. It's no wonder that AI in BFSI is expected to hit a whopping \$100 billion by 2032. Technology is a powerful tool in the hands of those with an understanding of how to use it. With the power to democratise financial literacy, it can bring people from every stratum of society onto a level playing field. However, as technology evolves, so must we to enjoy the benefits of its advancement. This is a crucial step not just for society but also for our personal and financial well-being. (The writer is a MD at StoxBox; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A COURT IS A COURT

Madam — The special feature of Indian judiciary is the relative non-interference in its functioning from either the executive or the legislature. Also, the hierarchical system of judiciary has ensured that no litigant goes unsatisfied with a particular court's verdict. The Supreme Court has time and again reiterated that no court in the country is above another. Besides, the SC has made it clear that although its judgments are binding on every court in India under Article 141 of the Constitution, the High Courts are in no way inferior to it because the former's administrative control is independent of the top court. SC has consistently refused to direct High Courts to clear cases in a time bound manner for the same reason. Justice Abhay Oka of the SC, during the course of a hearing, had succinctly remarked that "a court is a court". Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, in 2022, had decried the tendency to refer to the district courts as subordinate judiciary because there was no definition of the word "subordinate" although the world is frequently used in the Constitution. Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

VINESH PHOGAT HAS BEEN WRONGED

Madam — In an unfortunate turn of events, Vinesh was disqualified from a crucial Olympic match due to a minor weight discrepancy, sparking outrage and disappointment across the nation. This incident, which resulted in the loss of a potential medal for India, raises serious questions about the handling and management of the situation by the coaches and officials. Vinesh Phogat, who had successfully won three bouts in a single day, found herself disqualified just 24 hours after her semi-final victory. The controversy stems from the fact that it is highly improbable for an experienced athlete like Vinesh to gain 100 grams of weight in such a short period, leading many to suspect foul play. This suspicion casts a shadow over the transparency and fairness of the Olympic Games, prompting Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Economics should not be politicised



This refers to the editorial "Finance Minister yields" (Aug 8). Facing a backlash from the people, Members within NDA and the Opposition over changes to the property transaction taxation, the Finance Minister has given some concession to home owners, by way of two options. The tax payers can now choose to calculate their tax on long term capital gains either at 12.5% without indexation under the new scheme or at 20% with indexation under the old scheme. This is akin to income tax options. She

also stated in her speech on reduction in the income tax on annual income of Rs. 15 lakh. But the budget is not only taxes, it deals with development of the people as well as the country. People are burdened with high GST rates and fuel prices, no relief in them as they have cascading effect on overall inflation, which affects the poor most. On one hand government provides free ration & electricity to poor, on the other hand they are burdened with high taxes which nullify the former. FM did not mention about decreasing the fiscal deficit, decreasing the borrowings, increasing foreign investment in the country, boosting employment generation, rationalizing the freebies & subsidies that are affecting economy etc. which are equally important components of a budget. Development of the country should be the high priority in the budget and it should not be compromised by keeping people happy. Dr O Prasad Rao | Hyderabad

to urge the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President, P.T. Usha, to explore every possible avenue to ensure that justice is served for Vinesh. There is also a need to investigate whether Vinesh was unknowingly given a weight-gain substance during the 24 hours between the semi-final and the final weigh-in, as a similar incident reportedly happened to another wrestler from a different country. These concerns raise serious questions about the integrity and transparency of the Olympic Games' management. While human error is possible in such a vast sporting event, the circumstances surrounding Vinesh Phogat's disqualification do not appear to fall into the category of innocent mistakes. If it is determined that Vinesh was wronged, India should strongly consider appealing the decision. Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

BANGLADESH: A WARNING FOR INDIA

Madam — Bangladesh, which had seemed politically stable for the past 15 years under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, is now showing signs of distress. Hasina's extended

tenure, while initially successful, has led to growing concerns about her increasingly autocratic behavior. This shift has resulted in the imprisonment of political opponents and numerous legal battles against figures like Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, who gained significant popularity for his work with Grameen Bank. Could similar public discontent emerge in India? The government's actions, particularly over the past two terms, have shown tendencies toward authoritarianism. This has been evident in the public backlash against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), prolonged farmer protests against agricultural reforms, and discontent among youth over the Agniveer recruitment scheme. Rising inflation, unemployment, and corruption, coupled with selective legal actions against opposition members, contribute to a growing sense of frustration. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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FIRST COLUMN

DO NOT LET SKY BE YOUR LIMIT

Stay resilient in the face of adversity, and you'll find that there's no limit to what you can achieve



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

In the realm of corporate success, there is a fundamental truth: the sky is not your limit, but merely the starting point. With a powerful drive and unwavering determination, ambition propels you to surpass all perceived boundaries. Just like a high-performance engine, achieving your dreams requires proper focus and direction. Today, we all have unique goals and dreams, both in our personal lives and careers. Nevertheless, the journey from having a vision to making it a reality can be challenging and draining. It calls for unwavering dedication, relentless effort, and occasionally, the need to ignore those who doubt you. In our business environment, having a strong drive and steadfast determination is not just a cliché, but a crucial factor in setting ambitious goals and relentlessly striving for excellence. We must connect these grand aspirations to careful planning, unwavering commitment, and consistent hard work. Only then will the aspiration reveal its magic. Many times, the biggest obstacles we face are a result of the actions of others.

There will always be those who view our dreams as unattainable or doubt our abilities. It's crucial to remember that our potentials are not defined by external voices. Throughout history, countless individuals have faced ridicule and scepticism, only to prove their doubters wrong ultimately. The proper environment can truly make a difference in our pursuit of success. It is an environment that fosters growth by providing opportunities to use our skills and allow-



ing for energetic and unwelcome ambition, which drives change and advancement. Surround yourself with mentors and peers who share your vision and are there to support you on your journey. Embrace growth opportunities and always value the feedback of others to refine your approach. Equally crucial is the art of expressing our goals. Make sure to communicate your goals and progress with both supervisors and colleagues. It's important to keep everyone in the loop and stay motivated.

When you openly express your aspirations and the steps you're taking to achieve them, not only do you attract valuable encouragement, but you also establish a sense of personal responsibility. However, the true basis of ambition stems from the constant trust within oneself. It is important to have a strong belief in your abilities and to acknowledge the unique qualities that you bring to the table. Recognising and celebrating the small victories along your journey to greater success is crucial. Embrace challenges as chances to grow and learn.

Stay resilient in the face of setbacks. Ambition is a potent force. When properly harnessed, it has the potential to unlock remarkable outcomes. Despite facing obstacles and encountering negativity, you will always choose to embrace a positive mindset. And getting encouragement from prominent individuals will help you hugely achieve your goals.

After all, everyone deserves a chance to shine. So set the bar high, work, and let the ambition catapult you to new heights. The sky is not the limit in the corporate world; it is just the beginning of your journey toward success.

(The author is a freelance writer and a motivator; views are personal)

Bangladesh: Uncertainty and chaos grip the nation



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

As the nation grapples with a rising wave of Islamist extremism and escalating violence, the future of its democracy and regional stability hangs in the balance



The turmoil in Bangladesh, which led to Sheikh Hasina's resignation as prime minister and departure to India, raises two questions.

Why could she not prevent it? What lies ahead for Bangladesh and India? She should have reached out to the students-trying to win over the bulk of them who are moderates, and isolating the Islamist fundamentalist extremists—before their Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement (ADSM), had snowballed. She could have argued that her government did away with 30 per cent reservation for the descendants of the freedom fighters of the 1971 liberation war in 2018, which was their demand to start with. Bangladesh's High Court restored it following a petition by several descendants. Indeed, her government had appealed to the Supreme Court against the High Court's order.

In fact, the appellate division of the Supreme Court had, on July 21, 2024, ordered the allocation of 93% of government jobs on the basis of merit, reserving five per cent for freedom fighters and their descendants, and one per cent each for tribes, the differentially abled and sexual minorities. There could have been two reasons for the agitation continuing even after that. First, the rancour created by the government's harsh response to the agitation, which had led to a large number of deaths of students and others, was too great for the students to call a halt. They now wanted Sheikh Hasina's resignation. Second, Islamist terrorist organisations like Ansar al-Islam, linked to Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), as well as the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJE) and its students' wing, Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir (BICS), closely tied to them, had joined the movement and tried to steer it to serve their own agenda—ousting Hasina and the Awami League Government, and installing a fundamentalist Islamist and pathologically anti-India dispensation in its place.

Sheikh Hasina knew all this, and should also have known the convulsive impact students' movement has in Bangladesh on at least four occasions. The first was the language



STUDENTS ALSO PLAYED A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE AGAINST PAKISTAN'S COLONIAL RULE, WHICH EXPLAINS THE PAKISTAN ARMY'S SAVAGE ATTACKS ON THE CAMPUS AND HOSTELS OF DHAKA AND OTHER UNIVERSITIES ON THE NIGHT OF ITS NOTORIOUS CRACKDOWN

movement which demanded that Bengali along with Urdu, and not the latter alone, should become Pakistan's official language, and not Urdu alone, which Pakistan's ruling establishment, based in West Pakistan, wanted. Defying police repression, the movement peaked on February, 21, 1952, when there was a country-wide general strike. Police firing led to the deaths of four students, whose names—Rafiq, Barkat, Jabbar and Salam—shine prominently in Bangladesh's martyrs' pantheon. The movement continued to swell and compelled Pakistan's acceptance of both Bengali and Urdu as the country's official language. Again, students were at the forefront of the movement against General Ayub Khan's coup in 1958 and establishment of a military dictatorship, whose character could not be disguised by the fraudulent representative government introduced on March 23, 1962.

Students also played a prominent role in the liberation struggle against Pakistan's colonial rule, which explains the Pakistan Army's savage attacks on the campus and hostels of Dhaka and other universities on the night of its notorious crackdown, codenamed Operation Searchlight, killing hundreds of students, on the night of March 25, 1971. Finally, there was the massive Shahbag Square movement in Dhaka (February-May 2013) demanding death penalty to the war criminals of 1971. The government agreed to move the International Crimes Tribunal, set up by an amendment in 2009 to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, to investigate and prosecute personnel of the Pakistan Army and Razakars, Al-Badr and Al-Shams, accused of committing genocide during the 1971 liberation war.

Given all this, Hasina should have

tried to diffuse the latest movement at the beginning. Be that as it may, what now in Bangladesh? What should India do now? Things do not look good. Hindu temples, including the emblematic Dhakeshwari temple, from which Dhaka derives its name, have been attacked and vandalised. Hindu shops, business establishments and homes, have been attacked, a Hindu municipal councillor aligned with the Awami League, has been killed. Many have been injured. Women have been assaulted.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's statues have been pulled down and/or vandalised. Awami League ministers, leaders and activists are under attack, as are many of their homes and establishments. In Khulna, three persons, including an Awami League functionary, Mohsin Reza, have been lynched. Film producer Selim Khan, who made a movie on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's life, has been murdered along with his son, Shanto Khan. A hotel owned by an Awami League politician was set ablaze, causing 24 deaths, in Jashore. The house of Mashrafe Mortaza, Awami League MP and former Bangladesh test cricketer, has been destroyed.

These are just a few instances indicating the kind of open season that has been declared on the minorities, supporters of the Awami League and civil society elements opposed to Islamist fundamentalists. The question is whether things will improve or become worse. Much would depend on whether the interim government, headed by Nobel laureate, Muhammad Yunus, is able to establish order, or whether supporters of the BJE, BICS and Ansar al-Islam, who are behind the current violence along with sections of Begum Khaleda Zia-led Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), are contained or allowed to escalate their campaign of vio-

lence and terror.

