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PM Modi gives Zelenskyy a comforting hug

PTI n KYIV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to find ways to end the ongoing war and that India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict. In his talks with Zelenskyy in Kyiv that took place under the shadow of the raging war, Modi said India is ever ready to play an "active role" in every effort to restore peace in Ukraine and he would even like to contribute personally in ending the conflict. The Prime Minister's wide-ranging talks with Zelenskyy primarily focused on ways to end the war and boost bilateral cooperation in areas of trade, defence, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and education. "We (India) are not neutral. From the very beginning, we have taken sides. And we have chosen the side of peace. We have come from the land of Buddha where there is no place for war," Modi said in his opening remarks during the talks. "We have come from the land of Mahatma Gandhi who had given a message of peace to the entire world," he said. The Prime Minister also asserted India's strong commitment towards respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. "I want to assure you and the entire global community that India is committed to respecting sovereignty and territorial



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives warm welcome by Indian community during his arrival at Kyiv, in Ukraine, on Friday

PIB

integrity (of states) and it is of utmost importance to us," he said. Modi also apprised Zelenskyy of his conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Samarkand in September 2022 as well as in Moscow last month. "Some time back, when I met President Putin in Samarkand, I had told him that this was not the era of war. Last month when I went to Russia, I said in clear words that a solution to any problem is never found on the battlefield," Modi said. "The solution comes through talks, dialogue and diplomacy and we should move ahead in that

direction without wasting time. Both sides should sit together and find ways to come out of this crisis," Modi said. The Prime Minister conveyed to Zelenskyy that he had come to Kyiv with a message of peace, including from the Global South. Modi arrived in Kyiv this morning on a special train on the first-ever visit to Ukraine by an Indian Prime Minister after it became independent in 1991. The Prime Minister's visit to Kyiv is seen in many quarters as a diplomatic balancing act as his trip to Russia triggered anguish among the Western countries.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Modi reiterated the need for "practical engagement" between all stakeholders to develop an innovative solution that will help build broad acceptability and contribute towards peace and stability. The Prime Minister conveyed to Zelenskyy India's willingness to contribute in "all possible ways" to facilitate an early return of peace to Ukraine, he said. It was a "very detailed, open and in many ways constructive discussion", Jaishankar said at a media briefing.

Continued on Page 2

SEBI bans Anil Ambani from securities market for five years

PTI n NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has barred industrialist Anil Ambani and 24 others from the securities market for five years on charges of diversion of funds from Reliance Home Finance Ltd. Additionally, Sebi has imposed a penalty of ` 25 crore on Ambani and restrained him from serving as a director or Key Managerial Personnel (KMP) in any listed company or Sebi-registered entity for five years. Besides, a fine ranging ` 21 crore to ` 25 crore have been levied on 24 entities. Also, the regulator barred Reliance Home Finance from the securities market for six months and slapped a fine of ` 6 lakh on it. An e-mail sent to Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group company remained unanswered. After receiving multiple complaints alleging diversion/siphoning of funds of Reliance Home Finance Ltd, Sebi conducted an investigation for the period of FY 2018-19 to ascertain any regulatory violations. In its probe, Sebi found that Anil Ambani, with the help of RHFL's KMPs — Amit Bapna, Ravindra Sudhakar and Pinkesh R Shah — have orchestrated a fraudulent



scheme to "siphon off" funds from RHFL by disguising them as loans to entities linked to him. Although the board of directors of RHFL had issued strong directives to stop such lending practices and review corporate loans regularly, the company's management ignored these orders. This suggests a significant failure of governance, driven by certain KMPs under the influence of Ambani. Given these circumstances, the company RHFL itself should not be held equally responsible as the individuals involved in the fraud. Further, the remaining entities have played the role of being either recipients of illegally obtained loans or conduits to enable illegal diversion of money from RHFL, the regulator noted.

Continued on Page 2

UP bus in Nepal veers off into a river, killing 18 Indians



Rescue work underway after an Indian number plate bus with 40 passengers coming from Pokhara to Kathmandu fell into the Marsyangdi river at Tanahun, Abu Khairani, Nepal, on Friday

PTI

PTI n KATHMANDU

At least 18 Indian pilgrims who arrived in Nepal from Maharashtra for a 10-day tour were killed after a tourist bus veered off the highway and fell 150 metres into the fast-flowing Marsyangdi River in Central Nepal approximately 120 kilometres from the capital on Friday, according to media reports. The bus from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh was heading towards Nepal's Capital Kathmandu from the resort town of Pokhara when it drove off the highway in Aaina Pahara in the Tanahun district. There were 43 people, including the driver and the co-driver, on the bus with an Indian registration number. The passengers onboard the bus were part of a group of 104 Indian pilgrims who arrived in Nepal from Maharashtra in three buses two days ago for a 10-day tour of the Himalayan nation, MyRepublica news portal reported. They came from Bhusal village in Jalgaon district. After visiting Pokhara for two days, all three buses left for the capital Kathmandu on Friday morning. Madhav Prasad Paudel, chief of the Armed Police Force (APF), Kurintar, said most of the passengers travelling in the three buses were families and relatives. A list of names of the 43 passengers who were in the ill-fated bus has been released. "An Indian tourist bus travelling from Pokhara to

Kathmandu with around 43 Indians fell 150 metres into Marshyangdi River today," the Embassy of India said in a post on X. The mission is coordinating with local authorities undertaking relief and rescue. According to Deputy Superintendent of Police of the APF Shailendra Thapa, 14 bodies were retrieved from the crash site and 16 injured were rushed to a local hospital. The bus that fell on the river bank has been badly damaged. An MI 17 helicopter of the Nepal Army has left for the accident site at Anbu Khairani in Tanahun district with a medical team for the rescue operation, MyRepublica reported. The Gandaki Province Police Office, Pokhara, said 15 of those rescued can speak. Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh Government has sent a Sub Divisional Magistrate to the incident site. An ADM has also been appointed to coordinate the relief work. Uttar Pradesh Relief Commissioner GS Naveen Kumar in a press statement said, "As per media reports and further confirmed from the MEA Nepal Division, today at about 11:30 am, a bus with registration number — UP 53 FD 7623 carrying approx 43 passengers from Maharashtra, including the driver and one assistant, fell around 150 metres into river Marshyangdi in Ambukhereni region in the Tanahu District of Nepal."

Continued on Page 2

DGCA imposes ` 98 lakh penalty on Tata-owned Air India

RAJESH KUMAR n NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday imposed a penalty of ` 98 lakh on Tata-owned Air India Limited for operating flights with non-qualified crew members from Mumbai to Riyadh. Additionally, the aviation watchdog also penalised the Director Operations and Director Training of Air India, slapping fines of ` six lakh and ` three lakh respectively. This incident was highlighted after the airline submitted a voluntary report on July 10.

DGCA said as per regulations, a trainee co-pilot is supposed to fly with a trainer captain. However in

this case, trainee co-pilot was found flying with a non trainer captain. DGCA has called it a serious scheduling mistake having serious safety ramifications. According to sources, on landing in Riyadh, the young trainee would have asked the training pilot to sign his SLF (supervised line flying) form. However, the training captain fell ill and rostering replaced him with a normal line (not training) captain. Enroute, the two pilots realised this mix-up (which wasn't their fault) by the scheduling department. The other pilot could not have sign that form as he was not a training captain. The trainee could not have known this. And



the other pilot could not have known the trainee was to do supervised flying under a training captain. In a statement, DGCA said the

concerned pilot has been warned and asked to exercise caution to prevent such occurrences in future. "M/s Air India Limited operated a flight commanded by a non-trainer line captain paired with a non-line-released first officer which has been viewed by the regulator as a serious scheduling mistake having significant safety ramifications," it said. After the incident came to its notice through a voluntary report submitted by the airline on July 10, the regulator investigated the operations of the carrier, including examination of documentations and spot check of the scheduling facility.

Continued on Page 2

Routine Indian Army drone crosses into Pakistan territory

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n JAMMU

A tactical drone belonging to the Indian Army accidentally crossed the Line of Control (LoC) from the Rajouri sector into Pakistan on Friday morning. The Pakistan Army has reportedly recovered the drone following its unintended landing. The incident occurred at approximately 9:30 am while the drone was engaged in a routine surveillance mission. In response to the situation, the Indian Army is expected to initiate discussions with the Pakistan Army at the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) level. According to reports, the drone was on a routine surveillance



mission when it crossed the line of control and it landed in Pakistan due to some technical snag.

A teenager drowns in Delhi's waterlogged Chanakyapuri

SAUMYA SHUKLA n NEW DELHI

As heavy rain lashed several parts of the national Capital on Friday morning, the city was left inundated, causing significant traffic disruptions. Tragically, a teenager drowned on a waterlogged road near The British School in the upscale Chanakyapuri area of Central Delhi. In addition, two people have died due to electrocution in the city in the past two days. A 40-year-old woman died after being electrocuted on a waterlogged street, and a 40-year-old man lost his life when rainwater entered his house and he got electrocuted after the water came into contact with the electrical circuit.



In the past one and a half months of the monsoon season, Delhi has witnessed nearly 30 rain-related deaths. According to the police, the 15-year-old deceased Sourabh lived with his family at the Vivekanand Camp in the same area.

Continued on Page 2

CBI tells SC, Kejriwal likely to tamper with evidence

RAJESH KUMAR n NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday informed the Supreme Court that Arvind Kejriwal is likely to tamper with evidence and hamper its ongoing probe in the excise policy scam case, if he is released on interim bail. In a counter-affidavit filed before the Supreme Court opposing Kejriwal's pleas challenging arrest and seeking bail in the excise policy scam case, the CBI has stated that all critical decisions in the formulation of the excise policy were taken at Kejriwal's behest and there is substantial evidence pointing to his involvement. "The petitioner does not hold any Ministerial portfolio, including that of Excise. However, it emerged over a period of time that all the critical decisions in the formulation of the new Excise Policy were taken at the behest of the Petitioner, in connivance with the then Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Excise Manish Sisodia", the CBI said in its affidavit. Justifying arrest of Kejriwal, the CBI claimed that it was necessitated after his examination on June 25, 2024 when he remained "evasive and non-cooperative, gave evasive replies regarding his role and that of other co-accused in respect of criminal conspiracy hatched." "His replies were contrary to the oral and documentary evidence gathered by CBI during the investigation and he failed to disclose the facts truthfully, despite being confronted with incriminating evidence," the CBI said.

Continued on Page 2

Amit Shah launches counter offensive on Congress in Jammu and Kashmir

MOHIT KANDHARI n JAMMU

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday launched a scathing attack on the Congress over its decision to ally with the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference in the upcoming Assembly polls beginning September 18. Accusing the Congress of repeatedly putting at risk the country's unity and security in its greed for power, the Union Home Minister also sought clarification while he posted 10 straight questions for the Congress party and Rahul Gandhi on the microblogging

site X. Before launching the party's election campaign on ground zero, the top brass of the BJP is also in the process of finalising the names of the party candidates for the 90 Assembly seats in Jammu Kashmir. As per the reports, the NC-Congress alliance has almost finalised its seat-sharing formula. Inside reports suggested the National Conference is laying its claim on at least 60 Assembly seats (41 from Kashmir and 19 from Jammu province) and offering 30 seats to the Congress (24 from



Jammu and 6 from Kashmir valley). The alliance partners are yet to formally announce the final seat-sharing

arrangement. In New Delhi, BJP president JP Nadda Friday chaired a meeting of the core group to

review the report cards of the party aspirants ahead of the final meeting of the Central Election Committee on August 25. The meeting was also attended by Shah and all the core group members, including Union Minister and Election in charge G Kishan Reddy and Ram Madhav, along with other leaders National General Secretary and BJP J&K in charge Tarun Chugh, co-in-charge Ashish Sood, MP Jammu Jugal Kishore, State General Secretary (org) Ashok Kaul, State President Ravinder

Raina, Union Minister and MP from Jammu, Dr Jitendra Singh. Meanwhile, referring to the manifesto of the National Conference the Union Home Minister asked, "Does the Congress support the National Conference's promise of a separate flag for Jammu and Kashmir? Do Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party support the JKNC's decision to restore Article 370 and 35A, thereby pushing Jammu and Kashmir back into an era of unrest and terrorism?"

Continued on Page 2

Shah to hold review meeting of Maoist affected states today

STAFF REPORTER n RAIPUR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is on a three-day visit to Chhattisgarh and will review the inter-state coordination among Maoist-affected states at a meeting in Raipur on Saturday.