Yunus is neither a fundamentalist nor known for his pathological hatred for India. The backgrounds of some of his colleagues, however, raise questions. The Army's role is of critical importance. The report that it is being purged of those perceived to be pro-Sheikh Hasina, should worry those who want a peaceful, democratic and tolerant Bangladesh. Looking beyond the interim government, of critical importance is how free and fair are the parliamentary elections, that would have to be held now that Bangladesh's national parliament has been dissolved.

New Delhi is rightly watchful. The BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government ruling Bangladesh from 2001 to 2006, was pathologically hostile to India and actively sheltered and armed the secessionist groups active in the north-eastern parts of this country. A hostile Bangladesh, engaged in a repeat performance, is not what New Delhi wants.

Meanwhile, External Affairs' Minister, S. Jaishankar, has said that he does not rule out the machinations of a foreign hand behind the Bangladesh developments. Given his official position, he has to be circumspect with his words. But it is prima facie clear that Pakistan's ISI, and perhaps even China, have been involved.

Pakistan, which is having serious problems with the Taliban which it had once wet-nursed, and China, which has its troubles with Islamists, should remember William S. Baring-Gould's limerick, "There was a young lady of Rigal/ Who went for a ride on a tiger/ They returned from the ride/ With the lady inside/ And a smile on the face of the tiger."

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

Integrative health approaches for mental wellbeing

The road to mental well being doesn't have to be paved with pills alone; sometimes, it is as simple as finding our breath and practicing Yoga

There is enough scientific evidence to validate that the mind, body, and soul are interconnected on a subtle level. This connection influences our thoughts and emotions, hence, our physical reality and our physical state impact our mental health and processes.

True health is signified by a harmonious balance between mind and body. Even a minor imbalance can lead to a range of issues, from physical illnesses and mental health challenges to a sense of unfulfillment with oneself and life. As per the WHO, nearly 80% of mental health cases arise in low- and middle-income countries. Conditions like depression and anxiety affect approximately 9% of the world's pop-



ISHAN SHIVANAND

ulation and account for over 10% of years lived with disabilities.

The Drawbacks of Traditional Approaches

Pharmaceutical treatments have long been a cornerstone of mental healthcare, aiding in the management of severe cases and stabilisation. These targeted therapies address specific disease mechanisms based on biomarkers, leading to more personalised treat-

ment. Medical technology advancements enhance the efficacy of these treatments and improve patient outcomes. However, the reliance on medication alone often overlooks the holistic nature of mental well-being.

Embracing Integrative Health Approaches

Integrative health approaches, particularly those rooted in Indian Knowledge Systems such as yogic modalities, offer a promising complement to traditional pharmaceutical treatments.

A combination of breathwork and meditative protocols helps individuals penetrate a heightened state of non-judgemental awareness. They enable a physiological state of rest and digestion or relaxation, which is opposite to the flight-or-flight

stress response. This interruption in the stress response helps foster a sense of balance and union between the mind and body.

Yogic practices are also underpinned by a few principles: The human body is a holistic entity comprising various interrelated dimensions inseparable from one another. The health or illness of any one dimension affects the others. Secondly, every individual's needs are unique and must be approached with tailored practices that acknowledge this individuality.

Yogic modalities empower individuals: to be their healers, actively engaging in their journey toward health, and fostering autonomy. Also, the quality and state of an individual's mind are crucial to heal-



ing. A positive mind-state accelerates healing, while a negative mind-state can prolong it.

The Science Behind the Practice:

A consistent yogic practice has been shown to alleviate depression, leading to significant increases in serotonin levels and decreases in monoamine oxidase, an enzyme that breaks down neurotransmitters and cortisol. Yoga-based interventions also

help manage depressive disorders, stress, and anxiety by inhibiting the sympathetic area of the hypothalamus. This inhibition optimizes the body's responses to stressful stimuli and restores autonomic regulatory reflex mechanisms associated with stress. Moreover, yogic practices inhibit areas responsible for fear, aggressiveness, and rage, while stimulating the pleasure centres in the brain, resulting in a state of bliss and reduced anxiety. Regular practitioners of yoga and meditation experience lower heart rates, respiratory rates, blood pressure, and cardiac output.

Broader Health Benefits: Beyond mental well-being, yogic protocols improve cardiorespiratory performance, psychological profiles, and

plasma melatonin levels. It significantly reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure, mean arterial pressure, and orthostatic tolerance. Yoga also enhances cardiovascular efficiency and homeostatic control, leading to better autonomic balance, respiratory performance, and overall well-being. Studies have shown that yoga-based lifestyle modifications can even aid in the regression of coronary lesions and improve myocardial perfusion in patients with coronary artery disease (CAD).

Integrating Yoga into Modern Healthcare: An integrated approach to mental health care leverages insights from traditional Indian knowledge systems, combining pharmaceutical treatments with non-pharmaceutical medita-

tive practices. This synergy not only addresses the immediate symptoms but also promotes long-term recovery and well-being. As we navigate the complexities of modern life, it's crucial to embrace the wisdom of ancient practices. By integrating yoga and other non-invasive approaches into our mental health toolkit, we can achieve a balanced state where the mind and body work in harmony. The road to mental well-being doesn't have to be paved with pills alone; sometimes, it's as simple as finding our breath and grounding ourselves in practices that connect us to our core.

(The writer is mental health researcher and the founder of Yoga of Immortals (YOI) meditative program; views are personal)

Israeli troops launch new assault as mediators push for cease-fire

PTI ■ DEIR-AL-BALAH

Israeli troops launched a new assault Friday into the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis, targeting Hamas fighters who the military claims still operate there despite repeated offensives, as American, Qatari and Egyptian mediators renewed their push for Israel and Hamas

Haniyeh, was assassinated in a presumed Israeli blast in Tehran on July 31. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office confirmed Thursday that it would send negotiators to talks that mediators have called for on August 15, to be held in either Qatar's capital of Doha or Egypt's capital of Cairo.

the expectations of all parties." It did not elaborate on what that would look like. A key question hanging over the talks is the impact of Sinwar's elevation to Hamas' top leadership post. Seen as a hard-liner within the group, Sinwar has been in deep hiding in Gaza throughout the war as Israel vows to kill him.



to reach a cease-fire deal. Israeli evacuation orders triggered yet another exodus of Palestinians from the heavily destroyed eastern districts of Khan Younis, where many had just returned less than two weeks ago — after the Israeli military's last incursion into the city in July. Thousands fled Thursday, carrying essentials like small gas cylinders, mattresses, tents, backpacks and blankets. Officials from Israel and the United States have said they believe Yahya Sinwar, Hamas' newly named top leader and one of the architects of the October 7 attack on Israel, could be hiding in tunnels under Khan Younis. The military said Friday its warplanes struck 30 Hamas targets in the city, including fighters and weapons storage sites. It said troops were searching for Hamas tunnels and other infrastructure while engaging in combat "above and below ground." After 10 months of war in Gaza, the mediators' push aims to resume indirect negotiations for a cease-fire that have been on hold since Sinwar's predecessor, Ismail

There was no immediate response from Hamas, which announced Tuesday that Sinwar, the group's leader in Gaza, would replace Haniyeh as the group's top leader. Haniyeh previously served as the key interlocutor in the negotiations. Haniyeh's killing and that of a top Hezbollah commander in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut brought vows of retaliation from Hezbollah and Iran. International diplomats have been scrambling to prevent an escalation and to seal a deal to stop the fighting in Gaza and release the hostages still captive in the enclave. In a joint statement, the United States, Egypt and Qatar called for the new round of talks, to be held either in Doha or Cairo, and pressed both sides to move ahead. "There is no further time to waste nor excuses from any party for further delay," they said, adding that the negotiators have already finalized a framework for the deal. They said mediators were prepared to present a final compromise "that resolves the remaining implementation issues in a manner that meets

Sinwar has already been closely involved in negotiations from behind the scenes. Hamas officials and mediators have said Hamas negotiators regularly sought his approval on the group's positions as it pressed for guarantees that a deal would bring a complete end to the war and withdrawal of all Israeli troops from Gaza, in return for the release of all hostages. Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas after the Oct. 7 attack, in which militants from Gaza stormed into southern Israel, killing around 1,200 people and abducting 250 others. After a round of release exchanges in November, Israel says 111 hostages remain in Gaza, including 39 bodies. Its campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,600 Palestinians and wounded more than 91,700 others. More than 1.9 million of Gaza's pre-war population of 2.3 million have been driven from their homes, fleeing repeatedly across the territory to escape offensives. Most are now crowded into ramshackle tent camps in an area about 50 square kilometers (19 square miles) on the Gaza coast.

Bangladeshis welcome interim govt with hope for normalcy

PTI ■ DHAKA

People in Bangladesh welcomed the new interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, hoping it would restore order, end repression and hold a fair election to facilitate a democratic transition of power. Yunus, 84, on Thursday took oath as the head of an interim government, replacing Sheikh Hasina who abruptly resigned and fled to India leaving the country in turmoil following deadly protests against her government over a controversial quota system in jobs. He was sworn in as the chief advisor — a position equivalent to prime minister. Women's rights activist Farida Akhtar, right-wing party Hefazat-e-Islam's deputy chief AFM Khalid Hossain, Grameen Telecom trustee Nurjahan Begum, freedom fighter Sharmeen Murshid, chairman of Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board Supradip Chakma, Prof Bidhan Ranjan Roy and former foreign

secretary Touhid Hossain are among the advisory council members. Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury said that one of the duties of the interim government would be to restore order, which has been disrupted over the last few days following the fall of Hasina. "The other task is to ensure the safety of citizens," The Daily Star newspaper quoted Choudhury as saying after the oath-taking of the interim government. The government would also need to eliminate all forms of oppression and the culture of fear prevailing across the country, he said. However, the main responsibility of the government, he emphasised, would be to hold a fair and acceptable election to facilitate a democratic transition of power. Eminent jurist Kamal Hossain said, "The change that has happened was welcomed by everyone. There has been an extraordinary turnout at the event. Everyone feels that

change has come. "We hope they [members of the advisory council] will be able to address the new crises. People will expect a meaningful change — let this be that change," he said. Barrister Sara Hossain said: "My main expectation from this government is that it will enable substantial reforms to institutions in Bangladesh and clear the path for truth-telling about what has happened not only in the immediate past or the past few weeks but even over the last 14 years and before that." The students' anti-discrimination movement was for reforms and against repression and these should be the interim government's main themes, she told the newspaper. "What I perhaps am a bit troubled by is that, unlike previous years, there is no balance of political background and police. We obviously have no representation from (Hasina-led) Awami League. This absence of balance could cause a problem," she said.

Bangladesh has a secular Constitution, history and tradition, which has not denied any faith but encouraged pluralism, but the swearing-in today did not reflect that, she said, expressing hope that "it is not a sign of things to come." The inclusion of students is of course unprecedented, she said, adding, "But I think it can only add energy to the whole process... I believe they can be a part of keeping the interim government in the right direction and keep it within the demands of the students and general people. We need to remember that even post-Liberation in 1971, we had many young leaders." Samina Luthfa, associate professor at Dhaka University, said, "While I welcome the interim government, it is to be noted that many of them are from non-government organisations and require a specific kind of skill set. However, there is much work to be done to reform the nation, whether they have the skills for that remains a question. I think

including the students [leaders of the anti-discrimination student movement] in the government brings hope." Asked whether minority and women representation were enough, she said, "I believe those could be higher. Many other women and actors from religious minority backgrounds are skilled and have been supporting the movement, they too could have been included. More people from these segments of society could have ensured a higher possibility of a 'discrimination-free' country." She added that since the Jamaat-e-Islami was banned, the Hefazat Ameer may have been included to balance out participation from all religious backgrounds. "We are in an extraordinary situation and of course, we cannot expect everything to be perfect already, it will all take time. "However, at this moment, the first thing the interim government must look after is the safety of all citizens, justice, the economy, and restoring law and order."