Later, in another meeting the same day, he will also review security and development initiatives in Maoists-hit areas of Chhattisgarh.

The Chief Secretaries and Directors General of Police of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, besides top security officials of the Central government, are expected to attend the inter-state coordination



meeting. During his visit to the state, Shah will also visit the Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya

Ashram in Chhamparan, review the functioning of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Raipur and attend a meeting related to the Ministry of Cooperation.

Since the BJP took power in Chhattisgarh last year, about 125 Maoists have been killed, 352 arrested and about 175 have surrendered.

According to the Home Ministry data, the number of Naxalite incidents fell from 14,862 in 2004-14 to 7,128 in 2014-23.

The number of deaths of security forces personnel due to the Maoists plunged by 72 per cent, from 1,750 in 2004-14 to 485 in 2014-23. The number of civilian deaths was down by 68 per cent, from 4,285 to 1,383, in the same period.

MoU to incorporate modern skills in schools education

STAFF REPORTER n RAIPUR

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) in Chhattisgarh and the Magic Bus India Foundation have signed an MoU to incorporate 21st century life skills education into the government school curriculum.

An official communiqué said on Friday that the three-year partnership will benefit about 40,000 children from grades 6 to 10 in 800 government schools in the state.

The programme includes skill training such as information literacy, decision-making, problem solving, effective communication, and more to make students self-empowered.



The programme will be first implemented in the tribal and aspiring districts of the Bastar division. Then it will be expanded to the remaining districts.

Master trainers will first train the teachers, who will then impart the skills to the

students. A monitoring and session-tracking system will also be implemented by a WhatsApp-based AI chatbot.

On this occasion, SCERT Director Rajendra Kumar Katara said this initiative will improve the quality of education and turn students

into responsible and competent citizens.

The Magic Bus India Foundation is a non-profit working in the field of education and skills. It has empowered over 30 lakh adolescents and 3.7 lakh youths across the country.

Two Maoists with Rs 16 lakhs bounty surrender in Sukma



STAFF REPORTER n SUKMA

Two Maoists carrying a cumulative reward of Rs 16 lakhs surrendered on Friday in Sukma district in Chhattisgarh.

Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan identified them as Madkam Muya (22) and Madkam Sanna (35).

Muya was a member of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army battalion no 1 of the outlawed Maoist outfit. Sanna was its platoon party committee member. Both carried a bounty of Rs 8 lakh each on their heads. They were involved in several instances of Maoist violence.

Sachin Pilot slams Cong MLA arrest

Congress to stage protests across state today

STAFF REPORTER n RAIPUR

Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Friday slammed the BJP government in Chhattisgarh for arresting his party MLA Devendra Yadav in connection with the June 10 arson in Balodabazar city.

The BJP was targeting political opponents both at the Centre and the state using central agencies and police, the Congress' in-charge for Chhattisgarh told reporters outside the Raipur Central Jail after meeting Yadav.

"An unfortunate incident happened in Balodabazar which was the result of the state government's failure. Neither the Centre nor the state government is able to ensure protection to Satnamis, Dalits and Adivasis. Instead of taking action against the anti-



social elements involved in that incident, our two-time MLA Devendra Yadav was arrested as part of a political conspiracy," he said. Pilot also claimed there

was a bad example by arresting him without any evidence against him, he said.

"His arrest is clearly political vendetta. If they will do such things against their political opponents then people will not tolerate it," he said.

"I met Yadav today in jail and he is ready to fight for tribals, Satnamis and backwards. We will fight against his arrest both politically and legally," he said.

On Saturday, Congress workers will stage protests across the state against Yadav's arrest, he said.

Yadav, who represents Bhilai Nagar constituency in Durg district, was held on August 17 in Balodabazar-Bhatapara district. He is in judicial remand till August 27.

DPS Bhilai reaches UBI's U-Genius Quiz finals



STAFF REPORTER n RAIPUR

The team of Delhi Public School from Chhattisgarh's Bhilai has reached the finals of the Union Bank of India's (UBI) U-Genius Quiz Competition held in Raipur on Friday.

About 700 students from 85 schools participated. There were six rounds in

the final stage, and DPS Bhilai won by scoring 450 marks.

The UBI is organising this competition nationally. One team is being selected from each state, and the final round will be held in Mumbai.

The winners will be awarded Rs 2 lakh as the first prize and Rs 1 lakh as the second prize.

Six more EV charging stations in Raipur soon

STAFF REPORTER n RAIPUR

The Raipur Municipal Corporation is set to establish fast EV charging stations at six parking locations, it was announced on Friday.

Presently, fast four-wheeler EV charging stations are operational at four locations: the RMC headquarters parking area, the Interstate Bus Stand at Bhatagaon, the multi-level parking in front of the Collectorate and the old bus stand multi-level parking near Jaistambh Chowk in Raipur city, an official statement said.

Between April and July 2024, a total of 3,499.17 units of electricity have been consumed at these stations.

The revenue from these stations is approximately Rs 10.50 per unit, providing significant earnings to the RMC.

The consumption of electricity at the EV charging stations has increased by about 30 per cent each month,



indicating a positive response from citizens.

In April 2024, the four EV charging stations consumed 378.83 units of electricity. In May, this totalled 701.24 units. In June, it went

up to 1,050.10 units and in July it reached 1,369 units.

Over the four months from April to July 2024, the total electricity consumption at these four EV charging stations was 3,499.17 units.



The Modak pest has attacked certain villages in tribal-dominated Sukma district of Bastar region in Chhattisgarh. Agriculture scientists have prescribed the farmers use of Chlorpyrifos 50 per cent EC to get rid of them.

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियंता. लो.नि.वि. संभाग क्र-0-3.
डी-1/17, सेक्टर-17, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला-रायपुर (छ.ग.)

प्रथम निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना
दिनांक: 21-08-2024

NIT-11/2024-2025/व ले लि

निविदा प्रपत्र क्रय करने हेतु आवेदन :- 09/09/2024 अपराह्न 5.30 बजे तक प्रस्तुत करने की अंतिम तिथि

टेकेंदरों द्वारा प्रस्तुत निविदाये प्राप्त :- 16/09/2024 अपराह्न 5.30 बजे तक करने की अंतिम तिथि

निविदा खोलने की तिथि: 18/09/2024 पूर्वाह्न 11.30 बजे तक

निविदाकारों की श्रेणी:- ई-पंजीयन के अंतर्गत श्रेणी "द" से "अ" तक

निविदा क्र	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की अनुमानित लागत (लाख में) अमानत राशि (रु.में) बैंक सार्वेरी (रु.में)
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निविदा संबंधी शर्त विभागीय वेबसाइट www.cg.nic.in/pwdraipur में Live Tender के अंतर्गत निविदा प्रपत्र में उपलब्ध है। इनका अवलोकन संबंधित संभाग कार्यालय में किया जा सकता है। अन्य जानकारी हेतु संभागीय कार्यालय में संपर्क करें

कार्यपालन अभियंता
लोक निर्माण विभाग, संभाग क्र-3
रायपुर

G-242502005/3

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.W.D. KANKER CIRCLE KANKER (C.G.)

e-Procurement Tender Notice

Online tenders are invited for Construction Of Building work up to Date 10/09/2024

Sr No	NIT No.	System Tender No.	Name of work	Probable Amount of Contract.	Tender Downloaded upto
1	2	3	4	5	6
01	36	157855	Balance Work For Construction of Administrative Cum Academic Building At Polytechnic i/e Water Supply and Electrification work at Kondagaon.	176.93 Lakh	10.09.2024

All Documents related to Tender are to be submitted by Tenderers online only, failing which the tenderer can not participate in the bidding, for tender details please visit <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

Note:- 1st Call

Superintending Engineer P.W.D, Kanker Circle Kanker

G-242502002/3

Outreach programme to benefit PVTG from today

STAFF REPORTER n RAIPUR

Netam in a statement said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the national mega event to be organized under Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN) scheme in Jharkhand. From there, he will address all the districts with PVTG settlements across the country.

One of the PVTG-dominated districts in Chhattisgarh will be identified for the state-level mega event.

In addition to the mega event, district-level programs will also be organized in all the PM JANMAN districts.

Chhattisgarh Minister for Tribal Welfare Ramvihar Netam on Friday outlined the mega event and the IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) campaign, which will be held across 18 districts from August 23 to September 10.

Govt issues advisory to tackle Swine flu, seasonal diseases

STAFF REPORTER n BILASPUR

Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Prabhat Srivastava said the symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of the common cold, cough and fever.

Appealing for caution, he said to wear a mask while in the presence of sick people and maintain a distance of at least one metre.

Also, wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer. Wear a mask in crowded places, he said.

Eat nutritiously, get enough rest and reduce stress. Maintain hygiene and clean surfaces and objects regularly. Seek medical attention immediately if you notice symptoms, he said.

With the rising cases of swine flu and seasonal diseases, the Chhattisgarh Health Department on Friday urged people to take precautions, issued Helpline numbers and an advisory for Bilaspur district.

For any help, one can contact CIMS Helpline number 75874-85907, the District Hospital on 07752-480251, Apollo Hospital on 97555-50834 and the Health Department toll free number 104.

The Helpline numbers will be operational 24 hours a day and will provide immediate assistance.

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India, US sign key defence pacts during Rajnath's Washington visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

In an effort to further strengthen defence ties, India and US have inked two major agreements - Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers.

Two important documents have been signed in Washington DC as Raksha Mantri Shri @rajnathsingh's visit to the United States begins. Senior Defence officials from both sides concluded the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA), and Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers," Defence Ministry said in a social media post.

The US and India entered into a "bilateral, non-binding Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA)", the US Department of Defence (DoD) said in a press release on Thursday.

Through this SOSA, the US and India agree to provide reciprocal priority support for goods and services that promote National defence.

Global Strategic Partnership, officials said.

The agreements signed on Thursday pertain to the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers.

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Through this SOSA, the US and India agree to provide reciprocal priority support for goods and services that promote National defence.



The Arrangement will enable both countries to acquire the industrial resources they need from one another to resolve unanticipated supply chain disruptions to meet national security needs, it said.

The SOSA was signed by Dr Vic Ramdass, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Industrial Base Policy, on behalf of the US, and Samir Kumar Sinha, Additional Secretary and Director General (Acquisitions), on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

"This Security of Supply Arrangement represents a pivotal moment in the US-India Major Defence Partner relationship and will be a key factor in strengthening the US-India Defence

Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI)," said Ramdass.

"I look forward to OUSD(A&S) hosting the next DTTI meeting this fall to deepen cooperation between our respective defence industrial bases and pursue bilateral co-development, co-production, and co-sustainability initiatives," he said.

In the Arrangement, the US and India commit to support one another's priority delivery requests for procurement of critical national defence resources.

The US will provide India assurances under the US Defence Priorities and Allocations System (DPAS), with programme determinations by DoD and rating authorisation by the Department of Commerce (DOC).

India will in turn establish a Government-Industry Code of Conduct with its industrial base, where Indian firms will voluntarily agree to make every reasonable effort to provide the US priority

support, the release said.

With an expanding global supply chain for DOD, SOSAs are an important mechanism for DoD to strengthen interoperability with US defence trade partners.

The Arrangements institute working groups, establish communication mechanisms, streamline DoD processes, and proactively act to allay anticipated supply chain issues in peacetime, emergency, and armed conflict.

They are also a useful tool in developing investment strategies to ensure redundancy and security, it said. India is the 18th SOSA partner of the US. Other SOSA partners include Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

Meanwhile, Rajnath said India and US, together, are a formidable force which can ensure peace, prosperity and stability in the world.

He made this assertion while interacting with the Indian diaspora after landing in Washington.

He described India and US as natural allies, which are destined to be strong partners, and this collaboration is growing continuously.

Rajnath re-asserted the fact that under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's stature has grown on the global stage.

"Earlier, India's words at international fora were not heeded; but today, the whole world listens carefully," he said. Rajnath pointed out that before 2014, India was among the 'Fragile Five' nations, as coined by investment firm Morgan Stanley, and today it finds itself among the 'Fabulous Five' economies of the world.

He cited the firm's recent report, which says that India will become the third largest economy by 2027.

He stressed that the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

ensured that the Indian economy was not adversely impacted as compared to other countries.

The defence minister highlighted the fact that the government has successfully brought 25 crore people above poverty line.