UN concern over racially-based attacks in B'desh

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

Amid violence against the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh, a spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he stands against any racially based attacks or incitement to violence. "What we've made clear is we want to make sure that the violence that has been occurring in Bangladesh in recent weeks is stamped down. Certainly, we stand against any racially based attacks or racially based incitement to violence," Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, said here on Thursday. He was responding to a question on the Secretary-General's reaction to attacks on Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh. Several Hindu temples, households and businesses have been vandalised, and at least two

Hindu leaders affiliated with former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party have been killed in the violence since Monday, when Hasina resigned and fled to India. Since Hasina fled the country, media reports from Bangladesh have flagged more and more cases of violence against minorities, including the massive vandalism and destruction at popular folk band Joler Gaan's frontman Rahul Ananda's residence on Monday, prompting the singer and his family to go into hiding. However, it is not just Hindus that are targeted. At least 232 people were killed in Bangladesh in the incidents of violence that erupted across the country following the fall of the Hasina government on Monday, taking the death toll to 560 since the anti-quota protests first started in mid-July.

Police stations reopen with military support in Dhaka

PTI ■ DHAKA

Police stations in Bangladesh, which were deserted during the peak of the anti-government protests, are slowly resuming their normal activities with the assistance of the military, according to media reports on Friday. Following the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on Monday due to student-led protests, all police station activities came to a halt. Several police stations were attacked, looted and set on fire, leading to many officers evacuating their stations and going into hiding due to the threat of more attacks. More than 400 people, including police personnel, were killed in the violence centring the students' movement. After about four days, activities resumed at some 29 police stations with the assistance of the military, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported, quoting military and police officials. On Thursday, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was sworn

in as the head of Bangladesh's interim government, vowing to restore law and order in the country. Company Commander Shakhawat Khandakar from 25 East Bengal Regiment said: "Seeing how criminals were killing people, including the police, we decided that it was critical to save the police members. They serve the people; we needed to give them a chance to reform. "Many weapons are in the Tejaon police station. If these fell into the hands of criminals, the country would be in grave danger. That is when we took measures to reinforce the security of the station," Khandakar said. Tejaon Deputy Police Commissioner Azimul Haque said, "We are grateful to the members of the military who came forward to save our policemen and played an important role in protecting the lives and properties of the people. Today, we have started all police activities with the help of the military. I request all citi-

zens to come to the police station. We are ready to serve you." He added that out of six police stations in Tejaon division, three police stations have been fully operational. "Work is underway on a small scale at the affected police station. In the meantime, many policemen have joined work in the police stations. The others are starting to arrive. We hope that all our policemen will join the workplace by afternoon," Haque said. 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.

British authorities still on alert for further unrest

AP ■ KONDON

British authorities said Thursday they were preparing for the possibility of further unrest, even as they applauded the efforts of anti-racism campaigners and police officers who largely stifled a threatened wave of far-right demonstrations overnight. Prime Minister Keir Starmer sounded the note of caution after a week of anti-immigrant violence that has scarred communities from Northern Ireland to the south coast of England. Starmer spoke to reporters at a mosque in Solihull, near Birmingham, where demonstrators shut down a shopping center on Sunday. "It's important that we don't let up here," Starmer said. At an emergency meeting with law enforcement officers at his office, Starmer said on Thursday evening that police need to remain on "high alert," Britain's Press Association

reported. He credited strategic police staffing and swift justice for rioters in the courts for creating a deterrent that kept trouble at a minimum the night before. Police across the United Kingdom had braced for widespread disorder on Wednesday, after far-right activists circulated a list of more than 100 sites they planned to target, including the offices of immigration lawyers and others offering services to migrants. But those demonstrations failed to materialize as police and counter-protesters filled the streets. Carrying signs saying "Refugees Welcome" and chanting "Whose streets? Our streets," people turned out in force to protect asylum service centers and the offices of immigration attorneys. The government also declared a national critical incident, putting 6,000 specially trained police on standby to respond to any disorder. Police said that protests and counter-protests

were largely peaceful, though a small number of arrests were made. "The show of force from the police and, frankly, the show of unity from communities together defeated the challenges that we faced," said Commissioner Mark Rowley, the head of London's Metropolitan Police Service. "It went off very peacefully last night, and the fears of extreme right disorder were abated." But tensions remain high after right-wing agitators fueled the violence by circulating misinformation about the identity of the suspect in a knife attack that killed three young girls in the English seaside town of Southport last week. The last child hospitalized in the July 29 stabbing has been released, police said Thursday. Nearly 500 people have been arrested around the country after anti-immigrant mobs clashed with police, attacked mosques and overran two hotels housing asylum-seekers.

3rd person in custody over foiled plot targeting Swift show

AP ■ VIENNA

A third teenager has been arrested in connection with a foiled attack on now-cancelled Taylor Swift concerts in Vienna, Austria's interior minister said Friday. Austrian Interior Minister Gerhard Karner said an 18-year-old was taken into custody Thursday evening in Vienna after allegedly being in contact with the main suspect. Karner announced the arrest during an unrelated news conference Friday. Investigators are scrutinizing the "networks" of the suspects, the Austrian interior ministry told The Associated Press on Friday, adding in a statement that investigators have turned to evaluating physical and electronic evidence. The 19-year-old main suspect and a 17-year-old were arrested Tuesday, while a 15-year-old was also interrogated but was not arrested. Officials said Thursday afternoon that no additional suspects were being sought. They did not immediately offer further details Friday.

Authorities say the plot appeared to have been inspired by the Islamic State group and al-Qaida. Investigators found bomb-making materials at one of the suspects' homes. Officials say one suspect has confessed to planning to "kill as many people as possible outside the concert venue." Officials say the main suspect and the 18-year-old arrested Friday both pledged "oaths of allegiance" to the Islamic State group. "He had been in contact with the main perpetrator, but is not directly connected to the attack plans," Karner said. "But, as was found out a few days ago, he took an oath of allegiance specifically to the IS on August 6." The 18-year-old "comes from the social environment" of the main suspect, Karner said. Three sold-out concerts were cancelled Wednesday because of the plot, devastating Swifties from across the globe. Many of them had dropped thousands of euros (dollars) on travel and lodging in Austria's expensive capital city to attend the

Eras Tour shows at the Ernst Happel Stadium, which sat empty Thursday morning. Europe is enamoured with the American superstar: The German town of Gelsenkirchen renamed itself "Swiftkirchen" before its mid-July concerts. Concert organisers in Austria said they had expected up to 65,000 fans inside the stadium at each concert and as many as 30,000 onlookers outside, where authorities said the suspects planned to strike. The foiled attack was planned for Thursday or Friday, according to Austria's interior minister, Gerhard Karner. Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer defended the decision to cancel the concerts, saying the arrests of the suspects took place too close to the shows, scheduled for Thursday, Friday and Saturday. "I understand very well that those who wanted to experience the concert live are very sad," Nehammer told a news conference Thursday. "Moms and dads are looking after their daughters and sons, who were full of enthusiasm and

anticipation for this concert. But it's also important that in such serious moments as now, it's inevitable that safety comes first." Swift is also scheduled to perform at London's Wembley stadium in five concerts between August 15 and 20 to close the European leg of her record-setting Eras Tour. London Mayor Sadiq Khan said that while he understood Vienna's reasons for canceling, "We're going to carry on." Khan said the capital's authorities were prepared for shows there following lessons learned from a 2017 attack at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, that killed 22 people. A suicide bomber had set up a knapsack with explosives in Manchester Arena. The bomb detonated at the end of Grande's concert as thousands of young fans were leaving. Last month, an attacker in England killed three girls and wounded 10 people in a knife attack during a Taylor Swift-themed dance and yoga class. Swift at the time said she was "completely in shock" over the

violence. In Austria, the main suspect confessed that he had started planning the attack in July, authorities said. The 19-year-old just a few weeks ago uploaded to the internet an oath of allegiance to the current leader of the Islamic State group. He was "clearly radicalised in the direction of the Islamic State and thinks it is right to kill infidels," said Omar Hajjawi-Pirchner, head of the Directorate of State Security and Intelligence. Hajjawi-Pirchner added that the suspect "wanted to carry out an attack in the area outside the stadium, killing as many people as possible using the knives or even using the explosive devices he had made." During a raid of the suspect's 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.

Iran accelerating cyber activity to influence US poll: Microsoft

AP ■ NEW YORK

Iran is ramping up online activity that appears intended to influence the upcoming US election, in one case targeting a presidential campaign with an email phishing attack, Microsoft said Friday. Iranian actors also have spent recent months creating fake news sites and impersonating activists, laying the groundwork to stoke division and potentially sway American voters this fall, especially in swing states, the technology giant found. The findings in Microsoft's newest threat intelligence report show how Iran, which has been active in recent US campaign cycles, is evolving its tactics for another election that's likely to have global

implications. The report goes a step beyond anything US intelligence officials have disclosed, giving specific examples of Iranian groups and the actions they have taken so far. Iran's United Nations mission denied it had plans to interfere or launch cyberattacks in the US presidential election. The report doesn't specify Iran's intentions besides sowing chaos in the United States, though US officials have previously hinted that Iran particularly opposes former President Donald Trump. US officials also have expressed alarm about Tehran's efforts to seek retaliation for a 2020 strike on an Iranian general that was ordered by Trump. This week, the Justice Department unsealed criminal charges against a Pakistani

man with ties to Iran who's alleged to have hatched assassination plots targeting multiple officials, potentially including Trump. The report also reveals how Russia and China are exploiting US political polarisation to advance their own divisive messaging in a consequential election year. Microsoft's report identified four examples of recent Iranian activity that the company expects to increase as November's election draws closer. First, a group linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard in June targeted a high-ranking US presidential campaign official with a phishing email, a form of cyberattack often used to gather sensitive information, according to the report, which didn't identify which campaign

was targeted. The group concealed the email's origins by sending it from the hacked email account of a former senior adviser, Microsoft said. Days later, the Iranian group tried to log into an account that belonged to a former presidential candidate, but wasn't successful, Microsoft's report said. The company notified those who were targeted. In a separate example, an Iranian group has been creating websites that pose as US-based news sites targeted to voters on opposite sides of the political spectrum, the report said. One fake news site that lends itself to a left-leaning audience insults Trump by calling him "raving mad" and suggests he uses drugs, the report said. Another site meant

to appeal to Republican readers centres on LGBTQ issues and gender-affirming surgery. A third example Microsoft cited found that Iranian groups are impersonating US activists, potentially laying the groundwork for influence operations closer to the election. Finally, another Iranian group in May compromised an account owned by a government employee in a swing state, the report said. It was unclear whether that cyberattack was related to election interference efforts. Iran's UN mission sent The Associated Press an emailed statement: "Iran has been the victim of numerous offensive cyber operations targeting its infrastructure, public service centres, and industries. Iran's cyber capabilities are defensive

and proportionate to the threats it faces. Iran has neither the intention nor plans to launch cyber attacks. The US presidential election is an internal matter in which Iran does not interfere." The Microsoft report said that as Iran escalates its cyber influence, Russia-linked actors also have pivoted their influence campaigns to focus on the US election, while actors linked to the Chinese Communist Party have taken advantage of pro-Palestinian university protests and other current events in the US to try to raise US political tensions. Microsoft said it has continued to monitor how foreign foes are using generative AI technology. The increasingly cheap and easy-to-access tools can generate lifelike fake images, photos

and videos in seconds, prompting concern among some experts that they will be weaponised to mislead voters this election cycle. While many countries have experimented with AI in their influence operations, the company said, those efforts haven't had much impact so far. The report said as a result, some actors have "pivoted back to techniques that have proven effective in the past — simple digital manipulations, mischaracterisation of content, and use of trusted labels or logos atop false information." Microsoft's report aligns with recent warnings from US intelligence officials, who say America's adversaries appear determined to seed the internet with false and incendiary claims ahead of November's

vote. Top intelligence officials said last month that Russia continues to pose the greatest threat when it comes to election disinformation, while there are indications that Iran is expanding its efforts and China is proceeding cautiously when it comes to 2024. Iran's efforts seem aimed at undermining candidates seen as being more likely to increase tension with Tehran, the officials said. That's a description that fits Trump, whose administration ended a nuclear deal with Iran, reimposed sanctions and ordered the killing of the top Iranian general. The influence efforts also coincide with a time of high tensions between Iran and Israel, whose military the US strongly supports.