He added that as per latest data, retail inflation fell to a five-year low of 3.54% and foreign exchange reserves have reached an all-time high of \$675 billion.

He enumerated the steps taken by the Government to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence, including the notification of Positive Indigenisation Lists comprising over 5,000 items. He emphasised that the consistent efforts are being made to ensure that state-of-the-art defence items are manufactured on Indian soil by domestic companies.

Rajnath acknowledged the fact that the defence exports, which were Rs 600 crore before the current government came to power, have now risen significantly to over Rs 21,000 crore.



President Murmu lauds ISRO's debris-free space mission goal by 2030

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday voiced concern over increasing space debris as a result of numerous satellites being placed in orbit and lauded ISRO for setting itself a target to make future space missions debris free by 2030.

She was speaking at the celebration of the maiden National Space Day to mark the first anniversary of the landing of India's Chandrayaan-3 project. Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people on the first National Space Day, and said his Government has taken a series of futuristic decisions relating to this sector and will do even more in the times to come. Modi had announced the celebration of the National Space Day last year following India's success in landing its first spacecraft on the moon on this day with the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

He said in a social media post, "Greetings to everyone on the first National Space Day. We recall with great pride our nation's achievements in the space sector. It is also a day to laud the contributions of our space scientists."

President Murmu said "Space debris can cause problems for space missions," she said during the event at Bharat Mandapam here that was attended by Union minister Jitendra Singh, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S Somanath, engineers, ISRO scientists and representatives of the country's nascent space industry.

The President appreciated the ISRO System for Safe and Sustainable Operations Management facility, which ensures continuous progress of space research activities.

"I am also happy to note that India is moving forward to make all its space missions debris free by 2030," Murmu said. The President said ISRO had made remarkable achievements in the space sector as well as invaluable contributions to the country's social and economic development.

She appreciated the dedicated scientists who placed India's space programme among the best in the world by using minimum resources.

The President said the progress of India's space sector was extraordinary. "Be it a successfully completed Mars mission with limited resources or the successful launch of more than a hundred satellites at once, we have made many impressive achievements," she said.

At the event, Dr Jitendra Singh announced that an Indian will land on the surface of Moon, fifteen years from now, in the year 2040 and highlighted the historic landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon's South Pole, a feat that astonished the world and established India as a leader in space exploration. Later the President also presented awards to winners of the Robotics Challenge and the Bharatiya Antariksh Hackathon on the occasion.

"In the last six decades, India has not only touched the lives of its citizens but also reached the Moon," said Dr. Jitendra Singh.

Govind takes charge as Union Home Secretary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Senior IAS officer Govind Mohan on Friday took charge as the Union Home Secretary following the retirement of incumbent Ajay Kumar Bhalla.

Mohan, a 1989-batch IAS officer of Sikkim cadre, was serving as Union Culture Secretary before being appointed as Union Home Secretary last week.

A B.Tech from Banaras Hindu University and PG Diploma from IIM, Ahmedabad, the senior bureaucrat has a wide experience of serving both the Sikkim and the Central Governments in various capacities. Mohan is considered to be one of the brilliant officers presently serving in the Government and known for his diligence. He had earlier served the Home Ministry as additional Secretary handling several key divisions. A seasoned bureaucrat, Mohan was also the Government's key officer during the COVID-19 pandemic and tasked with overseeing implementation of decisions taken for various protocols and ensuring smooth coordination with States.

As Union Culture Secretary, Mohan has successfully launched two flagship programmes of the Modi Government 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and 'Har Ghar Tiranga movement'.

The 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is an initiative to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Independence of the country and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.

Hosting of the national flag in every home, 'Tiranga Yatras', 'Tiranga' rallies and 'Tiranga' runs are key initiatives under the 'Har Ghar Tiranga movement'. After the launch of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga movement', job opportunities were created for thousands of women associated with self-help groups (SHGs), which have been increasingly taken over flag production to meet the massive demand, officials said.

Steps to modernise railways discussed at ASSOCHAM meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

India is the country with maximum electrification for expansion of tracks, Mukul Saran Mathur, Additional Member, Commercial, Ministry of Railways, said in his inaugural address at the ASSOCHAM National Conference held on Friday in New Delhi.

Eminent experts, stakeholders and senior government officials from the Railway Ministry deliberated upon a range of issues and transformative technical solutions for 'Modernisation of Railway for Viksit Bharat'.

Mathur, while focusing on the achievements of the railways, said the rail network has been increased to 68,000 km currently and more capacity must be created immediately because two crore people travel every day by train in the country.

He added that more than 5,000 special trains have recently been operated to transport migrants. He also mentioned an example for Vande Bharat trains, a major "flagship product" in India.

According to Mathur, Rs 85,000-crore plan was provided for railways expansion in 2023-24.

He said the railways' refund process for tickets has become efficient as it has been reduced by one-two business days.

Deepak Sharma, Senior Member ASSOCHAM and CEO, River Engineering Pvt Ltd, highlighted the modernisation of railways as a key component in India's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India).

Sharma said the initiative aims to transform the Indian Railways into a world class network that supports economic growth, enhances connectivity, and improves the quality of life for millions of people.

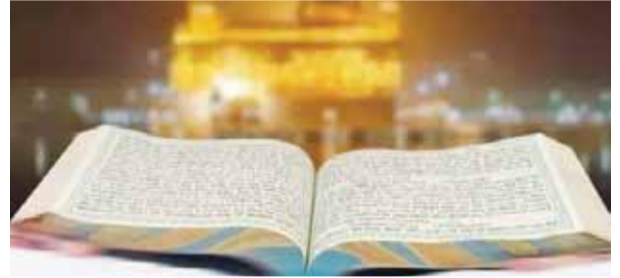
Sanjay Bajpai, Co-chairman, the National Council on Logistics and Warehousing, ASSOCHAM and Executive



Director, the Container Corporation of India Ltd talked about how AI and machine learning are useful in terminals for 100 per cent cargo visibility. We aim to have the last mile connectivity as we are working on the Gati Shakti plan, he added.

Animesh Gupta, a scientist at Goldratt Research Labs USA, discussed the gaps in railways related to technology and freight. "We need to reach 40 per cent freight by rail to meet the demands. There's a need to reduce the environmental footprint of railway operations. The railway sector needs to ensure that digital solutions are secure and protected from cyber threats," Gupta said.

Concentrating on transportation dependability, President of ACTO Manish Puri said that in order to satisfy capacity and demand, infrastructure and logistical output are the main areas of concern due to the increase in trade activity. In order to realise the goal of 'Viksit Bharat', contemporary railway transition is essential since it advances the country's economy, society, and technology.



India seeks return of seized Guru Granth Sahib copies from Qatar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

India on Friday said it has taken up with Qatar reports of seizure of copies of the Guru Granth Sahib, and is according high priority to the matter.

"We have seen reports regarding the Guru Granth Sahib seized by the Qatari authorities and the demand of their release by the Sikh community," External Affairs Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said.

He said the Government has already taken up the matter with the Qatar side and the Indian Embassy in Doha has kept the Sikh community in the Qatari capital abreast of the developments.

"It is important to note that

two Swaroops of Guru Granth Sahib were taken by Qatari authorities from two individuals/groups who were charged for running religious establishment without approval of the government of Qatar," Jaiswal said. "Our Embassy rendered all possible assistance within the ambit of local laws and regulations," he said.

The Spokesperson was responding to media queries on the issue.

"One Swaroop of the Holy Book was returned by Qatari authorities and it was assured that the other Swaroop is also kept with respect," Jaiswal said.

"We continue to follow up the matter with Qatari authorities with high priority and hope for early resolution," he said.

Health Ministry to replace colonial convocation attire with local dress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

In a bid to move away from the "colonial legacy" of wearing the black robe and cap for convocation ceremonies and instead embrace attire that reflects India's diverse cultural heritage, the Union Health Ministry has directed its institutes including AIIMS to develop a new dress code for convocation ceremonies that reflects local traditions.

"Currently, the black robe and cap is being used during convocation by various institutes of the ministry," the communication said. This attire originated in the middle ages in Europe and was introduced by the British in all their colonies," said the Ministry in a statement.



"The above tradition is a colonial legacy which needs to be changed," the communication to all of its institutes said. "Accordingly it has been decided by the ministry that the various institutes of the Ministry including AIIMS/TNIs engaged in imparting medical education will design (an) appropriate India(n) dress code for the convocation ceremony of their institute -

based on local traditions of the state in which the institute is located," the communication stated.

Overall, the goal is to modernise and localise the convocation experience, making it more relevant and reflective of India's rich and varied cultural landscape.

The proposed dress codes will need to be submitted for approval by the Union Health Secretary.

Plea for clarity on new captive elephant genetic data rules

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Senior Congress Leader Jairam Ramesh on Friday urged Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav to provide clarity on a recent circular regarding the transport of captive elephants.

Ramesh sought detailed information on the process used by the Ministry to establish the genetic profiles of elephants, including how this data is being generated and who is responsible for maintaining the database.

In a letter to Yadav, the former Environment Minister Ramesh drew the attention of the Government that on August 20, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change reminded the Elephant Range States of the Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024.

"In particular attention was drawn to the provision of clause (7) Terms and Conditions, sub-clause (3) which mandates that 'No transfer of an elephant shall be permissible unless genetic profile of the elephant has been entered in the electronic monitoring application of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,'" Ramesh said in his letter to Yadav. Ramesh said this condition itself raises four issues on which there is need for clarity in the public domain.

How exactly is the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change establishing the genetic profile of each elephant, Ramesh asked.



"Who is generating this data and maintaining this database? How exactly does the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change intend to use this genetic data for the protection of captive and wild elephants?" he said.

"I presume that we have the laboratory infrastructure with the necessary sequencing facilities," Ramesh said.

On August 20, the Ministry had issued a memorandum to Chief Wildlife Wardens and Principal Chief Forest Conservators regarding the Captive Elephant (Transfer and Transport) Rules. These rules are designed to regulate the movement of captive elephants within and between States in India.

A key provision, sub-clause 3, mandates that no elephant can be transferred unless its genetic profile is recorded in the Ministry's electronic monitoring application. The memorandum instructs State officials to ensure full compliance with these requirements to facilitate proper tracking and management of captive elephants.

Docs resume work after SC order, easing patients woes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

Much to the relief of the patients, resident doctors across the country returned to work on Friday, bringing an end to their 11-day strike which was sparked by the alleged rape and murder of a junior doctor at RG Kar Medical College in Kolkata on August 9.

The strike, which began on August 12, had led to the shutdown of non-emergency services, including outpatient departments (OPD) and diagnostics, causing significant delays in patient care.

The medics have been advocating for a central law to prevent violence against healthcare professionals in the workplace.

After the Supreme Court made an appeal to all the resident doctors across the country to resume work, the Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA), which was the first to give the nationwide strike call, on Friday said that they are suspending nationwide elective services halt and resuming duties.

However, while resident doctors across the country resumed their duties, protests continue in West Bengal, where the issue originated. In Bengal, the agitating junior doctors have maintained their cease-work, leading to ongoing disruptions in State-run hospitals.

The Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA), a key resident doctors association, said "FAIMA has decided to call off the strike following



positive directions from the Chief Justice of India. We welcome the acceptance of our prayers for interim protections and the necessary steps to enhance hospital security."

Dr. Dhruv Chauhan, the National Council Coordinator of the Indian Medical Association-Junior Doctors Network (IMA-JDN), said that their demands for the Central Protection Act, which is in the hands of the Government of India is still the same, and will continue to fight for our rights.

The United Doctors Front Association (UDF) also said in response to the SC's proactive and reassuring directives, they have resolved to suspend the ongoing nationwide strike.

The Supreme Court had directed healthcare professionals to return to work, emphasising that both judges and doctors, who handle matters of life and liberty, should not engage in strikes.

It also assured that no coercive action would be taken against the striking medics and instructed the Centre to enhance safety measures for healthcare personnel.

PM-JANMAN campaign to uplift tribes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI

To deliver crucial services and benefits to Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in 194 districts across India, the Government has launched a nationwide campaign under the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyaan (PM-JANMAN) which was conceived last year.

The campaign to be running until September 10 seeks to address the social, economic, and educational challenges faced by PVTGs by providing essential services such as housing, clean water, sanitation, education, healthcare, and improved connectivity.