Russia declares emergency in region under attack from Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

Russia's Ministry for Emergency Situations on Friday declared the situation in the Kursk region a "federal level" emergency, four days after hundreds of Ukrainian troops poured over the border in what appeared to be Kyiv's biggest attack on Russian soil since the war began. Meanwhile, a Russian plane-launched missile hit a Ukrainian shopping mall late morning Friday, killing at least nine people and injuring 26, authorities said.

The mall in Kostiantynivka, in the eastern Donetsk region, is located in the town's residential area. Thick black smoke rose above it after the strike.

"This is another targeted attack on a crowded place, another act of terror by the Russians," Donetsk regional head Vadym Filashkin said in a Telegram post.

"The operational situation in the Kursk region remains difficult," Kursk acting governor Alexei Smirnov said on Telegram.

Social services and civic associations are providing assistance to people forced to flee their homes by the fighting, he said. The last Russian figure for evacuations in Kursk was 3,000. Little reliable information about the surprise Ukrainian operation has emerged, and its strategic aims are unclear. Ukrainian officials have refused to comment specifically about the incursion, which is taking place about 500 km (320 miles) southwest of Moscow.

But a top adviser to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that border region attacks will cause Russia to "start to realise that the war is slowly creeping inside of Russian territory." Mykhailo Podolyak also suggested that the operation would improve Kyiv's hand in the event of negotiations with Moscow.

The assault came as the Ukrainian army toils to hold at bay an intense Russian push at places on the front line in eastern Ukraine, especially in the Donetsk region. Russian President Vladimir Putin has

made clear he wants to capture the parts of Donetsk that the Kremlin's forces don't already occupy.

Russia declares federal level emergencies when there are more than 500 victims or damage exceeds 500 million rubles (about \$6 million).

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, says Ukrainian forces have pressed on with their "rapid advances" deeper into the Kursk region, reportedly going up to 35 km (20 miles) beyond the border.

"The lack of a coherent Russian response to the Ukrainian incursion into Kursk... and the reported rate of Ukrainian advance indicates that Ukrainian forces were able to achieve operational surprise," said the Washington-based ISW late Thursday.

A Russian Defence Ministry statement Friday said only that the military "continues to repel the attempted invasion" and is responding with airstrikes, artillery and troops on the ground.

Ukraine has also kept up its strategy of hitting rear areas with long-range drones, targeting military sites, oil refineries and other infrastructure.

Ukrainian drones attacked Russia's Lipetsk region, which is about 300 km (180 miles) from the Ukraine border, during Thursday night, authorities said.

Drones operated by Ukraine's Security Service hit a military airfield there, a security official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak publicly.

The airfield was a base for fighter jets and helicopters and more than 700 powerful glide bombs in storage, the source said.

Ukraine's Army General Staff also confirmed the strike on Lipetsk-2 airfield Friday morning, saying it was used as a base for multiple Su-34, Su-35 and MiG-31 jets.

The Russian Defence Ministry said that 75 Ukrainian drones were shot down during the night, 19 of them over Lipetsk.

Upset over curbs, Paraguay orders US ambassador to leave

AP ■ ASUNCION (PARAGUAY)

The government of Paraguay on Thursday effectively ordered the US ambassador to leave the South American nation, escalating tensions between the allies in the wake of the Biden administration's sanctions on a tobacco company linked to the country's powerful former president.

In a dramatic statement that took diplomats aback, the Paraguayan Foreign Ministry asked the US government to "accelerate the departure process" of Ambassador Marc Ostfeld, a career diplomat appointed by President Joe Biden in June 2021.

Ostfeld's expedited departure, the ministry said, would "avoid the loss of confidence in a person damaging the relationship that we have historically maintained."

The request appeared to be in protest against the White House's latest move to tighten its sanctions against Horacio Cartes, one of Paraguay's

wealthiest people who served as president from 2013-18, owns dozens of lucrative businesses and retains considerable influence over the country's ruling Colorado party.

The US government first sanctioned the cigarette tycoon last year, accusing him of "significant corruption."

On Tuesday, the US Treasury Department announced sanctions on Tabacalera del Este, a large tobacco producer that the US government accused of illegally funneling millions of dollars to Cartes, its former majority shareholder.

The company, also known as Tabesa, has angrily rejected the accusations and referred to the sanctions as an "abuse of power" by the US government.

Cartes has denied all allegations of corruption and said he no longer owns nor is directly involved in Tabesa's operations.

The US Embassy in Paraguay confirmed that the Foreign Ministry had summoned Ambassador Ostfeld for a

meeting Thursday, saying only that they "had a good discussion and talked about the sanction announcement as well as other topics."

Summoning a foreign ambassador for explanations is typically intended to express protest on the part of a host country.

The embassy did not comment on Paraguay's demand that Ostfeld leave on an accelerated timeline. Ambassador Ostfeld had planned to remain in his post until the end of Biden's term in January 2025.

His successor has been named but the Senate has not started the confirmation process, which could take anywhere from a few months to a few years.

In a news conference, Paraguayan Foreign Minister Ruben Ramirez Lezcano said the government objected "to the media coverage and politicization of the administration's sanctions."

"The direct or indirect intervention of any state in the inter-

national affairs of Paraguay compromises our independence and sovereignty," he said.

His remarks seemingly referred to a news conference called by Ambassador Ostfeld earlier this week in which he stressed his commitment to anti-corruption reforms in Paraguay, saying that the Biden administration was prepared to "use the range of relevant tools to combat corruption, including visa restrictions, designations, financial sanctions, and extradition."

Although standard language in diplomacy, the mention of extradition nonetheless raised alarms and stirred frantic debate in Paraguay, where Cartes' loyalists have a majority in both houses of Congress.

In a show of support and defiance — and a display of Cartes' enduring influence — dozens of lawmakers from the conservative Colorado party showed up to Cartes' mansion in the capital of Asuncion on Tuesday after the sanctions announcement.



Cars drive along a snow-covered road in Santiago (Chile). AP/PTI

US jury convicts Mozambique's ex-finance minister in 'tuna bonds' corruption case

AP ■ NEW YORK

Former Mozambican Finance Minister Manuel Chang was convicted Thursday in a financial conspiracy case that welled up from his country's "tuna bond" scandal and swept into a US court.

A federal jury in New York delivered the verdict.

Chang was accused of accepting payoffs to put his African nation secretly on the hook for big loans to government-controlled companies for tuna fishing ships and other maritime projects. The loans were plundered by bribes and kickbacks, according to prosecutors, and Mozambique ended up with USD 2 billion in "hidden debt," spurring a financial crisis.

"Today's verdict is an inspiring victory for justice and the peo-

ple of Mozambique who were betrayed by the defendant, a corrupt, high-ranking government official whose greed and self-interest sold out one of the poorest countries in the world," Brooklyn-based US Attorney Breon Peace said in a statement.

Messages seeking comment were sent to Chang's attorneys and to Mozambique's embassy in Washington. Chang was his country's top financial official from 2005 to 2015.

Chang had pleaded not guilty to the US conspiracy charges. His lawyers said he was doing as his government wished when he signed off on pledges that Mozambique would repay the loans, and that there was no evidence of a financial quid-pro-quo for him.

No sentencing date was set for Chang, 48. The charges carry

the possibility of up to 20 years in prison, though sentencing guidelines for any given case can vary depending on a defendant's history and other factors.

Between 2013 and 2016, three Mozambican-government-controlled companies quietly borrowed USD 2 billion from major overseas banks. Chang signed guarantees that the government would repay the loans — crucial assurances to lenders who likely otherwise would have shied away from the brand-new companies.

The proceeds were supposed to finance a tuna fleet, a shipyard, and Coast Guard vessels and radar systems to protect natural gas fields off the country's Indian Ocean coast.

But bankers and government officials looted the loan money to line their own pockets, US

prosecutors said.

"The evidence in this case shows you that there is an international fraud, money laundering and bribery scheme of epic proportions here," and Chang "chose to participate," Assistant US Attorney Genny Ngai told jurors in a closing argument Monday.

Prosecutors accused Chang of collecting USD 7 million in bribes, wired through US banks to European accounts held by an associate.

Chang's defence said there was no proof that he actually was promised or received a penny. The only agreement Chang made "was the lawful one to borrow money from banks to allow his country to engage in these public infrastructure works," defense lawyer Adam Ford said in his summation Monday.

Maduro suspends X network in Venezuela for 10 days

AP ■ CARACAS

President Nicolas Maduro said he has ordered a 10-day block on access to X in Venezuela, accusing the owner Elon Musk of using the social network to promote hatred after the country's disputed presidential election.

Associated Press journalists in Caracas found that by Thursday night posts had stopped loading on X on two private telephone services and state-owned Movilnet.

"Elon Musk is the owner of X and has violated all the rules of the social network itself," said Maduro in a speech following a march by pro-government groups. Maduro alleged Musk "has incited hatred."

Maduro also accused the social network of being used by his opponents to create political unrest.

Venezuela's president said he had signed a resolution "with the proposal made by CONATEL, the National



Telecommunications Commission, which has decided to remove the social network X, formerly known as Twitter, from circulation in Venezuela for 10 days so that they can present their documents." Maduro did not provide more details about the process taken against X. X's press office did not immediately respond to an email from AP requesting comment. "X out for 10 days! Elon Musk out!" Maduro said. The president's announcement

comes after Maduro and Musk exchanged accusations over Venezuela's disputed July 28 presidential election. Electoral authorities declared Maduro the winner but have yet to produce voting tallies. Meanwhile, the opposition claims to have collected records from more than 80 per cent of the 30,000 electronic voting machines nationwide showing the winner was his candidate, Edmundo Gonzalez. Musk used the social network to accuse the self-proclaimed socialist leader of a "great electoral fraud."

"Shame on the dictator Maduro," Musk said on Monday in a post.

Since the election, Maduro has expressed the need to "regulate" social networks in Venezuela. Maduro also denounced that the social platform was used by his adversaries to threaten the families of his followers and political allies, military personnel, police officers and to generate a state of anxiety in Venezuela.