India's Scheduled Tribe (ST) population stands at 10.45 crore, with 75 communities classified as PVTGs in 18 states and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. PM-JANMAN was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas on November 15 last year in Jharkhand with an aim to provide essential services like housing, clean water, sanitation, education, healthcare, and better road and telecom connectivity to PVTG families.

A budget of Rs 15,000 crore has been allocated over three years starting from 2023. Last year, a similar campaign reached 100 districts, covering 500 blocks and 15,000 habitations.

This year, the effort will expand to cover 28,700 habitations and reach 44.6 lakh individuals in 194 districts.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Surging ahead

Kamala's socialism resonates with people while personal attacks by Trump diminish his chances in the US elections

As the United States gears up for another contentious election, the spotlight is once again on Vice President Kamala Harris. Her steadfast commitment to secularism has struck a chord with a diverse electorate that values the separation of church and state. In contrast, former President Donald Trump's attacks on Harris, aimed at undermining her credibility, may be backfiring, potentially diminishing his chances in the upcoming elections. As the political climate in the United States continues to evolve, Vice President Kamala Harris has emerged as a prominent advocate for policies rooted in democratic socialism. Her focus on social justice, economic equality, and government intervention to address systemic issues resonates with a growing segment of the American electorate. Meanwhile, former President Donald Trump's attacks on Harris appear to be weakening his appeal, potentially diminishing his chances in the upcoming elections. Kamala Harris's brand of socialism centres on creating a fairer society through progressive taxation expanded healthcare access, and stronger social safety nets. Her policies aim to address the widening wealth gap, ensure affordable education, and promote racial and gender equality. These ideas have gained traction, particularly among younger voters, minorities, and working-class Americans who feel left behind by the current economic system. Harris's commitment to these principles is seen as a response to the pressing needs of a diverse and economically stratified nation. By advocating for policies that prioritize the needs of the many over the interests of the few, Harris is tapping into a widespread desire for systemic change. In contrast, Donald Trump's strategy has often relied on personal attacks, attempting to discredit Harris by questioning her policies and character. However, these comments have not only failed to undermine Harris's growing support but may also be backfiring on Trump himself. Many voters perceive Trump's rhetoric as divisive and out of touch with the issues that matter most to them, such as healthcare, education, and economic justice. Moreover, Trump's focus on personal attacks rather than substantive policy debates could be alienating voters who are looking for solutions to real problems. As the electorate becomes increasingly concerned with issues like income inequality, climate change, and access to healthcare, Trump's attacks may come across as a distraction from the pressing issues at hand. Kamala Harris's approach, rooted in democratic socialism, offers a vision of an America where everyone has a fair shot at success. This vision is resonating with a growing number of voters who are frustrated with the status quo and are seeking leaders who will champion their interests. Meanwhile, Trump's jabs may be costing him the support of those who are tired of political mudslinging and are looking for a leader who can address their needs.



These incidents happened within days when the entire nation was gripped by the horrors of the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital at Kolkata. And these are not isolated incidents – they are part of a grim reality where a rape is reported every 21 minutes. Yet, despite the horror these crimes evoke, they are quickly forgotten by all except the victims and their families, who are left to fight lonely, often futile battles for justice for years, which sometimes is only the ray of hope for them. India's response to sexual violence remains disturbingly inadequate. More than a decade has passed since the Nirbhaya case – a brutal gang rape that shocked the nation and led to the passage of new sexual assault laws. But the situation has barely improved. Nearly 50 years before Nirbhaya, the fearless, Aruna Shanbaug, a 25-year-old nurse, was viciously assaulted by a hospital cleaner in Mumbai. Sodomized, strangled with a metal chain, and left for dead, she survived – only to remain in a vegetative state for 41 years until her death. Her ordeal led to a landmark judgment on passive euthanasia in India, yet her suffering stands as a testament to the enduring failures of a society that continues to fail its women. The recent brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old postgraduate trainee doctor in Kolkata serves as a grim reminder that little has changed. Female healthcare workers or

women workers per se, still fear for their safety even in supposed sanctuaries such as hospitals. This ongoing crisis underscores the dire need for real change – a change that goes beyond laws and addresses the deep-seated cultural and institutional failures that allow such atrocities to persist. This incident of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital has shaken the conscience of West Bengal, and the ripple effects are being felt across the political landscape – and the entire nation. The public's reaction to this crime has been fierce and unforgiving. Protests have erupted across the state, with citizens demanding justice not only for the victim but also calling for broader reforms to ensure such incidents are not repeated. The political and social response to the incident has been equally chaotic. The decision for a swift call for a CBI investigation and capital punishment, alongside the rally for "Khela Hobe Divas," has been met with criticism for its timing and focus. Additionally, state actions, such as the transfer of doctors allegedly involved in protests and the use of social media to counter celebrity critiques (read singers), have further fueled debates about the handling of the case. The political implications of this incident could be far-reaching. Beyond politics, the safety of women and girls in India remains a critical concern, deeply rooted in societal norms, legal frameworks, and institutional practices. Despite advancements in legislation and public awareness, instances of violence and harassment against women are prevalent. High-profile cases of assault, trafficking, and domestic violence highlight the persistent vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. The legal system, while equipped with laws like the 'Protection of Human Rights Act' and the 'Criminal Law Amendment Act', or for that matter, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO of 2012), often struggles with implementation and enforcement. There are systemic delays in justice delivery and shortcomings in police response, which exacerbate the sense of insecurity. Protective measures, including the establishment of fast-track courts and specialized police units, aim to address these issues and provide some ray of light in this dark world for women. Further, societal attitudes towards women play a significant role in undermining these measures. Deep-seated patriarchal views and cultural practices continue to normalize gender-based violence, making it difficult for protective laws to translate into tangible safety for women. The lack of comprehensive sexual education and community engagement further perpetuates harmful stereotypes and behaviours. Right education for the boys at home is another crucial area for intervention by the government and NGOs. The role of NGOs and grassroots movements has been pivotal in advocating for women's rights and safety. Effective safety measures must involve not only legal reforms but also significant shifts in overall attitudes and community involvement. The challenge before the authorities is not just one of governance but of moral leadership – a test that will define their legacy to guarantee safety to women and girl children. *Aami tomari maatiro konya, janoni bosundhara /Tobe aamar manobojanmo keno bonchito kora...* (I am no other, but the daughter of yours, O' motherland/Why deprive me of the legacy of my human life...). Written in the year 1933 by Rabindranath Tagore, these lines echo far and wide and call for collective action. It is time to stand up to see where we stand and where we fail. (The writer is Program Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

PICTALK



A mahout bathes an elephant at Elephant Orphanage in Pinnawala

PTI

Empowering Women: Mandatory self-defence training in schools

This proactive approach could provide women with the skills and confidence to fend off potential attackers, empowering them

The cauldron of public rage is boiling over in the aftermath of the rape and murder of a young resident doctor in Kolkata. It isn't the first time that the nation is witnessing such gruesomeness, and it won't be the last either unless something drastic happens at all levels – societal, legal and psychological.

It isn't that there were no horrific instances of sexual assault on women before Nirbhaya. There were, but Nirbhaya's case brought the issue of women's safety (or the lack of it) front and centre, and it resulted in instituting legislation that offered women more protection and legal support. Stringent measures have been implemented, yet incidents keep happening across the country. It nearly feels like no external force can stem this rot, and it is time for women to take their protection into their own hands, literally. In light of the above, I am wondering if it wouldn't be more prudent and practical to arm our girls with self-defence tactics right from the beginning. Crimes against women have become so reg-



ular, that attention must now turn towards finding means to empower women in a way that will give them confidence and security in different realms of their professional and private lives. The violations can probably be attributed to a deep-rooted patriarchal mindset that has been the bane of women (not just in India), but fixing the blame on society or its vagaries does not help us fight critical issues such as this. It's worse when women themselves are held responsible for the abuses they are subjected to. If society wants to pin the responsibility of safety on women, then there must be an action plan to arm women with the necessary armament. In simple words, why not

make martial arts and other self-defence lessons compulsory in the school curriculum? If there can be a sports or PT period, there can be a martial arts period too. The very idea of equipping our girls with the skills to fend off troublemakers makes me jubilant and offers hope that no legislation can offer. Widespread condemnation and demand for punitive action cannot pre-empt future instances.

What can curb it is the general knowledge among errant men that the woman they have cornered is capable of packing a punch, a chop or a kick that will neutralise them. Martial arts has been an optional activity for girls in an urban setting, but only when it is introduced as a part of the curriculum from primary grades in every school and they must be genuinely emancipated from the dangers that lurk at every corner of their daily lives. It is encouraging to learn that the government is intent on its aim to ensure the safety of women in the country and hand out the severest punishment to perpetrators,

but these are steps taken post-incident. What is suggested in this piece is a plan to provide a pre-emptive measure, a way to forestall violent attacks against women by their defences. It can deter a good majority of men on the loose with vagrant ideas. Parents who are better informed enrol their daughters in self-defence programmes, but they are few and far between. The real difference will be seen only when every school-going child is taught the techniques to ward off an offender by dint of their physical prowess. If our women can win medals in the boxing and wrestling rings, if they can build enough brawns along with brains in school, if every man who casts a salacious glance on a woman remembers that his prospective victim is not a push-over, then there will be change. Let us empower our girls with the spunk to keep the marauders at bay.

(The author is a columnist, author and writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

VALID CONCERNS ON E-COMMERCE
Madam — Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, has raised valid concerns about the questionable practices of e-commerce companies, particularly regarding predatory pricing, cash burning, successive years of losses, and the use of FDI to cover these losses. His concerns emphasize the need for policymakers to ensure a level playing field for local businesses and industries. More troubling is the destination and intent behind the FDI in these companies. E-commerce companies consistently declare significant losses in their income tax returns, carrying them forward year after year to offset against future profits. This cycle continues with mergers, where the losses of merged companies are also carried forward. In contrast, local traders and entrepreneurs pay regular taxes on their incomes, while e-commerce companies avoid taxes through their accounting strategies. This tax advantage, along with the convenience and wide range of products offered by online trade, gives e-commerce companies a significant edge. Goyal suggests that cash burn by e-commerce companies should not be allowed as a deduction, and the period for carrying forward losses should be limited to a maximum of two years. The impact of e-commerce on local traders is already evident, with potential job losses on the horizon. Another concern is the shift of youth from traditional businesses and agriculture to delivery jobs, leading to their migration from rural areas to metro cities.

labour and forced marriages are direct examples of today's slavery whereas domestic work, construction activities, and sexual exploitation fall into the "domain" of forced labour. Nothing can exemplify modern slavery better than the child labour. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has identified about twenty five million men and women as victims of modern slavery. Nobody can turn somebody into a slave unless the latter allows them is now something like a misnomer. ILO has specifically targeted migrant workers who are easily lured because of their poor understanding of local language and tradition. To take stock of the progress done by ancillary agencies and the respective governments, "International Day for the Abolition of Slave Trade" is observed on August 23. It is hoped that the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights that states "no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms" gains a fresh momentum.

MODERN SLAVERY
Madam— "I freed a thousand slaves. I could have freed more if only they knew they were slaves". One need not look beyond these thought-provoking words of American abolitionist Harriet Tubman to decipher the evils of slavery. Though Tubman spoke at the end of the 19th century, her words hold true for modern slavery as well. Human trafficking, bonded

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lateral entries rolled back
ernment wanted to rope in 45 lateral entries into our civil services, which was not the first time, it has been happening since Nehru's days. But such is the compulsion of coalition politics that the government had to give in to the demands of its own allies. Prime Minister Modi had also rolled back critical three farm laws which were in the larger interest of the farmers. So now after this decision, it is going to boost opposition morale to put Gol on the mat again in future, and it has given Modi's government a negative and weak government's image. Hopefully it will learn its lessons and take opposition and allies on board before rolling out any sensitive changes or policies in future. It is the most democratic thing to do anyway because what is democracy if it is not inclusive and does not reflect people's will.

Bal Govind |Noida

NO LIMITS FOR PARA PLAYERS
Madam — The season of Paralympics is all set to begin with Indian athletic contingent start reaching over there in the Game village of Paris. So far, the closing of Paris Olympics done, with India taking on six medals only, however some sports spectators and aficionados are setting the medal count limit with 12 medals at the Paralympics. India has successfully lifted 19 medals in Paralympics Tokyo edition of 2021, for all those are setting the bar before the real talent actually comes up, it is crucial to appreciate the talent and zeal of our para players. Let's don't set any specific boundary of medals that they have to win for the nation. Why just 12, our players have the capability of winning much more. May their competitive spirit and sportsmanship, let them conquer the sports laurels in a celebrated manner without any pressure.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Violence against women: Unheeded cries

As public outrage grows, the challenge before the authorities is to provide safety and dignity of women across the country



RAJDEEP PATHAK

In a flashback all the past horrendous incidents of violence against women, particularly incidents of rape cross the mind. Here in our country, newspaper pages more than often bring out horrifying accounts of sexual violence – a 65-year-old grandmother assaulted in Kharagpur or a teenage girl, native of Uttar Pradesh, was gang-raped inside a government bus at the Dehradun Inter-State Bus Terminal (ISBT) in Uttarakhand on August 12, 2024, and the latest from Maharashtra, when on August 20, 2024, two minor girls, aged 4, studying in Nursery, were sexually assaulted by a school sweeper in the washroom of a well-known Adarsh Vidya Mandir in Badlapur school near Mumbai.

These incidents happened within days when the entire nation was gripped by the horrors of the R G Kar Medical College and Hospital at Kolkata. And these are not isolated incidents – they are part of a grim reality where a rape is reported every 21 minutes. Yet, despite the horror these crimes evoke, they are quickly forgotten by all except the victims and their families, who are left to fight lonely, often futile battles for justice for years, which sometimes is only the ray of hope for them. India's response to sexual violence remains disturbingly inadequate. More than a decade has passed since the Nirbhaya case – a brutal gang rape that shocked the nation and led to the passage of new sexual assault laws. But the situation has barely improved. Nearly 50 years before Nirbhaya, the fearless, Aruna Shanbaug, a 25-year-old nurse, was viciously assaulted by a hospital cleaner in Mumbai. Sodomized, strangled with a metal chain, and left for dead, she survived – only to remain in a vegetative state for 41 years until her death. Her ordeal led to a landmark judgment on passive euthanasia in India, yet her suffering stands as a testament to the enduring failures of a society that continues to fail its women. The recent brutal rape and murder of a 31-year-old postgraduate trainee doctor in Kolkata serves as a grim reminder that little has changed. Female healthcare workers or



women workers per se, still fear for their safety even in supposed sanctuaries such as hospitals. This ongoing crisis underscores the dire need for real change – a change that goes beyond laws and addresses the deep-seated cultural and institutional failures that allow such atrocities to persist. This incident of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital has shaken the conscience of West Bengal, and the ripple effects are being felt across the political landscape – and the entire nation. The public's reaction to this crime has been fierce and unforgiving. Protests have erupted across the state, with citizens demanding justice not only for the victim but also calling for broader reforms to ensure such incidents are not repeated. The political and social response to the incident has been equally chaotic. The decision for a swift call for a CBI investigation and capital punishment, alongside the rally for "Khela Hobe Divas," has been met with criticism for its timing and focus. Additionally, state actions, such as the transfer of doctors allegedly involved in protests and the use of social media to counter celebrity critiques (read singers), have further fueled debates about the handling of the case. The political implications of this incident could be far-reaching. Beyond politics, the safety of women and girls in India remains a critical concern, deeply rooted in societal norms, legal frameworks, and institutional practices. Despite advancements in legislation and public awareness, instances of violence and harassment against women are prevalent. High-profile cases of assault, trafficking, and domestic violence highlight the persistent vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. The legal system, while equipped with laws like the 'Protection of Human Rights Act' and the 'Criminal Law Amendment Act', or for that matter, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO of 2012), often struggles with implementation and enforcement. There are systemic delays in justice delivery and shortcomings in police response, which exacerbate the sense of insecurity. Protective measures, including the establishment of fast-track courts and specialized police units, aim to address these issues and provide some ray of light in this dark world for women. Further, societal attitudes towards women play a significant role in undermining these measures. Deep-seated patriarchal views and cultural practices continue to normalize gender-based violence, making it difficult for protective laws to translate into tangible safety for women. The lack of comprehensive sexual education and community engagement further perpetuates harmful stereotypes and behaviours. Right education for the boys at home is another crucial area for intervention by the government and NGOs. The role of NGOs and grassroots movements has been pivotal in advocating for women's rights and safety. Effective safety measures must involve not only legal reforms but also significant shifts in overall attitudes and community involvement. The challenge before the authorities is not just one of governance but of moral leadership – a test that will define their legacy to guarantee safety to women and girl children. *Aami tomari maatiro konya, janoni bosundhara /Tobe aamar manobojanmo keno bonchito kora...* (I am no other, but the daughter of yours, O' motherland/Why deprive me of the legacy of my human life...). Written in the year 1933 by Rabindranath Tagore, these lines echo far and wide and call for collective action. It is time to stand up to see where we stand and where we fail. (The writer is Program Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)



HIGH-PROFILE CASES OF ASSAULT, TRAFFICKING, AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIGHLIGHT THE PERSISTENT VULNERABILITIES FACED BY WOMEN

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FIRST COLUMN

THE ESSENCE OF BEING:
BEYOND BODY AND MIND

The soul is envisioned as pure and tranquil, the mind remains latent and unmanifest.



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It is now becoming something of a cliché in various circles of modern life—from religion to psychology to holistic medicine—to use the phrase “body-mind-soul” or “body-mind-spirit” when referring to our totality as human beings. So, what do we exactly mean when we ask, What is the body? What is the mind? What is the soul? and What is the spirit? It is often said that the real self is behind the mind or intellect. It is also said that we can experience and know the self when we go beyond the mind, which is like a sheath of the soul.

This is truly said, but it means something different than what is generally understood because to experience or perceive the soul, we do not have to cross the mind which is considered to be a subtle form of matter. No! Instead, we have to calm the ripples of the mind, stop it from being agitated by the outer world, and check its outward tendency. From a spiritual perspective, it should be understood that when the soul is in the soul-world, it is pure, calm, tranquil, and above all bondages or attributes.

There, the mind is unmanifest, and its abilities of volition, action, desire, understanding, ascertainment, etc., are not at play but at rest—not emerged but latent and merged. While in the soul-world, the soul is pinned, so to say, only on one thought, one consciousness, one feeling, one understanding, viz—‘I am a Soul, I am a Soul, I am a Soul’. That is all—nothing more. The turbulence, the vagrancy, the sportiveness of the mind is at rest, or you may say that, in a sense, it is in deep sleep. Therefore, when it is said that “If we want to experience the peace and tranquility



of the soul or have to know the self, we will have to go beyond the intellect and the mind,” it does not mean that we will penetrate, percolate through, tear away, or cross over to a material form as the mind is understood to be. No! It means that to know ourselves, we will have to concentrate our mind on the maxim: “I am a soul, a child of the Supreme Soul.”

We will have to make our intellect and mind one-pointed and disposed to understand the Self alone. We will have to lay all our memories, thoughts, feelings, etc., to rest. This is what would be ‘going beyond’ the mind. For this, there are so many methods that have been advocated, demonstrated, advised, and laid down by various spiritual and religious teachers. However, the all-knowing Almighty has offered His supreme advice that we should control the mind using the intellect. This means that we have to know the Self, the Supreme, etc., and using that, know the Self to calm ourselves. He has sermonized that it can be best done by pinning the mind on the name, form, attributes, and relation of the Supreme with the soul.

His sermon is, “Manmana Bhav,” i.e., concentrate your mind on me, your love, your faith in me. And I assure you that I will bless you with supreme sanctity, peace, and bliss, and you will attain me. I will purge you of all sins, rest assured. If we act as HE says, all our inner conflict will end, and we will work only as His divine instrument. By aligning ourselves with the Supreme, our mind will cease its endless wandering, and we will find ourselves centred and at peace. We will then be able to adjust ourselves easily and quickly in any situation. Having been freed from other psychological memories, except that of the Supreme and our duty, our energy potential will find no resistance and will be free for full performance. We will thus be able to attain excellence and experience peace and tranquillity without putting in much effort. This state of effortless being is what every soul seeks, whether knowingly or unknowingly. The Supreme guides us to this state of fulfilment, away from the darkness of ignorance. Now, it’s up to us whether to listen to the Almighty or keep wandering in the darkness of ignorance.

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

Reject calls for extraditing
Sheikh Hasina

India must stand firm in its refusal to hand over a leader who has been a steadfast ally, particularly when such demands come from factions with anti-India sentiment

HIARANMAY
KARLEKAR

India must not pay the slightest heed to the demand by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party’s secretary-general, Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, to extradite Sheikh Hasina to his country. From reports in Indian newspapers, he seems to have cited two grounds, both utterly laughable, for his demand. The first is that she should stand trial for the murder and other charges levelled against her. The question is: will she receive a fair trial under the conditions now prevailing in Bangladesh? The matter is important. Even if the charges levelled against her are true, and she has done terrible things, she has an inalienable right to a fair trial.

This, she will not get with large mobs literally baying for her blood, statues of her father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of the country’s emergence from East Pakistan to sovereign Bangladesh, are being pulled down, the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum of 32 Dhanmondi, Dhaka, his erstwhile residence, ransacked and burnt, and the Liberation War Museum at Suhrawardy Udyan Dhaka, razed to the ground.

Clearly, a section of people is trying to take advantage of the situation created by the Anti-Discrimination Students’ Movement (ADSM), to target the symbols of Bangladesh’s liberation struggle. Undoing the country’s independence and its re-unification with Pakistan is, of course, out of the question. But cultivating closer ties with Pakistan, pursuing a stridently hostile policy towards India, which such elements have never ceased hating for playing a decisive role in Bangladesh’s independence by routing Pakistan in the 1971 war, and replacing Bangladesh’s secular, democratic polity by one practicing fundamentalist Islam, has been a part of the agenda of the country’s fundamentalist Islamist groups.

It is no secret that the Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, recently re-incarnated as Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (BJEI), its students’ organization, Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Shibir (BICS)—which was Islami Chhatra Sangha (ICS) in 1971—and allied organisations like al-Badr, al-Shams, Razakars, and Shanti Committee, had sided with Pakistan and committed despicable war crimes during the liberation war of 1971. A number of them have been punished, including some who have been executed, by the International Crimes Tribunal set by the Bangladesh Government in 2009 by an amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act, 1973, to investigate and prosecute personnel of the Pakistan Army and BJEI, Razakars, Al-Badr, Al-Shams, and Shanti Committee, accused of committing genocide during the 1971 liberation war.

The BJEI and the BICS, which have close links with Islamist terrorist organisations like Ansar al-Islam, linked to Al-Qaeda in the Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), clearly joined the ADSM to further their own agenda, which is transforming a secular and democratic Bangladesh into an Islamic emirate. To do this, they must eliminate from the political scene not only the Awami League and its leaders, particularly Sheikh Hasina, but all secular, democratic and humanist civil society organisations and leaders.



GIVEN THAT THE AWAMI LEAGUE HAS BEEN REDUCED TO SUCH STRAITS THAT IT COULD NOT EVEN OBSERVE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRENADE ATTACKS ON AUGUST 21, 2004, IT COULD HARDLY BE IN A POSITION TO CONSPIRE TO DEFEAT THE STUDENTS’ UPSURGE

Revealingly, circulating in Bangladesh in the wake of Sheikh Hasina’s ouster, is a list of intellectuals, scholars, lawyers, academics, human rights social activists, who its shadowy authors want to “see.”

Included in the list of 50 or more were the Professor Abul Barakat (a well-known economist who had exposed the sources of the BJEI’s phenomenal wealth), Rana Dasgupta (general secretary of the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council), AAMS Arefin Siddique, (former vice-chancellor, Dhaka University), and Professor Sadeka Halim (vice-chancellor, Jagannath University) and a number of journalists and film personalities. In these circumstances, Sheikh Hasina’s life will be in danger if she is extradited to Bangladesh: nor can she be assured of a fair trial, particularly given the fact that judges will either be under tremendous pressure or will be pre-disposed to convict her as they have been appointed by the Interim Government and are hostile to her.

The second ground that, according to the reports, Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir has cited for Sheikh Hasina’s extradition, is that the Awami League and she were conspiring in New Delhi to falsify (sic) the victory that students and other citizens of Bangladesh have achieved. Nothing could be more ludicrous. Most Awami League leaders are in Bangladesh, busy defending themselves in courts

against charges brought against them, or in hiding. A number of them have been lynched. The homes and business establishments of many of them have been destroyed and set aflame.