Houthi rebels attacks ship off Yemen

AP ■ DUBAI

Three suspected attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a ship in the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait linking the Gulf of Aden to the Red Sea, including one that saw private security guards shoot and destroy a bomb-loaded drone boat, authorities said Friday.

The Houthis did not immediately claim the assaults, though they follow a monthlong campaign by the rebels targeting shipping through the Red Sea corridor over Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

"The operations are ongoing — our operations toward occupied Palestine to target the Israeli enemy, our operations at sea, the inevitable forthcoming response, as well as coordination with the axis in any joint operations," warned the Houthi's secretive leader, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, in a speech Thursday.

Indian Consulate in NY cautions community against using unscrupulous agents for services

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Amid instances of unscrupulous elements overcharging members of the Indian community for consular services and other fraudulent activities, India's mission here has cautioned against using such agents and highlighted measures undertaken by it to streamline visa, passport and other services for the diaspora.

Consul General of India in New York Binaya Pradhan told reporters here that several instances have come to the notice of the Consulate where various travel agents are "misusing people's trust."

They have been charging higher amounts of money in the name of providing services. Such unscrupulous elements have overcharged applicants for assistance in getting Consular services such as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI), visa, passport and an emergency certificate. Pradhan cited instances where travel agents have charged as much as USD 450 to provide an emergency certificate to travel to India, while such a service costs only USD 17.

The Consulate said it has also come across instances where fake documents about identity, residential address, and utility bills have been submitted by the agents on the applicants' behalf, often without the knowledge of the applicant. The Consulate said that this not only causes undue avoidable delay but is also a violation of prescribed Indian

rules and puts the applicants on the wrong side of the law in the US.

The agents "claim that they have a relationship with the Consulate," Pradhan said, adding that "they put our community members in trouble by providing false documents, fake certificates."

Pradhan underscored that whether it is an Indian citizen, an American citizen or an Indian-American person, they "don't have to come to us through an agent. You can come to us directly for the services that we provide at the Consulate. There is no requirement of using an agent, and on top of that to pay money, which is exorbitantly higher," Pradhan said.

Additionally, Pradhan noted that it has also been brought to the Consulate's notice that several fake E-visa websites, claiming to provide such services, are active on the internet. To mislead the applicants, some of these websites have created images and home page templates mimicking the Government of India's websites.

The Consulate strongly urged members of the community and diaspora to apply on the correct website for E-visa services and not go through any other portal listed on the internet.

The Consulate has issued an advisory to create awareness about not using the services of "unscrupulous elements" who have been overcharging and submitting fraudulent docu-

ments on behalf of applicants. It has also publicised the fees and charges for all the services provided to ensure applicants don't end up paying higher amounts. The New York Consulate serves the northeastern states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. Pradhan noted that of the 5.4 million strong Indian diaspora in the US, about 2.5 million or 40-45 per cent of the total, live in these 10 states. Over 113,000 Indian students out of the 354,000 in the whole country study in universities in these 10 northeastern states.

Pradhan also highlighted a slew of measures undertaken by the Consulate to ensure efficient consular services, including digital initiatives for ease of availing services and digital assistance tools like 'Prमित', 'Bharti Chatbot' and mobile app. It also organizes an open house twice a month when applicants can walk in without prior appoint-

ment and meet the Consular Officers for any query they may have regarding the consular services.

Amid a string of tragic and concerning incidents involving Indian students in the US in the recent past, Pradhan emphasised that there has been a "special focus" on students. The Consulate's approach has been to connect the student community to the larger Indian community so they get a "helping hand" in their initial months. In this regard, the Consulate developed a special platform for the students to find internship opportunities at companies in the US as well as provide access to attorney and medical information.

Deputy Consul General Varun Jeph added that under a recent initiative aimed at addressing the problems of students, the Consulate will host an open house twice a month when they can walk in without taking prior appointments and meet officials.

Trump praised Minnesota Gov. Walz in 2020 over Floyd's murder

AP ■ MINNEAPOLIS

While former President Donald Trump and running mate JD Vance have been hammering Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz over his response to the violence that erupted after George Floyd's murder, Trump told the governor at the time that he fully agreed with how Walz handled it.

"What they did in Minneapolis was incredible. They went in and dominated, and it happened immediately," Trump told Walz and other governors and officials in a phone call on June 1, 2020. The Associated Press on Wednesday obtained an audio recording of the call, which has taken on new significance now that Walz has been tapped as Vice President Kamala Harris'

running mate against Trump and Vance. Other administration officials on the call included Defense Secretary Mark Esper; Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Attorney General William Barr.

ABC News reported on the call earlier Wednesday, a day after Harris introduced Walz as her vice presidential pick. CNN posted a transcript of the call back in 2020.

Protests erupted in Minneapolis and around the world after Floyd was murdered by Derek Chauvin, a white former officer who knelt on the Black man's neck for nearly 9 1/2 minutes, on May 25, 2020. A bystander video captured Floyd's fading cries of "I can't breathe." His death forced a reckoning with

police brutality and racism. Some of the protests turned violent. Walz mobilized the Minnesota National Guard three days later to help restore order to Minneapolis after rioting that included the burning of a police station and numerous businesses. Trump offered federal help to Walz later that day, but the governor did not take him up on it.

During a May 2024 fundraiser in St. Paul, Trump repeated a claim he had been making lately that he was responsible for deploying the National Guard. "The entire city was burning down. ... If you didn't have me as president, you wouldn't have Minneapolis today," Trump told a Republican audience. Trump made similar claims at a rally in St. Cloud last month.

It was actually Walz who gave the mobilization order in response to requests from the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Although Walz came under criticism at the time for not moving faster. There was finger-pointing between Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and Walz on who bore responsibility for the delays.

Trump, in the June 1, 2020, call, described Walz as "an excellent guy" and later said: "I don't blame you. I blame the mayor." The president didn't criticize the governor at the time.

"Tim, you called up big numbers and the big numbers knocked them out so fast, it was like bowling pins," Trump said.

But Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt put a different spin on the call in a statement to the AP on Wednesday.

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Press (Open) Tender Eng. No. 55/P-3/EMP-W-12765 dated 08.08.24
Dy.Chief Engineer/ Headquarter (Procurement Cell-3) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites Press Tender for Erection of MS pipes used for supply of water to fire hydrant system at GGSSTP, Roopnagar. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to PSPCL website www.pspcl.in from 08.08.24 from 05:00 P.M. onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at PSPCL website www.pspcl.in

RTP-84/24

76155/12/3269/2023/36555 Dated CHD :- 8/9/2024

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ई-निविदा सूचना

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न जनपदों में विद्युत औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों में विद्युत विकास/अनुसंधान कार्य हेतु सरकारी बिगामों/सर्वजनिक उपकरणों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/बरिसदों/नगर निकायों में पंजीकृत फर्मों/उत्कृष्टता से अल्पकालीन/पूर्वकालीन ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	निविदा का प्रकार	सर्विस का समय
1.	Supply and Installation of high mast lighting system and street light network in dark zone at IA, Kosi Kothan Ext. II (Mathura).	पूर्वकालीन	49.09
2.	Providing LED street light network on balance road no. 5,6,9,10 and 11 at IA, Piliikhani Saharanpur.	अल्पकालीन	13.82
3.	Providing power line on balance road no. 5, 6,9,10 and 11 at IA, Piliikhani Saharanpur.	अल्पकालीन	16.10
4.	Providing LED street light network on remaining Begrajpur road at IA, Begrajpur (Muzaffarnagar).	अल्पकालीन	14.83

क्रमांक 01 पर निविदा दिनांक 10.08.2024 को 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 17.08.2024 को 18:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है, विसरे दिनांक 19.08.2024 को 11:00 बजे या इसके पर्याप्त खोला जायेगा एवं क्रमांक 02 से 04 पर अंकित निविदा दिनांक 10.08.2024 को 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 17.08.2024 को 18:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है, विसरे दिनांक 19.08.2024 को 11:00 बजे या इसके पर्याप्त खोला जायेगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा अपलोड प्रपत्र पत्रों की मूल प्रतियाँ निविदा खोलने के बाद 03 कार्य दिवस में पंजीकृत डाक/व्यक्तिगत रूप से कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती हैं।
नोट: 1. निविदादाता अपनी निविदाओं में समस्त कर सहित दरें अंकित करें, अलग से मात्र जीएसटीडीई देय होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्य हेतु निविदादाताओं को निविदा अपलोड करते समय "विद्युत सूचना बिगाम" उपग्रह वास्तव, लखनऊ में 'क' श्रेणी, अनुमोदित लाइसेंस एवं Eligibility Criteria के अनुसार समस्त प्राच्य अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा, अन्वेष्य निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए www.upsida.co.in पर स्वागत लिंक सुपीयरसी की website: <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।
बरिस प्रबन्धक, उपग्रह राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण, गाजियाबाद

Sensex bounces back

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded 1 per cent each on Friday following buying in blue-chips such as Reliance and Infosys amid a rally in global equity markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex bounced back 819.69 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 79,705.91 with 28 of its constituents closing in green and two in red. The index opened higher amid gains in Asian markets and later surged 1,098.02 points or 1.39 per cent to hit a high of 79,984.24.

The NSE Nifty soared 250.50 points or 1.04 per cent to 24,367.50. During the day, it rallied 302.75 points or 1.25 per cent to 24,419.75.

"Positive US jobless claims data eased the fears of recession and provided a favourable broader market reaction," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. Most of the Sensex firms settled in the positive territory. Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors, Tech Mahindra, JSW Steel, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Reliance Industries and Infosys were the biggest gainers.

Kotak Mahindra Bank and



Maruti were the laggards.

"The markets started strong, gaining over a per cent, buoyed by positive global cues," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.21 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.79 per cent. All the indices ended in the positive territory, with IT surging 1.59 per cent, consumer discretionary by 1.57 per cent, realty by 1.56 per cent, auto by 1.51 per cent,

teck by 1.41 per cent and capital goods by 1.37 per cent. On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark slumped 1,276.04 points or 1.57 per cent, while the Nifty declined 350.2 points or 1.41 per cent.

A total of 2,330 stocks advanced while 1,579 declined and 97 remained unchanged on the BSE. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Seoul and Hong Kong ended higher while Shanghai settled lower. European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended

significantly higher on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,626.73 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.03 per cent to USD 79.18 a barrel. The BSE benchmark declined 581.79 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 78,886.22 in a volatile trade on Thursday. The NSE Nifty retreated to settle lower by 180.50 points or 0.74 per cent to 24,117.

Rupee rises two paise to close at 83.95 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day higher by 2 paise at 83.95 (provisional) against US dollar on Friday, supported by gains in the domestic markets.

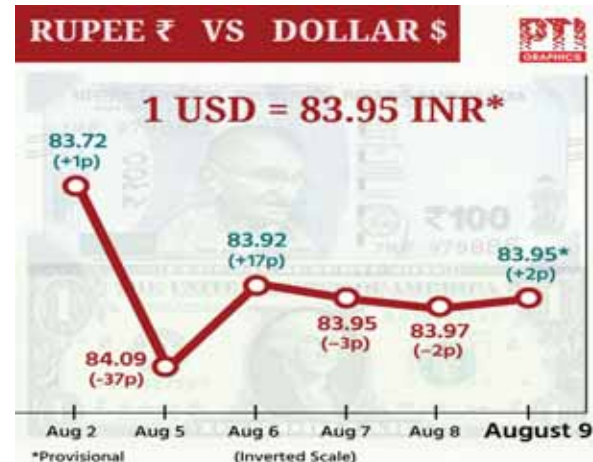
Forex traders said the rupee edged up slightly on gains in the domestic markets. However, a surge in crude oil prices capped sharp gains for the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.95 and touched an intraday low of 83.96 and a high of 83.88 against the dollar during the session.