In fact, the Awami League has been reduced to such straits that, unlike in the earlier years, it could not stage an event to observe the anniversary of the grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Dhaka on August 21, 2004, to protest against increasing terrorist attacks on its cadres and leaders.

Perpetrated by the terrorist outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami Bangladesh (HUJIB), it left at least 24 persons dead and over 300 injured. Among the wounded was Sheikh Hasina, whose hearing has been permanently impaired. Ivy Rahman, secretary of the Awami League’s women’s affairs wing and wife of its general-secretary, Zillur Rahman, who subsequently became Bangladesh’s president, was also seriously hurt. She later died later in hospital.

Given that the Awami League has been reduced to such straits that it could not even observe the anniversary of the grenade attacks on August 21, 2004, it could hardly be in a position to conspire to defeat the students’ upsurge. It may well be argued that Sheikh Hasina needs to be present in courts to stand trial and face cross-examination to establish the veracity of the charges levelled against her, or examine the complicity of others involved.

For that, the interim government or its successor must establish that a prima facie case exists against her and then request India to allow an emissary to question her in any facility that New Delhi may provide.

Meanwhile, there can be no question of extraditing her. The BNP-BJEI coalition government, in office from 2001 to 2006 with Begum Khaleda Zia as prime minister, made no bones about its hostility to India. Indeed, except those headed by Sheikh Hasina, all governments of Bangladesh since the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, have been hostile to India and pro-Pakistan.

To cite one example, under them, Bangladesh provided sanctuary, assistance and training to north-east India’s secessionist rebel groups. On the other hand, Sheikh Hasina not only closed down their sanctuaries but handed over to India some of the leaders of these secessionist terrorist groups. In fact, India-Bangladesh relations were perhaps more cordial under her than even when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman headed the government in Dhaka.

Extraditing Sheikh Hasina would send the message round that even the most loyal friends of India cannot depend on it for support in times of distress. That is not something that New Delhi should want.

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

Lateral entry in bureaucracy: A double-edged sword of reform and controversy

The implementation of lateral entry has sparked serious concerns about social justice and the representation of marginalised groups in the Indian bureaucracy

The introduction of lateral appointments in India’s bureaucracy has sparked intense debate, particularly due to the absence of reservations for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). The issue gained traction with a recent UPSC advertisement for 45 senior positions, which did not include the constitutionally mandated quotas, raising concerns about social justice and the representation of disadvantaged groups in high-level government roles.



K S TOMAR

trations. However, the lack of provisions for reservations in this system has led to widespread criticism. Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition, accused the NDA government of undermining the Constitution by excluding reservations from these appointments. He argued that this move was a direct attack on social justice, sidelining the underprivileged and diluting their representation in the

higher echelons of bureaucracy. In response, Arjun Meghwal pointed out the Congress’s past practices, highlighting the appointments of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as Finance Secretary in 1971 and Montek Ahluwalia as Planning Commission Chairman without transparent procedures.

Since the inception of the lateral entry system in 2018, the government has received 6,077 applications, resulting in the appointment of 63 individuals to senior positions across various ministries, with approximately 35 from the private sector. While these appointments aim to bring in expertise and fresh perspectives, the exclusion of reservations has overshadowed the intended benefits. The backlog of vacancies

in proportion to these 63 officials can only be addressed if the government creates new posts specifically for candidates from SC, ST, OBC, and EWS categories. The delay in amending recruitment rules has already caused significant harm, as many eligible candidates may have crossed the age limit.

The introduction of lateral appointments has been met with mixed reactions within the bureaucracy. While it brings in specialized knowledge and fresh perspectives, it also poses several risks to the traditional bureaucratic structure:

Impact on Bureaucracy: A Mixed Bag; the introduction of lateral appointments has been met with mixed reactions. While it brings in specialized



knowledge and fresh perspectives, it also poses several risks to the traditional bureaucratic structure.

Demoralization of Bureaucracy: Traditional bureaucrats, who have risen through the ranks, may feel demoralized seeing lateral entrants appointed to senior positions without undergoing the rigorous training and years of service they have endured. This could lead to a perception that meritocracy is being

undermined and create uncertainty regarding career progression.

Integration Challenges: Lateral entrants may struggle to integrate into the established bureaucratic culture, leading to friction with traditional bureaucrats.

3rd. Potential Conflicts of Interest: Lateral entrants from the private sector may face conflicts of interest, where their decisions could be influenced by their previous affiliations.

This raises concerns about policy bias and the potential prioritization of private sector interests over the public good. **Accountability and Transparency Issues:** Unlike career bureaucrats, lateral entrants might not undergo the same level of public scrutiny

and evaluation, leading to concerns about transparency in decision-making. Their lack of deep institutional knowledge could also affect the quality of their decisions, especially in complex policy areas. **Impact on Administrative Cohesion:** The introduction of lateral entrants at senior levels could fragment authority within the bureaucracy, leading to inefficiencies and delays.

Positive Takeaways: Lateral entry into senior government positions offers several benefits:

Expertise Infusion: Brings specialized knowledge from various sectors, enhancing policy-making. **Diverse Perspectives:** Introduces new viewpoints, fostering innovative solutions.

Increased Efficiency: Private sector professionals bring a focus on performance and efficiency.

Skill Gap Bridging: Addresses deficiencies in areas like technology and finance. **Meritocracy Promotion:** Emphasizes skills over seniority, potentially improving leadership quality.

Governance Flexibility: Allows for quick adaptation to new challenges with experienced professionals.

Public-Private Collaboration: Strengthens ties between government and private sectors. (Writer has been ex chairperson of Standing Committee of All State Public service Commissions in India and former chairman of HP Public Service Commission; views are personal)

18 Indians killed as bus falls into river in Nepal



PTI n KATHMANDU

At least 18 Indian pilgrims who arrived in Nepal from Maharashtra for a 10-day tour were killed after a tourist bus veered off the highway and fell 150 metres into the fast-flowing Marsyangdi River in central Nepal approximately 120 kilometres from the capital on Friday, according to media reports.

sengers who were in the ill-fated bus has been released. "An Indian tourist bus travelling from Pokhara to Kathmandu with around 43 Indians fell 150 metres into the Marshyandi River today," the Embassy of India said in a post on X. The mission is coordinating with local authorities undertaking relief and rescue.

sengers from Maharashtra, including the driver and one assistant, fell around 150 metres into river Marshyandi in Ambukhereni region in the Tanahu District of Nepal. "The UP government has sent SDM Maharajan to the incident site. The MEA is coordinating the search and rescue operations with local authorities."

'Bangladeshis not angry but hurt'

PTI n DHAKA

Top BNP leader here said Bangladeshis are "not angry but hurt" over deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's stay in India, even as he urged politicians and security strategists in New Delhi to "rethink" their policy given the ground reality here.

ence in India has given rise to speculation here. Khan said the current situation is of "consolidation" and coming back to normalcy. The interim government led by Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus is trying to stabilise the country and electoral reforms are their "top priority".

clear. It is amazing how the country is settling back after such a big upheaval. People are trying to get back to their normal day-to-day life, the (interim) government is trying to normalise everything, and they are up to their main mandate which is the transition from autocracy to democracy," Khan told PTI on Thursday.

forces the people of Bangladesh to doubt their intentions," he added. There are reports in newspapers that the US and UK governments had "refused" to take Hasina in and under these circumstances, she has found "refuge" in India and this is "public information", the BNP leader claimed.

her. It is not us to decide. What we have said is what the foreign advisor has said on it." New Delhi has to make up its mind whether it wants to be a "friend of the Bangladeshi people" or they want to be a "friend of a section of people, or one party or one leader".

Hasina's diplomatic passport revoked

Dhaka (PTI): Bangladesh's interim government has revoked ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's diplomatic passport along with all members of the former Cabinet, over two weeks after she resigned and fled to India following a student-led uprising against her government.

ment, it said. The release said ordinary passports may be issued in their favour based on the reports of at least two investigating agencies, it added. Hasina fled to India after being forced to resign in the face of a student-led mass uprising on August 5.

Bangladesh floods kills 15, maroon over 4.5 million

PTI n DHAKA

Monsoon rainfall-triggered floods in deltaic Bangladesh and upstream Indian regions killed at least 15 people and affected over four million others in this country, posing a huge administrative challenge to the newly installed interim government amid a political transition.



"We are monitoring the flood situation and relief activities from our control room in Dhaka." Communications with the central Feni district, which is located almost midway between the capital Dhaka and the port city of Chattogram, was virtually cut off while flood waters largely submerged the district headquarters and the collapsed electricity supply system disrupted the telecommunication lines.

Centre (FFWC) said about the situation on Friday afternoon. The FFWC office came under criticism for failure to predict the situation even as the officials attributed the situation to a lack of information from counterparts in the upstream Indian region.

'Biden to dispatch adviser to China as he looks to sharpen policy focus in final months'

AP n BUELLTON

President Joe Biden plans to dispatch his national security adviser Jake Sullivan to China as the White House aims to sharpen its focus on foreign policy in the Democrat's final months in office.

Santa Ynez Valley. The high-level visit by Sullivan to China could potentially set the ground for another face-to-face meeting for Biden with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The two leaders last November spent four hours together at a bucolic Northern California estate — in meetings, a working lunch and a garden stroll — as they looked to steady a relationship that has been fraught for much of Biden's time in office.

Ukraine recaptures land in the Kharkiv region

AP n KYIV

Ukrainian forces say they have recaptured territory in the eastern region of Kharkiv, where Russia launched a large offensive in the spring that brought initial gains but the operation soon stalled. Ukraine's 3rd Separate Assault Brigade said in a statement late Thursday that its forces advanced nearly two square kilometers (about three-quarters of a square mile) in that area.

this week. On Friday some new details emerged about damage and injuries caused by some of those attacks. A Ukrainian drone attack targeting a distant Russian air base in its Volgograd region caused significant damage to an airfield that reportedly housed glide bombs used by Moscow in the war, satellite photos analyzed Friday by The Associated Press showed.

death and destruction and created Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II. Ukraine and its Western allies hope that the regained momentum could strengthen Kyiv's hand on the diplomatic front. A visit to Kyiv by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is meeting Friday with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, is being closely watched. Modi, who has maintained cordial ties and economic relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, could play a role in forging a mediated peace.

Bangladesh is crisscrossed by more than 200 rivers, 54 of them being transboundary rivers with upper riparian India, in four major basins. A depression (a system that brings in copious rainfall) in the Bay of Bengal has led to the current deluge with rivers in two basins — the north-eastern Meghna Basin and south-western Chattogram Hills Basin — flowing above the danger mark. Apart from the torrential rains, the overflowing rivers, El Nino and climate change phenomenon were the factors responsible for widespread flooding in the country, weather experts said on Friday.

Advertisement for Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot. Admission Notice for Post Basic Nursing Courses, session 2024. Online applications are invited for vacant seats for admission in all the Govt/Private colleges of Punjab through University website from candidates who have not appeared in PPBNET-2024 on the basis of GNM examinations from 25.08.2024 To 31.08.2024.

Advertisement for Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Tender Notice Reference No. GNDU/Gen/69/2024. The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the following: 1. Imaging of Part-C & Part-D of OMR front cover. 10 Lac for Two semesters (5 Lacs per semester).

Advertisement for PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD. (Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001). Tender Enquiry No. 1701/TGM/O&M/PC-2579 Dated: 22-08-2024. Chief Engineer/ O&M (P&P Cell-II), GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat, invites E-tender for the Procurement of Scaling and Antisize Compound.

Advertisement for UPSIDA. कायाकाल प्रमाण मासिकपत्रक (अभिलेखण) -आर 3000 राज्य औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण. एलट्ट द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्राधिकरण के विभिन्न जनपदों में विद्युत विकार, अनुशासन एवं रक्षा-सव्य कार्यों हेतु सारकरी विभागों/सामाजिक प्यवर्गों/निगमों/प्राधिकरणों/परिचालो/नगर निगमों में रोजीकर के अनुभवी कर्म /केकराये से अत्यन्त लघु-निमित्त आर्म्भित की जाती है जो दिनांक 24.08.2024 को अपरान्ह 04.00 बजे से दिनांक 02.09.2024 को अपरान्ह 5.00 बजे तक आन्वीड की जा सकती है। निविदाओं को दिनांक 03.09.2024 को अपरान्ह 04.00 बजे खोलो जायेगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा सव्य परों की मूल प्रतियां दिनांक 06.09.2024 को सां. 5.00 बजे तक कायाकाल में जमा की जा सकती है। ई-निविदा के माध्यम से आर्म्भित की जाने वाली निविदा सम्बन्धी विवरण निम्नवत् है-

SL prez poll candidate passes away

Colombo (PTI): One of the 39 candidates in the fray in Sri Lanka's presidential election scheduled for September 21 has passed away, Idroos Mohamed Ilyas, 79, an independent candidate from the north-western Puttalam district died last night from a heart attack while he was being taken to a hospital, his family said. He was a member of parliament in the 1990s representing the island's nine per cent Muslim minority from the northern district of Jaffna.