It finally settled at 83.95 (provisional) against the American currency, higher by 2 paise from its previous close.

The local unit had slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar on Monday.

On Thursday, the rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 2 paise at 83.97 against US dollar. Forex traders said post the



Reserve Bank of India's monetary policy announcement, markets now wait for the US CPI data, India CPI, WPI and IIP data, and India's trade data, all scheduled to be released next week.

The Jackson Holes Symposium to be held after next week will also remain in focus, traders said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.05 per cent to 103.15, on better-than-

expected weekly unemployment claims data.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.18 per cent higher at USD 79.30 per barrel in futures trade.

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

positive global markets after easing worries over the yen carry-trade may support the rupee at lower levels. "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 83.75 to Rs 84.20," he said.

In the domestic equity market, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 819.69 points, or 1.04 per cent, to close at 79,705.91 points, while the Nifty jumped 250.50 points, or 1.04 per cent, to 24,367.50 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Thursday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,626.73 crore, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank kept the benchmark repurchase or 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. Das further noted that the country's forex reserves touched a record high of USD 675 billion as on August 2.

Enabling framework needed to help companies issue ESG bonds domestically: RBI official

PTI ■ MUMBAI

There is a need to create an "enabling framework" to help Indian companies issue environmental, social and governance (ESG) bonds locally, a senior RBI official said on Friday.

Underlining that capital markets regulator Sebi which looks after the regulations for the bond markets has done significant work, Dimple Bhandia, the chief general manager in RBI, also rued that the development in the repo for corporate bonds has not been satisfactory.

"...We find that lot of our companies are going overseas and issuing ESG bonds. This is an area where we need to look at an enabling framework," Bhandia said, speaking at an event organised by industry lobby grouping ASSOCHAM here. Another disappointment has been the "non-starter" credit derivatives market, she said, recalling that very limited number of trades have taken place in it.

She, however, said that the overall secondary market activity in corporate bonds is



not as bad as one would think. Bhandia said even though its base is lower, the growth in corporate bond issuances has been higher than banks' credit growth in the last decade and added that the broadly stable spread on corporate paper over G-sec is illustrative of the maturity.

She also welcomed foreign portfolio investors' response to the voluntary retention route facility, pointing out that 99 per cent of the money under it is in corporate bonds and added that the increased interest forced the RBI to revise its upper limits twice.

The move to allow banks to hold corporate bonds under the held-to-maturity category has met with a success, she said, adding that banks are giving a feedback about it giving a boost to demand for corporate bonds.

Equity mutual funds' inflow drops in July; industry AUM touches ₹65 lakh cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Inflow in equity mutual funds declined 9 per cent month-on-month to Rs 37,113 crore in July owing to the drop in fund infusion in large-cap, small- and mid-cap categories.

Despite the dip, the quantum of net inflows witnessed in July was the second highest flows ever received in a month. Also, this was second only to the flows of Rs 40,608 crore received in June.

The latest flow also marks the 41st consecutive month of net inflows in equity funds, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Friday. Moreover, monthly contributions from Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) rose to an all-time high of Rs 23,332 crore in July as against Rs 21,262 crore in the preceding month.

This reflects the growing financial discipline among retail investors, helping them build wealth systematically over time, Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive, AMFI, said. Overall, the mutual fund industry has witnessed an



inflow of Rs 1.9 lakh crore in the month under review as compared to an outflow of Rs 43,637 crore in June. The inflow was due to investment in equity as well as debt schemes.

With these inflows, the industry's net assets under management rose to an all-time high of Rs 65 lakh crore in July-end from Rs 61.15 lakh crore in June-end.

"The share of financial assets has been increasing rapidly and within financial assets, mutual fund market share is relatively high. Mutual funds play a key role in enabling wealth creation for individual investors and providing tools

for long-term financial planning. I am sure that the mutual fund industry will surpass the milestone trillion AUM and 100 million investors in the next 3 to 4 years; time," Hitesh Thakkar, Acting CEO of IITI Mutual Fund, said.

According to the data, except for the focused and equity-linked saving schemes (ELSS) categories, all the other categories witnessed good net inflows.

"Inflows into equity mutual funds witnessed a dip after two months of record surges, as the flows in the large-cap category slumped by 31 per cent Rs 670.12 crore. Equity

inflows declined by 8.61 per cent MoM to stand at Rs 37,113.39 crore in July backed by a decline in the flows for small & mid cap category as well (witnessed a MoM fall of 7 per cent to Rs 1,644 crore & 35 per cent to Rs 2,109 crore respectively)," Jean Christophe Gougeon, Director & Chief Marketing Officer, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said.

Feroze Azeez, Deputy CEO, Anand Rathi Wealth Ltd, said the decline was partially fuelled by shift from PMS to mutual funds due to change in taxation.

Within the equity schemes, sector or thematic funds attracted investors with the highest net inflows of Rs 18,386 crores during the month. However, flow in the segment was less compared to Rs 22,352 crore in June. This suggests that the previous surge was likely driven by speculation, Azeez said.

Sector or thematic funds were followed by the multi-cap category that witnessed inflow of Rs 7,084 crore, Flexicap (Rs 3,052 crore, Large & Midcaps (Rs 2,622 crore) and Value (Rs 2,170 crore).

Forex reserves jump by USD 7.533 bn to record USD 674.91 bn

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves jumped by USD 7.533 billion to a new record high of USD 674.91 billion for the week ended August 2, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

The overall kitty had dropped by USD 3.471 billion to USD 667.386 billion in the previous reporting week ended July 26. The previous high for the reserves had stood at USD 670.857 billion, reached on July 18.

For the week ended August 2, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 5.162 billion to USD 592.039 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound



and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by USD 2.404 billion to USD 60.099 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 41 million to USD 18.161 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was up by USD 8 million to USD 4.62 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

Sebi asks mutual fund industry to proactively conduct stress test

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has asked the mutual fund industry to proactively conduct stress tests, a key component of risk management for the financial sector, which will help strengthen the ecosystem, its whole-time member Ananth Narayan Gopalakrishnan said on Friday.

The regulator's stress testing emphasizes the need to assess and manage liquidity risks, especially in small and midcap equity schemes.

Speaking at a mutual fund event, Gopalakrishnan highlighted the importance of modelling stress scenarios not just for individual schemes or fund houses but for the entire

mutual fund ecosystem. "It is also important to model stress scenarios for the entire composite mutual fund ecosystem. I would strongly encourage the industry and AMFI to take the lead and proactively conduct objective and credible industry wide stress tests. Themselves," Gopalakrishnan said.

He also emphasized the need to find better ways to communicate the risks associated with different mutual fund schemes.

The Sebi official mentioned that while the current risk measurement system is straightforward and has had a significant impact, it doesn't fully capture the differences in risks among various

investment schemes.

According to him, many schemes are just labelled as high risk, even though they have different kinds of risks. The goal is to improve this system to better reflect those differences while keeping it simple and easy to understand. One possible approach is to consider the portfolio's volatility and liquidity from stress tests to give a clearer picture.

"While ensuring simplicity and ease of understanding remains a key objective, perhaps the underlying volatility of the portfolio along with the liquidity of the portfolio from stress tests could be used to provide better colour all around," he added.



This comes at a time when the holdings of mutual funds by Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) and individuals have risen from about 54.3 per cent of free float of all mid cap and small cap companies as of March 2020 to 60.6 per cent as of March 2024. Several fund houses have proactively stopped lump sum investments in some small-cap schemes and also capped the amount that can be invested

through Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) into small-cap schemes.

He also highlighted the potential mismatch between the demand for paper and the supply of fresh paper coming into the ecosystem.

Gopalakrishnan said the industry can make more progress in streamlining operations and improving efficiency for investors. "At a time when instantaneous

fund transfers have become ubiquitous in our country, perhaps we should look to improve our internal processes and the security settlement ecosystem to ensure that funds are passed on to investors on the day of the settlement itself rather than a day after or two days after," he added.

Over the last few years, the mutual fund industry has made impressive strides and is now playing a crucial role in channeling financial savings towards risk capital formation. This was driven by stable macros, increased formalization, robust corporate earnings, digitisation and user friendly access.

Moreover, the number of mutual fund investors has

grown significantly from about 2 crore as of March 2019 to nearly 4.7 crore as of June 2024, an impressive compounded annual growth rate of 18 per cent during that period.

Gopalakrishnan mentioned that several exciting initiatives are in the works, developed with input from all stakeholders. These include a proposed low-ticket SIP, further breaking down regular SIPs into smaller, more accessible units (sachetisation and tokenization), and the introduction of "mutual funds lite" regulations. These new regulations will simplify rules for passively managed funds, reducing the compliance burden and encouraging competition and innovation.

LIC shares climb 3% after earnings announcement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) climbed 3 per cent on Friday after the company reported a 10 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 10,461 crore in the June 2024 quarter.

The stock jumped 3 per cent to Rs 1,159.60 on the BSE. At the NSE, it climbed 3 per cent to Rs 1,160 apiece.

The state-owned life insurance behemoth had a net profit of Rs 9,544 crore in the year-ago period.

The total income increased to Rs 2,10,910 crore during the latest June quarter as against Rs 1,88,749 crore in the year-ago period, LIC said in a regulatory filing on Thursday. LIC MD and CEO Siddhartha Mohanty said the Assets Under Management (AUM) increased to Rs 53,58,781 crore as on June 30, as compared to Rs 46,11,067 crore at the end of same quarter previous year, registering an increase of 16.22 per cent.

The total premium income for the quarter increased by 16 per cent to Rs 1,13,770 crore, as compared to Rs 98,363 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Asked about entry into the health insurance business, he said, LIC is exploring the option of picking up majority stakes in a standalone health insurance company.

PFC secures long-term loan from Japan bank for wind energy project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

PFC, a Maharatna company and leading NBFC in Indian power sector, has secured a long-term loan of JPY 25.5 billion from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). This loan is part of JBIC's 'Global Action for Reconciling Economic Growth and Environmental Preservation' ("GREEN") initiative.

In addition to JBIC's contribution, the loan is co-financed by Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation and other Japanese Banks. JBIC will also



provide a guarantee for the portion of the loan co-financed by these private financial institutions. The loan proceeds will be used to finance 300.3 MW Wind Energy Project of Ostro Kannada Power Private Limited (OKPPL) in Karnataka, India.

Gold jumps ₹1,100; Silver bounces ₹1,400

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price rallied Rs 1,100 to Rs 72,450 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, taking cues from the global market and a rise in domestic demand.

In the previous session, the precious metal had settled at Rs 71,350 per 10 grams. Silver prices also jumped Rs 1,400 to Rs 82,500 per kilogram on Friday against Rs 81,100 per kg in the previous trade, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Meanwhile, gold of 99.5 per cent purity bounced by Rs 1,100 to Rs 72,100 per 10

grams from the previous close of Rs 71,000 per 10 grams. Traders attributed the rise in gold prices to fresh demand from local jewellers and a firm trend in the international markets.

Globally, Comex gold is trading higher at USD 2,468.90 per ounce, up by USD 5.60 per ounce from the previous session.

Experts said the rise in metal price occurred despite a strong US dollar and rising Treasury yields, driven by a broader market rally. "The metal gained traction even though China's central bank abstained from gold



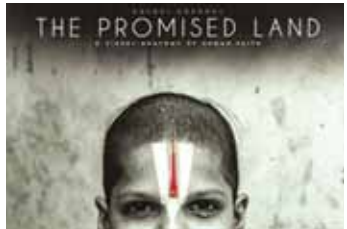
purchases for the third consecutive month," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP-Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

In the international markets, Comex silver marginally declined to USD 27.60 per ounce.

"Gold traders are advised to



A POWERFUL PORTRAIT OF FAITH THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY



The Promised Land: A Visual Anatomy of Human Faith by Aashvi Agarwal and Kounteya Sinha offers a profound exploration of Ayodhya's spiritual heritage, capturing the raw emotions and devotion of millions in striking black-and-white photography, writes SAKSHI PRIYA

At just 14 years old, Aashvi Agarwal from Kolkata has created something truly remarkable. Her collection of over 350 black-and-white photos goes beyond simple documentation, offering deep emotional insight into the city's visitors. Under the mentorship of Kounteya Sinha, a renowned journalist and photographer, her work captures the essence of Ayodhya with both historical depth and artistic flair. This coffee table book provides a unique perspective on the profound spiritual connection that draws millions to Ayodhya, a city imbued with cultural and religious significance. Agarwal's ability to depict the essence of Ayodhya's spiritual landscape is particularly noteworthy. Her images reveal the intense faith that envelops the city, especially in the wake of the Ram Mandir's inauguration. One can almost feel the reverence and awe emanating from the crowds of pilgrims captured in her lens. The monochrome format highlights the intricate details and emotions, making each image a powerful window into the heart of the city's devotion. Her use of light and shadow brings out the nuances of human expressions, highlighting moments of personal connection with the divine.



The book skillfully balances the grandeur of Ayodhya's architecture with the intimate stories of the individuals who visit. For instance, the images of devotees gathered at the Ganga ghats, their silhouettes etched against the flowing river, symbolise the eternal journey of faith. Another poignant photograph of a mother and child in the temple's soft glow captures the intimate bond between the sacred and the everyday. While the book focuses on the spiritual essence of Ayodhya, it consciously avoids delving into political or religious controversies. Instead, Agarwal's lens is focused on the human element - the pilgrims, priests and children who bring life to the city. This approach makes the book accessible and engaging to a diverse audience, inviting viewers from all walks of life to appreciate its universal themes of faith and humanity. Uma Nair, one of India's top art curators and critics, describes the book as "historic and unparalleled," commending Agarwal for capturing the essence of faith without political bias or personal agenda. Nair's praise

of the book as a "masterclass in storytelling and documentation" highlights its significance in the visual art world. Her contribution to the preface further enriches the book with her insightful perspective on its artistic and cultural value. Kounteya Sinha's influence as a mentor is evident in the disciplined yet expressive composition of the photographs. His guidance has helped shape Agarwal's natural talent into a sophisticated artistic voice, capable of conveying complex narratives through a single frame. The result is a collection of images that are not only beautiful but also deeply meaningful. *The Promised Land: A Visual Anatomy of Human Faith* is more than just a coffee table book. It is a profound exploration of faith, culture and the human spirit, captured through the lens of a young photographer with an extraordinary gift. Aashvi Agarwal's debut work is a monument to her talent and a powerful reminder of the enduring power of visual art to touch the human soul. **Self - Published Price - 4500**

A POIGNANT PORTRAIT OF SRINAGAR'S BEAUTY AND STRUGGLE

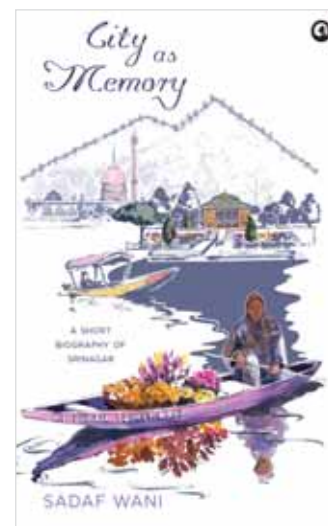
Sadaf Wani's *City as Memory* is a heartfelt exploration of Srinagar, where breathtaking beauty and deep-rooted pain exist side by side. Wani shares her personal experiences, creating a vivid picture of a city that is both fascinating and deeply scarred

TEAM VIVA

Sadaf Wani's *City as Memory - A Short Biography Of Srinagar* offers a deeply personal and insightful look into Srinagar, Kashmir - a city where breathtaking landscapes are often overshadowed by ongoing conflict. Wani blends personal stories with historical context to present a nuanced portrait of Srinagar, revealing how its natural beauty is entwined with its troubled past. The book begins by delving into Srinagar's rich historical backdrop. Founded in 250 BCE by the Buddhist king Ashoka, the city's history is marked by conquest and foreign rule. Wani uses this historical context to set the stage for understanding Srinagar's contemporary struggles. Her childhood memories from the mid-1990s, a period of waning insurgency and increasing militarisation, illustrate how historical forces



have shaped the city. The beautiful gardens and serene lakes of Srinagar are persistently overshadowed by the heavy presence of military forces, which are a constant reminder of the city's ongoing issues. As Wani transitions to her teenage years in the early 2000s, the focus shifts to a time of intensified violence and civilian unrest. Her personal experiences during this period offer a close-up view of life in a conflict zone. The contrast between the picturesque Dal Lake and the



harsh realities of military checkpoints becomes a powerful symbol of Srinagar's contradictions. Wani's descriptions of restricted access to public spaces and tourist sites shed light on the psychological and emotional impact of living

under constant surveillance. This juxtaposition highlights the deep scars left by ongoing conflict on both the city and its people. Wani's writing seamlessly weaves personal memories with broader historical and political analysis. Her stories reveal how conflict influences both individual identities and public spaces, providing a thoughtful

commentary on how political strife shapes a city's character. The contrast between Srinagar's scenic beauty and its troubled reality underscores the city's profound contradictions. Through vivid descriptions and reflective insights, Wani captures a place that is both enchanting and beleaguered. The cover of the book, illustrated by Zainab Tambawalla, truly brings Srinagar to life. It features a charming cityscape with a mosque, majestic mountains and a serene lake dotted with traditional boats. A delightful "Flower Man" in a shikara adds a touch of local character. The illustration's gentle, watercolor-like style creates a warm, nostalgic feeling, while the subtle barbed wire design hints at the region's complicated past. This artwork beautifully complements Wani's story, offering a vivid, heartfelt glimpse into Srinagar's captivating blend of beauty and struggle. **Publisher - Aleph Book Company (Rs 399)**

LEGENDARY ATHLETE ON FIELD, A SUPERSTAR SANS PRETENSIONS

PTI ■ PARIS

Neeraj Chopra is all about greatness without pretensions. A fierce competitor, a superstar of Indian sports, a humble human being who would make no bones about his limitations or desires, the double Olympic medalist from India, is all rolled into one.

He may want the top prize for himself but would not be envious if the rival pips him. He would tell himself to accept what he got, and work harder to achieve what he desires. He would not pretend that he does not care for brand endorsement. He certainly wants it, money matters, but would not compromise on his training for that.

The 17-minute interaction with the Indian media after winning a silver medal in the Paris Olympics was more than just a routine question-answer session.

"Your first throw was foul then in the second...," the scribe had not even completed his question before Chopra quipped, "Saari throw fouls hi thi sir sirf doosri hi theek thi (All throws were foul, except the second one)," he said, chuckling, and the 50-strong group joined him in laughter.

NEERAJ CHOPRA



He had skipped the Paris Diamond League in July, just before the Games, though he later clarified that the event was not part of his competition calendar.

He revealed how difficult it becomes for him to say no to the organisers despite fitness concerns.

With a wide grin, he said, "Of course I need to play more but then I send those carefully drafted messages that I have suffered a strain and I won't compete."

"In few competitions I have played just for the sake of organisers so that they don't feel bad. I keep thinking that I have entered the competition and if I don't go, they will say I am making excuses. Personally I love to compete as much as possible."

"I make plans but then you tell your team, 'let's draft a good message, saying sorry for pulling out,'" he said, laughing, but the pain of missing the event was writ large.

"No happiness is greater than playing. You work hard to compete only. Whatever strength God has given me I do."

Then came a tricky one. He was asked about the pressure of sponsors in the Olympic cycle. How he finds that balance between brand endorsements, obligations and training? Again, he came up with an honest answer.

"I put my game on top priority after Tokyo and after Tokyo Games only I got the opportunity to get associated with brands. It is difficult for us that brands come after you, and if you get it, why will you leave that opportunity. Just do it," he said, with all honesty.

"It also opens the way for kids (next generation), 'nahi to shreer hi tootega khel khel key, last mein kuch nahi rahega.'" How many athletes say that so openly?

"So I balance it. Priority is sport. This was an Olympic year, so whatever commitments I had, I fulfilled in the first half."

"You have seen I have been training outside since Tokyo." He could be upset inside for not being able to defend his title but accepted that Thursday was Nadeem's day. Lastly, volunteers did their best to push him out of the mixed zone but he would keep coming back either to sign autographs or honour the request for selfies.

After all, he knows how to find a balance between different things and saying no is the most difficult thing for him.

Sreejesh to join Bhaker as India's flag-bearer in closing ceremony

PTI ■ PARIS

Celebrated hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will join star shooter Manu Bhaker as the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games here on Sunday, a fitting honour and recognition for his contributions to the team.

Before homing in on Sreejesh, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chief PT Usha spoke with Neeraj Chopra, and she said even the superstar javelin thrower wanted to see the retiring legend as flag-bearer.

Chopra claimed a silver here to become the first Indian track and field athlete to win two Olympic medals. He won a historic gold in the Tokyo



choice" within the IOA leadership, including Chef-de-Mission Gagan Narang, and the entire Indian contingent.

The legendary Sreejesh retired from the game after India's bronze medal-winning feat at the ongoing Games, bringing to an end a glorious career spanning 18 years.

"The Indian Olympic Association is delighted to announce the nomination of hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh as the joint flag-bearer with pistol shooter Manu Bhaker at the Closing Ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games," Usha said in a statement.

The 2-1 triumph over Spain, in the bronze medal playoff match here on Thursday, was a fitting farewell to the 36-year-old custodian who has served the team with distinction for so long.

"Sreejesh has served Indian hockey in particular and Indian sport in general admirably through more than two decades," Usha said.

Sreejesh was also the flag-bearer in the closing ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Games last year.

The IOA had earlier named Bhaker as the female flag-bearer after she became the first Indian athlete post Independence to win multiple medals in a single Olympic Games. She won bronze medals in the women's 10m air pistol and the 10m air pistol mixed team (with Sarabjot Singh).

COVID-hit Lyles misses out on a double

PARIS ■ Sprinter Noah Lyles revealed he had COVID-19 after missing out on another gold medal for the United States at the Paris Olympics.

Elsewhere, French basketball star Victor Wembanyama moved closer to his dream of a first gold after helping Les Bleus beat Germany to set up a dream final against the U.S. Team after the Americans edged Serbia 95-91.

On the same Stade de France track where he won the historically close 100 meters by five thousandths of a second, Lyles was third behind gold medalist Letsile Tebogo of Botswana and U.S. Teammate Kenneth Bednarek.

Medics tended to a tired-looking Lyles and took him off in a wheelchair. Wearing a mask as he spoke with reporters, Lyles later said he had COVID.

"It definitely affected my performance," said Lyles, adding that he tested positive early Tuesday morning but was cleared to compete. The U.S. Track federation said it and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee adhered to all Olympic and Centers for Disease Control guidelines.