Pak seeks \$4bn loan from Middle East banks

PTI n ISLAMABAD

Cash-strapped Pakistan is in talks with banks in the Middle East to borrow approximately USD 4 billion to meet its external financial commitments for the current fiscal year, as part of the USD 7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) currently pending for IMF's approval. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and his team had a virtual meeting with Dr Adnan Chilwan, Group CEO of Dubai Islamic Bank, on Thursday, the Dawn newspaper reported on Friday.

tunities in Pakistan". For the current fiscal year, Pakistan has pitched about USD 20 billion in foreign borrowing in the budget, besides another USD 3 billion rollover from the UAE that was reported separately for the balance of payments. With this much borrowing, Pakistan's reserves are estimated to grow to about USD 19-20 billion by the end of the current fiscal year. Of the USD 20 billion estimate, about USD 4 billion is targeted to be arranged through foreign commercial borrowing during the current fiscal year and another USD 1 billion in international bonds.

IMF indefinitely postponed the approval of a USD 7 billion EFF this week after Islamabad failed to secure the additional USD 2 billion in financing and the rollover of USD 12 billion in cash deposits from Saudi Arabia, China, and the UAE. The finance minister now hopes that the IMF may approve the new EFF next month. Pakistan has also intensified its engagement with foreign commercial banks, though high financing costs and a low credit rating from international agencies remain significant hurdles. Pakistan's current credit rating stands at CCC+, which is below investment grade, leading to higher interest rate demands from commercial banks. Meanwhile, on Thursday, the Ministry of Finance and the

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) briefed the Senate Standing Committee on Economic Affairs about Pakistan's engagements with the IMF since 1958. Qader Bakhsh, an executive from the SBP, informed the parliamentary forum that Pakistan's last Stand-By Arrangement with the IMF had an average interest rate of 5.1 per cent, making it a costly deal. He also noted that the new IMF loan is expected to carry similar rates unless global interest rates decline. The IMF interest rate is determined by the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) basket price, plus a 1% base rate and two additional surcharges linked to loan volume and duration, he explained.

of its IMF quota, a 2 per cent surcharge applies. Additionally, a 1 per cent surcharge is levied if the borrowing period exceeds three years, he said. Traditionally, lending by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the IMF was considered affordable. However, due to Pakistan's increasing borrowing needs and limited capacity to sustain such debt, the WB and ADB have also raised their interest rates. Data shared by the finance ministry revealed that Pakistan's interest costs on IMF loans have steadily risen since 2008. That year, Pakistan borrowed from the IMF at an interest rate of 1.6 per cent, which increased to 2.4 per cent in 2013. The 2019 IMF programme was secured at an average interest rate of 3.41 per cent.

UNCOVERING THE PAST

THE LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE

Aparna Vaidik's *Revolutionaries on Trial* offers a fresh perspective on the Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1929, highlighting the trial's intricate political and legal dimensions. By examining the roles of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru, Vaidik reveals the trial's broader significance beyond martyrdom, providing a deeper understanding of its impact on India's independence struggle, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Aparna Vaidik's *Revolutionaries on Trial* is a riveting examination of one of the most significant and controversial events in India's struggle for independence - The Lahore Conspiracy Case of 1929. This book distinguishes itself with its insightful portrayal of the trial, not merely as a moment of colonial injustice but as a complex interplay of legal, political and cultural forces that shaped the course of Indian nationalism.

One of the most striking aspects of Vaidik's work is her ability to reframe the Lahore Conspiracy Case from a simplistic tale of martyrdom into a multifaceted historical event with far-reaching implications. While Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru have been venerated as heroes of the Indian independence movement, Vaidik challenges the reader to look beyond this familiar narrative. She delves into the intricacies of the trial, revealing the colonial state's calculated efforts to use the legal system as a tool for suppressing



revolutionary activities while simultaneously attempting to undermine the moral authority of the independence movement. The book challenges the conventional focus on Bhagat Singh as the central figure, providing a more holistic view of the revolutionary movement. By highlighting the contributions and experiences of Sukhdev and Rajguru, Vaidik corrects the often narrow historical lens that tends to elevate Singh's martyrdom while marginalising his comrade's significant roles. This nuanced

portrayal helps to appreciate the collective nature of the HSRAs struggle and the ideological and personal dynamics within the revolutionary group. Vaidik's approach is particularly compelling because she does not merely focus on the courtroom drama. Instead, she broadens the scope to include the roles played by the colonial government, the revolutionaries, the Indian press and the public. This holistic view allows readers to appreciate the trial's significance as a cultural and political spectacle that extended



far beyond the legal proceedings. Vaidik's detailed examination of the motivations and strategies of all the actors involved provides a richer understanding of the dynamics at play during this critical period in India's history. The book's exploration of the colonial state's decision to prosecute the revolutionaries is particularly eye-opening. The author argues that the trial was not just about dispensing justice, it was a deliberate move by the British to assert their authority and counter the growing influence of

revolutionary ideologies. This perspective adds a new layer of complexity to the story, highlighting the colonial government's strategic use of public trials to shape public opinion and maintain control. Moreover, Vaidik's analysis of the revolutionaries' actions during the trial challenges the conventional view that their courtroom tactics were purely propagandistic. She presents a nuanced argument that these actions were part of a broader political strategy designed to galvanise public support and expose the hypocrisies of the colonial regime. This interpretation enriches our understanding of revolutionary politics and underscores the significance of the trial in the broader context of India's nationalist movement. Vaidik's scholarly rigor is matched by her engaging writing style, making *Revolutionaries on Trial* both accessible and informative. The book is meticulously researched, drawing on a wide range of sources, including

archival documents, personal letters and contemporary press reports. This thoroughness not only enhances the credibility of Vaidik's arguments but also brings the historical events to life, making the book a compelling read. *Revolutionaries on Trial* is a significant contribution to the study of Indian history. It offers fresh insights into a well-known event, challenging readers to reconsider their understanding of the Lahore Conspiracy Case and the broader struggle for independence. Vaidik's work is essential reading for anyone interested in the complexities of colonial justice, revolutionary movements and the enduring legacy of India's fight for freedom. Whether you are a historian, a student of political science or simply someone interested in the depth of India's past, this book is sure to leave a lasting impression.

Book Name — Revolutionaries on Trial
Author — Aparna Vaidik
Publisher — Aleph book company
Price — Rs. 999

Through the Eyes of a Top Indian Cop

Jayaram Padikkal (1937-1997) was an IPS officer who served as the chief of Kerala Police during 1993 to 1994. He was the youngest DIG in the country as he excelled in investigation and intelligence gathering. Had it not been for a controversy associated with the custodial death of a young Maoist leader by name P Rajan of the Regional Engineering College (now NIT) at Kozhikode during the black days of the internal emergency, Padikkal would have retired as the top echelon of the Home Ministry either as the chief of IB or CBI.

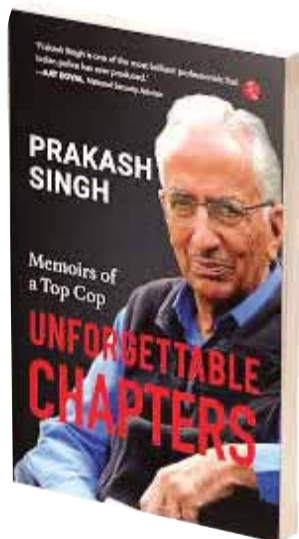
It is strange that the entire media in Kerala went gaga when Padikkal was suspended from service following the Rajan case. Though he was reinstated in service following the Court acquitted him of all charges, the Kerala media never left him alone and went after his blood with their own findings which were far from reality. All columns, books and even films of those days portrayed him as a villain. Even today, young journalists who do not have any idea about the Rajan case, lambast Padikkal. The truth is that there was a period in the history of Kerala Police when people, cutting across political lines, demanded that cases of murder, corruption and misuse of power should be investigated by Jayaram Padikkal! Newspapers and periodicals in the State stand proof of this demand.

What happened to Padikkal was his success in exposing the hypocrisy and double standard of the Communists. Interestingly it was during the tenure of EMS Namboodiripad as chief minister that a separate unit was set up in the State for tackling the Maoist menace. Padikkal was appointed as head of the special unit and he did not let his bosses down. The Maoists, they were known as Naxalites those days, ran for their lives and within a couple of years, Padikkal and his "boys" finished them off. But they struck back during the emergency days and

A revealing account of the challenges, controversies and victories faced by one of India's top police officers, as detailed in Prakash Singh's *Unforgettable Chapters: Memoirs of a Top Cop*, shedding light on the complex world of law enforcement in the country, says **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

murdered three cops including a deputy superintendent of police. Rajan was taken into custody for facilitating the escape of the Maoists who were the perpetrators of the heinous crime. While a lot of tears were shed for Rajan, the Kerala society ignored the sacrifice made by the cops and that was how Padikkal became the "evil character". Padikkal, the super cop of Kerala, breathed his last in 1997 and had a peaceful death. Despite the persecution and attack by the media and intellectuals, Padikkal kept his cool. "I was not a public relations officer of the Kerala Police and my mission was to safeguard the Constitution of India," he reportedly told a close associate when he was asked why he was indifferent to criticism by the media.

Memories about Jayaram Padikkal crept into the mind while going through "UNFORGETTABLE CHAPTERS", *Memoirs of a Top Cop* by Prakash Singh, a former IPS officer who had served as police chief of Uttar Pradesh, assam, Punjab, Nagaland and as the director general of Border Security Force. Prakash Singh also fought for reforms in police, which if implemented would have elevated our cops to the best force in the world. But politicians do not want to liberate police from their shackles. The importance of our political leaders is known by the number of armed cops guarding them. A chief minister like Pinarayi Vijayan, whom the



CPI(M) in Kerala portrays as the most popular politician in India, does not move out of his palatial house without a heavy posse of commandoes and a cavalcade of fifty SUVs and siren-wielding ambulances. Singh's memoirs take the readers through a period in India filled with terrorism, political turmoil and insurgency. He has hands-on experience in tackling terrorism in States like Jammu & Kashmir, Assam, Nagaland and the mafia raj of Uttar Pradesh. Singh has diagnosed the root cause of insurgency in North East India in an exemplary manner. No other political historians, security experts or observers have gone into the basics of these issues like Prakash Singh.

While serving as DGP in Uttar Pradesh, Singh had alerted his colleagues and subordinates about the danger posed by the Mukhtar Ansari, the dreaded don of Uttar Pradesh. Ansari,

nephew of a former vice-president of the country, was an accused in cases of murders, dacoity and rape. He was described as a shaheed by Asaduddin Owaisi much to the anguish of the law-abiding citizens in India. Though Prakash Singh did not approve the Sangh Parivar demolishing the disputed structure at Ayodhya in 1992, this police officer makes it unambiguously clear that the Babri Mosque was nothing other than the temple where Lord Rama was born.

What makes this book a must read for all who are interested in knowing the political and social chaos is the kind of information provided by the author. He has shared with the readers the reasons for the fall in standards of policing in the country. Post-retirement, Singh drew the attention of the Supreme Court to factors like the executive misuse and abuse of the police in frequent postings and transfers, recruitment procedures vitiated by political recommendations, promotions getting influenced, tampering of investigations, and unlawful directions to the police as matters of concern.

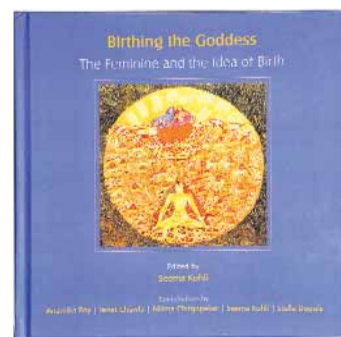
Singh is no ordinary police officer and is proved by his admission that he regrets his failure in mastering Sanskrit and not learning martial arts. His third regret that he could not divide his life in the four ashrams prescribed by our ancestors is uncalled for. We need officers like Prakash Singh to share their experiences with the new generation cops. It will make major changes in the spirit and soul of young officers. Prakash Singh had won a historical case against the Union of India when the Supreme Court ordered that IPS officers selected to head the police force should get a minimum two-year tenure as chief. Super cops like Padikkal and Prakash Singh belong to a different genre and they are the ones described by Chanakya as the real policemen.