Boxer Imane fights for Gold to cap Olympics filled with misinformed scrutiny



AP ■ PARIS

Arbitrary sex tests that the sport's governing body imposed on the two boxers irretrievably flawed. The IBA did nothing to help its argument this week at a shambolic news conference in which its leadership contradicted itself about the tests and declined to answer basic questions about them, citing privacy concerns from the Olympic committees of Algeria and Taiwan.

The IOC repeatedly reaffirmed the two boxers' right to compete in Paris, with President Thomas Bach personally defending Khelif and Lin while calling the criticism "hate speech."

"We have two boxers who are born as women, who have been raised as women, who have a passport as a woman and have competed for many years as women," Bach said.

That hasn't stopped the international outcry tied to misconceptions around the fighters that have been amplified by Russian disinformation networks, but neither has it slowed the two.

Khelif has dominated all three bouts. But, she faces her most significant test in Yang, the 2023 world champion and the No. 2 seed in their weight class. Khelif told SNTV, a sports video partner of The Associated Press, that the wave of hateful scrutiny she has

received "harms human dignity," and she called for an end to bullying athletes. She also said a gold medal would be "the best response" to the backlash against her.

The crowds in Paris, however, have embraced both Khelif and Lin, who have heard nothing but cheers during their bouts.

A huge contingent of flag-waving Algeria fans greeted and serenaded Khelif throughout her semifinal victory Tuesday night, and she's become a hometown hero in her North African country.

Khelif has already secured Algeria's first Olympic medal in women's boxing. She will attempt to become only her country's second boxing gold medalist, joining Hocine Soltani (1996).

The gold medal fight is the culmination of Khelif's nine-day run through an Olympic tournament that began with a bizarre event. Khelif's first opponent, Angela Carini of Italy, abandoned their bout after just 46 seconds, saying she was in too much pain from Khelif's punches. An already brewing story suddenly became major international news, with the likes of former US President Donald Trump and "Harry Potter" author JK Rowling weighing in with criticism and false speculation about men competing with women in sports.

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni personally visited with Carini to share her condolences and to cast doubt on Khelif's eligibility.

Carini later said she regretted her actions and wished to apologize to Khelif. The Italian newspaper La Stampa detailed Carini's mindset in the days leading up to the bout, describing pressure from both inside and outside her team to avoid the fight amid the growing speculation over Khelif's status.

SEBI भारतीय प्रतिभूति और विनियम बोर्ड
Securities and Exchange Board of India
SEB' BHAVAN, 5TH FLOOR, 'B' WING, PLOT NO. C4-A, 'G' BLOCK, BANDRA - KURLA COMPLEX, BANDRA (EAST), MUMBAI- 400 051.

TELEPHONE: 022 2644 9686
EMAIL : YPP@SEBI.GOV.IN

Invitation for Applications under SEBI Young Professional Program
Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) invites applications from eligible candidates who are desirous of engagement with SEBI under its Young Professional Program (YPP).

The details of the aforementioned program are available on SEBI Website: www.sebi.gov.in under "Careers" section. The last date for submission of application is 21 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in the newspapers.

Human Resources Department, SEBI
CBC 15204/11/0081/2425

Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (Government of India)

File No. A-12024/1/2024-A and F Dated 01.08.2024
Subject: Engagement of Consultants on contractual basis in WDR.

Applications are invited from retired Government / Central and State PSU officials for the position of Consultants in WDR as detailed below:

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of vacancies
1.	Sr. Consultant (Technical)	01
2.	Consultant (Technical)	01
3.	Consultant (Banking)	01
4.	Consultant (Warehousing)	01
5.	Consultant (Assaying)	01
6.	Jr. Consultant (A&F)	01

2. Eligibility criteria, Terms and Conditions etc. for engagement of the above Consultants are available on the website of the WDR www.wdra.gov.in. The applications should be proficient in working on computers and typing work.

3. Interested candidates, who fulfill the eligibility criteria, may submit their applications in the prescribed proforma in a sealed cover superscripted "Selection of Consultant on Contract basis" within a period of 30 days from the date of publication in the Employment News to the Director (Admin & Finance), Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority, NCU Building, Siri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016.

(Navneet Sandhu),
CBC 08109/12/0003/2425 Deputy Director (A.F.&C)

AAVAS FINANCIERS LIMITED
(CIN:L65922RJ2011PLCO34297) Regd. & Corp. Office: 201-202, 2nd Floor, South End Square, Mansarovar Industrial Area, Jaipur. 302020

Demand Notice Under Section 13(2) of Securitisation Act of 2002

As the Loan Account Became NPA therefore The Authorised Officer (AO) Under section 13 (2) of Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 had issued 60 day demand notice to the borrower as given in the table. According to the Notice if the Borrower does not deposit the Amount within 60 days, the amount will be recovered from Auction of the security as given below. As the demand Notice sent to the borrower/guarantor has not been served, copy of demand notice has also been affixed on the secured assets as given below. Therefore you the borrower is informed to deposit the loan amount along with future interest and recovery expenses within 60 days, otherwise under the provisions of section 13 (4) and 14 of the said Act, the AO is free to take possession of the Security as given below.

Name of the Borrower	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of Mortgaged property
JEEWAN LAL BARLAY, MEENA BAI BARLAY (A/C No.) LNDUR02118-190076233	8 AUG 24 Rs. 431132/- 7 AUG 24	HOUSE NO. 231, WARD NO- 28/31 SHIV MANDIR WARD, PART OF KH. NO. 105/1 VILL. DEVBALODA, PH.NO 02 R.M.M. PATAN, TESHIL, PATAN DIST. DURG (C.G) PIN- 490025 ADMEASURING 1225 SQ.FT
MURARI SAHU, BHAGVATI SAHU, SONIYA S, PUNARAM SAHU (A/C No.) LNBIL02922-230241023	8 AUG 24 Rs. 1068300/- 7 AUG 24	PROPERTY OF KH. NO. 140/8 GOKHAMHI, P.C. NO. 07/18, NEAR GOND KHAMHI GATE, MAHAMAYA PARA, BLOCK- LOHRI, DISTT - MUNGELI (C.G.) PIN-495115 ADMEASURING 0.129 HECT.(AS PER B-1 AREA-0.105 HECT.)

Place : Jaipur Date : 10.08.2024 Authorised Officer Aavas Financiers Limited

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, Landmark Building, 4th Floor, 228A, AJC Bose Road, Kolkata 700020
CIN No: L65190GJ1994PLC021012, www.icicibank.com

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued Demand Notices to the borrower(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.

Having failed to repay the amount, the Notice is issued to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described below, by exercising powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property. Any dealings with the property will be subject to charges of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs)	Name of Branch
1.	Sarthak Katlam/ Janaki Katalam/ Mahadev Katlam/ 27/1/3 Ward No-13 Mohan Nagar Durg Chhattisgarh Durg- 491001/ LBLI00005135189/ LBDRG00004802656 LBDRG00005309158	Survey Kh No. 1327/20, Khasra No. 1327/19, Ph No-78, R.N.M. Durg, P.S.R. No. 8868, Mohan Nagar, Tehsil and Dist Durg, Bilhai Chhattisgarh (Admeasuring an area of 0.022 Hectare) Date of Physical 07.08.2024	October 18, 2022 Rs. 39,91,446/-	Durg

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/guarantors(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice, as per the provisions under Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : August 09, 2024
Place : Durg
Sincerely Authorised Signatory
For ICICI Bank Ltd.

शेन्ट बैंक होम फायनेंस लिमिटेड
Cent Bank Home Finance Limited

APPENDIX-IV-A [Rule 8(6)] TENDER CUM AUCTION SALE NOTICE-28.08.2024

Notice sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Auction is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged / charged to the secured creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd. Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" Basis on 28.08.2024 for recovery of amount mentioned against each property due to the Secured Creditor from the Borrower. The Reserve Price and Earnest Money Deposit, description of the property are as mentioned in the table below:

Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower & Account No.	Details of the Properties	Amount Outstanding as on date of Demand Notice (₹)	Date of Demand Notice		Reserve Price (₹)
			Possession	Earnest Money Deposit (₹ 10%)	
Mr. Aditya Tiwari, And Mrs. Sapna, Tiwari LAN : 00302070002816	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Flat No. LIG - 655, Block No. 41, 3rd Floor, Housing Board Colony, Boryakala, Raipur (C.G.) Area 467 Sq. Ft., Bounded, East : LIG - 653, West. LIG - 669, North: LIG 656, South: Road	5,73,559/- + interest and other charges	28.06.2018	23.07.2021 (Physical)	4,69,000/- 46,900/-

TERMS & CONDITIONS: (1) The Auction is being held on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" Basis. (2) The secured asset will be sold below the Reserve Price. (3) The intending purchaser/bidder should submit their bids in the prescribed tender form in a closed envelope separately for each property, with the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amount (not below the 10% of Reserve Price) by means of Demand Draft (Nationalized Bank)/ RTGS / Online Transfer drawn in favour of Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd. payable at Raipur on or before 28.08.2024 up to 4.00 PM at above address of Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd. Raipur Branch. (4) The sealed envelope will be opened by the Authorised Officer at Raipur Branch at 5.00 PM in the presence of eligible/ intending Bidders who have deposited EMD amount Through Demand Draft (Nationalized Bank)/ RTGS/ONLINE TRANSFER to participate in Auction sale on 28.08.2024 upto 4.00 PM. (5) To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorized Officer, there is no encumbrance on the properties under sale. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims/ rights/ dues/ charges affecting the properties, prior to submitting their bid. The Auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the Company. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the Company. The Authorized Officer/ Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/ rights/ dues. (6) It shall be the responsibility of the bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the asset and specification before submitting the bid. The inspection of properties put on auction will be permitted to interested bidders at sites on 22.08.2024 to 23.08.2024 between 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM (7) The Earnest Money Deposit(EMD) of the successful bidder/ highest bidder shall be retained towards part sale consideration and the EMD of unsuccessful bidders shall be refunded. The Earnest Money Deposit shall not bear any interest. The sale shall be confirmed in favour of the purchaser who has offered the highest sale price in his bid or tender to the Authorised Officer and shall be subject to confirmation by the Secured Creditor. The highest bid will be subject to approval of the secured creditor/ Authorised Officer. (8) The successful bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the sale price (inclusive of EMD paid), on the same day or within 24 Hours. 75% of the sale price will be paid to the Authorised Officer on or before 15th day of confirmation of sale by the Secured Creditor. In case of default of payment within the period mentioned above all the amount deposited till then shall be forfeited including Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amount and the property shall be resold and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all the claim to the property or any part of the sum for which it may be subsequently sold. (9) The purchaser shall bear the applicable stamp duties/ additional stamp duty/ transfer charges, fee etc. and also all the statutory Dues, taxes, rates, assessment charges, fees etc. owing to anybody. (10) The Authorised Officer is not bound to accept the highest offer and the Authorised Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any or all offer(s) or adjourn/ postpone/ cancel the Auction without assigning any reason thereof. (11) This is also a notice to the Borrower/Guarantor/Property owner of the aforesaid loan in respect of the sale of the above mentioned secured Asset/under SARFAESI Act 2002 (under Rule 8(6)).

Place : Raipur, Date : 09.08.2024 Authorised Officer, Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd.
House No A -54, Beside Gupta Dental Hospital, Street No 1, Near Netaji Hotel Chowk, Katora Talab, Raipur- 492001
Ph. No. 0771-2225088