Rediscovering the Sacred Female Principle

Birthing the Goddess: The Feminine and the Idea of Birth is a profound anthology exploring the intersection of femininity and creation through diverse cultural and spiritual lenses. With essays that challenge conventional narratives and illuminate the sacred dimensions of birth, this collection offers a fresh and insightful perspective on the divine feminine, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Birthing the Goddess: The Feminine and the Idea of Birth is a captivating anthology that navigates the rich ground where birth, creation and the feminine divine intersect. Compiled by a diverse group of contributors, including Seema Kohli, Anamika Roy, Janet Chawla, Nilima Chitgopekar and Stella Dupuis. This volume extends the inquiry begun in *Experiencing the Goddess*, offering an even deeper exploration of the spiritual and cultural significance of the feminine principle. The book opens by reframing birth as not just a biological event but as a transformative process imbued with profound spiritual and cultural meaning. Anamika Roy's essay, "Radha Was Created Not Born," sets the tone by exploring the origins of Radha, a central figure in Hinduism whose existence stems from artistic and poetic creation rather than traditional birth. This interpretation of Radha's origin as a divine construct rather than a born deity is both refreshing and thought-provoking, challenging readers to reconsider the boundaries of creation.

Janet Chawla's "Birth as Magic and Dai as the Shaman" is another standout, delving into traditional Indian birthing practices. Chawla's exploration of the sacred roles of traditional midwives (dais) offers a poignant contrast to the sterile, clinical approaches of modern medicine. Her essay is a compelling reminder of the deep spiritual connections that can exist in the birthing process, connections that modern practices often overlook or undervalue. Nilima Chitgopekar "Not from the Womb - Birthing in the Devi Mahatmya" examines the divine birth of Durga, highlighting her emergence not as a typical birth but as a product of divine assembly. This essay powerfully underscores the symbolic and theological weight of Durga's creation, positioning her as a pivotal figure in maintaining cosmic



balance. Seema Kohli's essay, "Journey of Surya, from Martanda to Hiranyagarbha - Immortal Cycle of Creation and Recreation," adds a fascinating dimension to the anthology. By weaving Vedic concepts of creation with personal reflections, Kohli brings ancient symbols like the Golden Womb (Hiranyagarbha) and the Sun (Martanda) into contemporary relevance, offering readers a unique blend of mythology and modern interpretation. In "Birth of a Hero - The Pursuit of Immortality," Stella Dupuis explores the universal motif of heroism and immortality. She connects Amazonian women warriors, India's Sati memorial stones and Ladakh's Matsyendranth sculpture. Her analysis of the birth and quests of mythical heroes across different cultures enriches the anthology by showing the diverse ways divine favor and heroic journeys are

conceptualised. *Birthing the Goddess* is a deeply engaging and intellectually stimulating collection that offers new perspectives on the feminine divine through the themes of birth and creation. Each essay challenges conventional narratives and invites readers to go through into the sacred dimensions of the feminine, making the book a valuable addition to studies in mythology, spirituality and cultural traditions. What stands out most about this anthology is its ability to work together diverse perspectives into a coherent and profound meditation on the feminine principle. The author's willingness to challenge traditional narratives and explore lesser-known stories is both brave and necessary in today's cultural landscape. This book is not just an academic exercise; it's a spiritual journey that prompts readers to reflect on their own understanding of birth, creation and the divine feminine. For anyone interested in mythology, spirituality or cultural studies, *Birthing the Goddess* is a must-read. Its rich content and thought-provoking essays will leave a lasting impression, inspiring deeper contemplation and appreciation of the sacred feminine.

Book Name — Birthing the Goddess: The Feminine and the Idea of Birth
Publisher — Aryan Books International
Price — Rs. 1950

GUKESH, PRAGGNANANDHAA DRAW AGAIN IN SINQUEFIELD CUP



PTI n SAINT LOUIS (USA) World Championship challenger D Gukesh enjoyed an advantageous position against tournament co-leader Alireza Firouzja of France but eventually settled for a draw in the fourth round of the Sinquefield Cup, here. Gukesh, who is set to play the World championship match against Ding Liren of China next November, proved that he is made of sterner mettle as he made Firouzja's life tough. Grandmaster

Praggnanandhaa also drew his game against Anish Giri of Holland and almost at the half way stage in this 10-player round-robin tournament, the Indians stand at a level fifty percent score. The day when Wesley So of United States won the lone decisive game, the news doing the round through unconfirmed sources was that Firouzja has been offered to play for United States. For Prag things were not difficult as he meticulously handled Anish Giri with black

pieces and even though the Dutchman believed he had some chances, they were thwarted in no time. After three decisive games in round three the fourth round yet again produced just a lone decisive game with Wesley So overcoming Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia. With Wesley winning and Nepomniachtchi on the losing side, the former joined Firouzja in lead on 2.5 points after four rounds and they are now followed by Fabiano Caruana of United States,

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, Nepomniachtchi, Praggnanandhaa and Gukesh. Abdusattorov and Giri share the ninth spot with 1.5 points each. Results round 4: Anish Giri (Ned, 1.5) drew with R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 2); D Gukesh (Ind, 2) drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 2.5); Wesley So (Usa, 2.5) beat Ian Nepomniachtchi (Fide, 2); Ding Liren (Chn, 2) drew with Fabiano Caruana (Usa, 2); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 2) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 1.5).

Sri Lanka-New Zealand opening Test at Galle to have a rest day

PTI n DUBAI Sri Lanka's opening Test against New Zealand at Galle next month will be a six-day affair with the provision of a rest day owing to the presidential election in the island nation. The Test, scheduled to commence on September 18, will have a rest day on September 21, "owing to the Presidential Election of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka", said an ICC release on Friday. It will be the first time in more than two decades that Sri Lanka have been scheduled to



same venue from September 26-30. Rest days were a common feature in Test cricket in the last century, with several matches in the cricketing world being played across six days with Sunday usually being an off day. More recently, Bangladesh played a Test-series opener against Sri Lanka in December 2008, which was a six-day affair because of a parliamentary election. New Zealand and Sri Lanka are currently placed third and fourth respectively in the World Test Championship standings.

host a Test across six days, with their match against Zimbabwe in Colombo in 2001 also including a rest day due to Poya Day (full moon), said the ICC. The two-match series is part of the ongoing ICC World Test Championship cycle with the second Test scheduled at the

India A bowlers fight back but Australia A's lead surges to 192 on Day 2 of unofficial Test

PTI n GOLD COAST (AUSTRALIA) India A bowlers led a spirited fightback but Australia A tightened grip on the unofficial one-off women's Test, with the hosts' overall lead surging to 192 runs here on the second day on Friday. India A skipper Minnu Mani completed her match haul of 10 wickets but Kate Peterson returned an impactful 12-5-16-5 to hand Australia a slender 28-run lead in the first innings, as the visitors were bowled out for 184 in reply to the host's 212. Resuming at 100/2, India A looked on course to take a substantial lead but fell short as

Peterson ran through the middle order. India's set batters Tejpal Hasabnis (32) and Shweta Sehrawat (40) were the first to fall as the tourists lost five wickets for 27 runs before Sayali Satghare (21), Mani (17) and Mannat Kashyap (19) put up 56 runs to deny Australia a huge lead. Mani then swung into action with the ball immediately as Australia A batters' once again struggled against Indian spinners. The off-spinner first

removed opener Georgia Vull and her Australian counterpart Charli Knott for ducks in consecutive overs to reduce the hosts to 0/2 at one stage. Mani, who claimed a five-wicket haul in the first essay, also got rid of Nicole Faltum (16) before she cleaned up Tess Fintoo with an off-break. However, opener Emma de Brouhe continued to hold form from one end as she scored 58 runs off 117 balls before falling

prey to rookie leg-spinner Priya Mishra. Wicketkeeper Maddy Drake took matters into her own hands by hitting an unbeaten half century (54 not out of 100 deliveries) to lead Australia's recovery further as the hosts reached 164/7 at the end of play. Drake added 54 for the sixth wicket with Maitlan Brown (26 off 45) before the latter became Mani's tenth wicket in the game.

Ilkay returns for unlikely second spell at Man City after just a year at Barcelona

AP n MANCHESTER Ilkay Gundogan is back at Manchester City for a sequel few could have expected. A year after leaving for Barcelona, the former Germany midfielder completed his unlikely return to City on Friday on a free transfer and a season-long deal. The 33-year-old Gundogan, who has the option of a further season at City, was the captain when Pep Guardiola's team captured the Premier League-FA Cup-Champions League treble in the 2022-23 campaign. That confirmed his place in the growing pantheon of City greats, having already been in the conversation most notably after scoring two late goals against Aston Villa on the final day of the 2021-22 Premier League



season to seal a 3-2 win that clinched the title. He was at City for seven years after joining in 2016 as Guardiola's first signing, and was often his manager's go-to player with big performances and significant goals. Bringing in Gundogan is a late call by City in this transfer window. He was one

of Xavi Hernandez's favorite players during the coach's sole season with the Catalan club but Barcelona's delicate economic situation appears to have forced the new coach, Hansi Flick of Germany, to part ways with Gundogan. Typically an attacking central midfielder, Gundogan also will be used

as a replacement for holding midfielder Rodri should the Spain star need a break. He is well-versed in Guardiola's style of play so has the benefit of not needing a transitional period, and will compete for a place in the midfield alongside the irreplaceable Rodri with Kevin De Bruyne, Bernardo Silva, Mateo Kovacic and Phil Foden. Gundogan's exit should help Barcelona register new midfielder Dani Olmo, which the team has so far been unable to do because of the Spanish league's financial rules that make clubs balance expenditures on wages and transfers with available assets. In addition to Olmo, Barcelona also has depth in the creative midfield positions with Pedri Gonzalez, Frenkie de Jong,

Fermin Lopez and, once he recovers from his serious leg injury, Gavi Páez. Gundogan was Germany's captain at the recent European Championship but he retired from international duty this week. Gundogan's last game for City saw him lift the Champions League trophy after the win over Inter Milan in Istanbul in June last year. His next could be against Ipswich at Etihad Stadium in the Premier League on Saturday.

Aditi and Diksha fight hard on tough opening day at AIG Women's Open



PTI n ST. ANDREWS (SCOTLAND) Indian golfers Diksha Dagar and Aditi Ashok Made crucial birdies on their final holes to keep alive their chances of making the cut after the first round of the AIG Women's Open. Aditi carded a 4-over 76 to be T-79 while Diksha was 5-over 77, sitting at T-100 as play ended late on the opening day which was marred by strong winds. The cut looked likely at 3-over or 4-over after the second round. For a long time, Diksha's score on the board showed a birdie on Par-5 14th, which was later corrected and it was shown as 5-over. Aditi opened with two pars and then had a bogey on 12th

and a double on 13th for 3-over first nine. She dropped further shots on first and second to go 5-over before the birdie on ninth made it 4-over for the day. Diksha, T-21 last year at Walton Heath, was 5-over for her first nine holes, the back nine of the Old Course with bogeys on 10, 11, 13, 16 and 17. On the second nine, she dropped a shot on third and picked a birdie on the ninth, her final hole. Charley Hull fired a round of 5-under 67 to sit in the outright lead after the first round. The English star went out to tackle the Old Course in the afternoon wave alongside world number one Nelly Korda and defending champion Lilia Vu.

Hull rolled in her first birdie of the day on the fifth but made a bogey on the par-3 eighth, however, she was soon under par again with a birdie on the ninth. The three-time LET winner then had a great back nine as she made birdies on 10, 12, 15 and 18 to hold a solo lead on five-under-par in the final major of the year. China's Ruoning Yin and American Korda sit one shot behind the leader after they produced rounds of 68 (-4) on the opening day at the Old Course. Six players are in a share of fourth place with Korean duo Jenny Shin and Mi Hyang Lee, American pair Andrea Lee and Lilia Vu, Thailand's Patty Tavatanakit and Japan's Mao Saigo all on three-under.

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